



## Contacting Your Legislator

A fact sheet about calling and writing your legislator written by youth for youth.

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There are many issues that are found within our society today. Some of these issues may or may not have a direct impact on our lives. For those issues that greatly affect us, we should speak out about how we feel. A great way to let others hear how you feel is to call or write to your local legislator. Legislators are individuals who work for the government and write and pass laws. If there is an issue that really concerns you and you think change needs to happen, refer to the information below to help you contact your local legislator.

### Before you call or write your legislator

- Double check your facts.
- Prepare a short list of resources to share with your legislator.
- Have a solution to your problem.

### Tips for writing your legislator

- Be concise.
- Discuss only one issue or bill per letter.
- Include the bill number if you're writing about a specific bill.
- Be brief – 1 to 2 pages max.
- Personalize it – stay away from form letters. Form letters are only to help you get started.

### An outline for a letter to a legislator

(Your Name)

(Your Street Address)

(Your City, State, Zip)

(Today's Date)

The Honorable (Senator's or Representative's Full Name)

(Office Building)

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Dear Senator/Representative (*Last Name*):

First paragraph – a brief statement about the issue. Be sure to include the bill number if there is one.

Second paragraph – introduce yourself and explain why you are interested in the issue.

Third paragraph – explain how the issue affects you personally.

Next paragraph – provide a few facts that support your position on the issue.

Next paragraph – invite your legislator to contact you to talk about the issue further. Be sure to leave your contact information.

Last paragraph – thank your legislator for considering your position on the issue.

## More tips for writing your legislator

- Also consider sending your letter to the directors of agencies who provide services. Those people may be able to take care of the problem directly and more quickly.
- If your issue has no legislation attached to it, you can write an issue letter to bring the issue to your legislator's attention.
- You may want to ask a legislator to draft a bill for you. You must be ready with all the facts and be willing to work with the legislator. You also must be flexible about possible solutions.
- Handwritten letters have a personal touch but be sure you write clearly. It is also a good idea to have someone read your letter over for errors before you send it.
- Send a thank you letter whenever your legislator supports the issue you have contacted him/her about.
- Consider writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to raise awareness about your issue.

## Tips for calling your legislator

- Give your name and where you live.
- Give the bill number if applicable and the issue.
- State your position – you support or oppose the bill and give a brief reason for your position.
- Provide a solution to the problem – your legislator will be more likely to take action on the issue.
- Ask for your legislator's support or opposition.
- Leave your phone number.
- Be sure to thank them for their time.

## Sample script for calling your legislator

"Hi, my name is Your Name, and I am one of Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_'s constituents from Your City."

"Could I please speak with Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ about some of my concerns with \_\_\_\_\_."

(If this is not possible, speak to the aide who works on the issue. Aides often know more about a specific issue if they have been assigned to that issue and they work closely with the legislators).

"I am calling to urge [you/Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_] to oppose (or support) \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

"One possible solution for this problem is \_\_\_\_\_."

"Will you support (or oppose) this issue?"

"Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. I can be reached at Your Phone Number if you would like to talk some more about this issue."

## To find your Representative/Senator...

Call the Wisconsin Legislative Hotline at 1-800-362-WISC .

Look it up in the Wisconsin Blue Book – [www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/bb/05bb/index.htm](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/bb/05bb/index.htm)

Visit – [www.legis.state.wi.us](http://www.legis.state.wi.us) and click on 'WHO REPRESENTS ME?'