

Writing to Public Officials

Sample Letter

This information was gathered from the Bread for the World web site - a group known for its letter writing campaigns. When people write from Bread for the World, Congress listens. "Constituent letters count! And Bread for the World letters are special, not only because Bread members are generally well-informed, but because they write to help others, not themselves."

Representative Jim Leach (R-IA)

Letter Writing Tips

(Email is just as effective as snail mail. Adjust tips accordingly.)

1. Be personal. Handwritten letters still get more attention.
2. Be concise and request specific action.
3. Send your letters to the Washington, D.C, offices of your members of Congress. They work on legislation while local office people handle mainly casework type concerns.
4. Since the anthrax scare of 2001, it takes 2-4 weeks for letters to get to your members of Congress.
5. Continue to write to ask for co-sponsorship into the summer.
6. A good formula for letters includes the following components, in any order – Mix and match the ideas & put them into your own words:
 - o Make a specific legislative request of your members of Congress. Include the bill name and number [Name: the Hunger-Free Communities Act; the Senate bill number is S. 1120; the House bill number is H.R. 2717]. Make sure you refer to the Senate bill number when writing to your senator, and the House bill number when writing to your member of the House of Representatives.
 - o Give a reason - talk about your motivation and/or provide a fact.
 - o Write your name and address on both the letter and the envelope. Members of Congress pay primary attention to their own constituents. The different web sites listed give updates on the legislation. They can help you to send email to your legislators immediately.

Or you can Send your letters to:

Your name
Your Address
Date

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sen. (or Rep.) _____, Hurricane Katrina has made all of us much more aware of poverty, need and extreme inequities within the U.S. In fact, even as our nation experienced economic recovery and growth over the last four years, hunger has increased. This is unacceptable. Please cosponsor the Hunger-Free Communities Act, S. 1120 (or H.R. 2717).

This bipartisan legislation challenges Congress to cut hunger in our country, protect our nation's nutrition programs from damaging changes, and strengthen the hunger-fighting efforts of local communities. As you work for the passage of the Hunger Free Communities Act, please also make sure that Food Stamps and other nutrition programs are protected from funding cuts. How we spend our national resources reflects on our moral character as a nation.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip