

HOW TO WRITE YOUR LEGISLATOR

Fundamental “Do’s”....

- Specifically ask for support of your position.
- Address your legislator properly.
- Write legibly (handwritten letters are fine if they are readable).
- Be brief, to the point and discuss only one issue in each letter. Try to identify a bill by number and title.
- Know the facts. Do not try to influence anyone before you have a thorough understanding of the issue.
- If possible, give an example of how legislation will affect you personally.
- Use your own words and your own stationery. If you are writing as an organization, use the organization’s stationery.
- Include your address and sign your name legibly. If you have any family, business, or political connection in regard to an issue, explain it.
- Ask the legislator to state his or her position in their reply.
- Ask your legislator their communication preference (telephone, fax, letter, email).

Write your legislator when they do something of which you approve. Often, legislators hear only from individuals and organizations who are against something. It is refreshing for a legislator to receive something positive instead of something negative all the time.

Fundamental “Don’ts” . . .

- Do not send a postcard.
- Do not sign and send a form letter.
- Do not begin on a righteous note (“As a citizen and a taxpayer” and/or “As a concerned citizen”). Legislators realize you pay taxes and you are a citizen.
- Do not apologize for writing and taking their time. If your letter is short and expresses an opinion, they are happy to give it consideration.
- Do not be rude or threatening.
- Do not send a copy of your letter to other legislators; write each one individually.

HOW TO ADDRESS LETTERS . .

When writing to a Illinois Senator or Illinois Representative

The Honorable John Doe or Jane Doe
Illinois Senator or Illinois Representative
Address

When writing to a U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative

The Honorable John Doe or Jane Doe
U.S. Senator or U.S. House of Representatives
Address