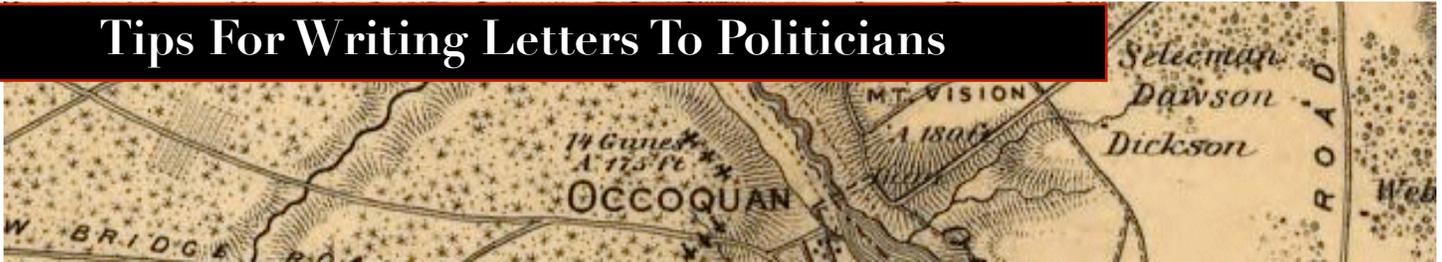


Tips For Writing Letters To Politicians



Also Good Advice For Emails

- ✓ Include your name and address:** Identify yourself as a constituent by including your address, and magisterial district when you write to your elected representative/s.
- ✓ Keep it brief:** Letters should be no longer than one page and should be about one issue only. Be as concise as possible. Politicians receive many letters on many topics every day. Long letters are likely to be put aside and never read. (Some professionals say that you should write multiple shorter letters and emails.)
- ✓ Use your own words, not someone else's:** An original letter sent by one single person is more effective than a form letter (or cut and pasted texts) sent by dozens of people. Even if your writing skills are not the best, a letter written in your own words will carry much more weight.
- ✓ Handwrite, or type and sign, your letter:** A handwritten, or typed and signed, letter is far more effective than photocopied form letters, postcard campaigns or emails.
- ✓ State the topic clearly:** Include a subject line at the beginning of your letter. If it is about a specific development, piece of legislation (an Act) or a proposed law (a Bill), state the full name of the Act or Bill in the first paragraph.
- ✓ Start with a clear statement of purpose:** For example: "I am writing to urge your support for / opposition to...", "I am writing to ask you to support / oppose ..."
- ✓ Focus on three important points:** Choose the three points that are most likely to be persuasive in gaining support for your position and describe them in the letter.
- ✓ Ask your representative to take concrete action:** For example, ask them to vote no on the Oaks III rezoning proposal.
- ✓ Ask for a response to your letter:** While the response will usually be a form letter, you will know you have had an impact on their office. A well-written letter can be crucial in prompting them to take action behind the scenes to inform and maybe change their political party's position.
- ✓ Personalize your letter:** When possible, include a personal story and/or information on how the issue affects you, your family, etc. This can help your representative understand your position and can be very persuasive. The more personal your letter, the more impact it is likely to have.
- ✓ Be polite:** Be courteous, but don't be afraid to take a firm position. While your representative's job is to represent you, remember that politicians and their staff are people too. Threats, hostile remarks and rude/offensive language are among the fastest ways to

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alienate people who could otherwise decide to support your position in light of rational and reasoned argument.

Use Standard English: Email and text messages have a language all their own. Don't use it when communicating with politicians. They appreciate a good turn of phrase in without abbreviations they don't understand and graphics that leave them perplexed.

Thanks is as important as criticism: Politicians need to be able to tell the 'other side' that they have been inundated with calls and letters supporting their position. Write thank you letters to politicians/parties that you know support your position. This will encourage them to stand firm on their position rather than backing down.

