



# Write a Letter to Your Member of Congress

Personalized communications are effective ways to engage your members of Congress and influence their policy decisions. Use these tips to draft an impactful letter.

## Step 1 / *Credential yourself*

Identify yourself as a constituent and list the organization that you represent or are a member of.

## Step 2 / *Keep it short*

Be concise. Limit your letter to one page if possible. Name the issue you're concerned about. What do you want your member to do? Why do you care about it?

## Step 3 / *Be yourself*

Be sure to state why this issue matters to you: Is your faith calling you to respond to this issue? Have you traveled or met someone impacted by this issue? Including a personal story makes your letter more compelling and helps it stand out.

## Step 4 / *Ask*

What do you want your legislator to do? Be clear and specific; for example,

*"Vote yes in support of bill  
[name and number of bill]."*

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## OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Use the appropriate address and salutation. See the sample letter.
  - Be polite. Like most of us, members of Congress will respond better to positive communication.
  - Write legibly if writing your letter by hand.
  - Proofread your letter for typos and other mistakes.
  - Check the member's website and social media accounts to see where he or she stands on the issue.
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## MAILING YOUR LETTER

Because of security procedures on Capitol Hill, we recommend that you mail your letter to your member's district office. You can easily find out your legislators' district office locations by visiting their websites, or [house.gov](http://house.gov) and [senate.gov](http://senate.gov).

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Join us at  
[crs.org/leadtheway](http://crs.org/leadtheway)  
and by texting  
LEAD NOW to 306-44

# SAMPLE LETTER

## PARAGRAPH 1

*Identify yourself, the issue and why this issue is important to you.*

The Honorable Jane Q. Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives (or U.S. Senate)  
Full Street Address  
Continued Street Address  
City, State and ZIP Code

## PARAGRAPH 2

*Credential yourself—who or what do you represent?*

Dear Representative (or Senator) Smith,

My name is Maria, and I am writing because I am concerned about poverty and violence affecting our brothers and sisters overseas. My family and I were once refugees fleeing violence, and I know that innocent people suffer the most in times of war.

## PARAGRAPH 3

*Make the ask—what do you want your member to do?*

I am a parishioner at St. Anthony de Padua Church in San Antonio, Texas, where I participate in various ministries to help local families in need.

I ask you to support continued humanitarian assistance to suffering people, by supporting robust funding for international humanitarian accounts.

This is an issue that's very important to others in my parish as well. We look forward to hearing back from you on this issue. Please know that Catholic Relief Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops can be a resource to you as you work on this issue in Congress.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. As a concerned citizen and a committed Catholic, I believe that we have an obligation to those who are suffering, whether they are our neighbors here at home, or our neighbors overseas.

Sincerely (or another closing remark),

Your Name  
Your Return Address

*This is how the member's office can determine that you're a constituent.*