

Tips on writing a letter to an elected official from 1000 Friends of Oregon

Use your own stationary. A neatly written or typed letter is more personal than an email.

Introduce yourself and why you are contacting him/her. If you have met the elected official before, personalize the letter by noting briefly when and where that occurred so they can place a face with your name.

Be concise. A one page letter is more likely to be read than a longer one. Write about only one issue in your letter.

Write your own thoughts and words. Write about your own personal experiences and how the issue affects you. Provide brief examples without being overly dramatic.

Be clear on your position. Be sure you clearly state your position on the issue. Show your knowledge of the issue, but in a concise format. Also, briefly write about how the issue affects you.

Refer to legislation or proposed legislation. Whether you are writing about a current bill or measure to be voted on or proposed future legislation, be clear on whether there is a specific measure or bill number you are bringing up.

Request a specific action. Are you asking your elected official to vote for or against your issue? Are you asking them to show leadership on an issue or request a hearing?

Ask for a reply. If you ask a question or request something, ask the legislator for a reply to your letter. Ask that your elected official state his or her position on the issue in a reply.

Include a return address when you mail the letter.

Write a follow-up letter. If the recipient of your letter complied with your request (e.g., voted favorably for a bill), send a thank you note. It is a refreshing change to most letters they receive.