

TIPS FOR WRITING TO POLICYMAKERS

Truth be told, you only need a pen and paper to be an effective advocate. Iowa Legislators and US Congressional staff will tell you, 5 to 20 handwritten letters can draw attention to an issue otherwise overlooked or ignored. Just imagine what another 10 or 100 or 1,000, could do!!!

(Graphic of a red pen laying down a black line not available in Braille.)



Here are some TIPS to help you with your

LETTERS – EMAILS – TEXTS – SOCIAL MEDIA & BLOGS:

- NEVER say anything hateful or hurtful in writing!
- Always start with the proper title: Honorable or Representative/Senator.
- Begin your letter by thanking him/her for a recent speech or vote that you found effective or inspiring.
- Be specific about the legislative proposal or the issue you are writing about, and explain what you want them to do – are you for it or against it.
- Make sure your letter is timed well. For example, you want to make sure that your passionate letter arrives BEFORE a vote is taken!
NOTE: You wouldn't want to ask a Senator to make a change to a current bill via US Mail since mail goes into a holding building for a week for security ✓'s.
- Stick to one or two key issues.
- It is important to have both FACTS and to SHARE YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE in a letter to elected officials.
- Put your address on the envelope, as well as inside the letter (along with your phone number & email address. Most congressional offices respond to mail only from within their districts or areas.
- Try to be as brief and courteous as you can – don't write a letter that is 6 pages long – that is just too long!!
- Neatness, grammar and spelling count. Ask a friend to help if these are not your strong areas.
- When you get ACTION ALERTS, and it is something you believe in, sign onto the PETITION. Make sure to ALSO WRITE SOMETHING PERSONAL!!!

When getting information to POLICYMAKERS:

- Make sure you have all the facts right.
- Write a sample letter for peers to modify and personalize.
- Have congressional office addresses handy for other people to use.
- Take your campaign everywhere you go – talk it up!!
- If the congressperson takes your suggestion(s), write a thank you note.
- Maintain a connection with him/her, and encourage other letter writers to do the same – someday, he/she may become president!