

# Effective Communication with Your Legislators

## HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO CONGRESS

Concise, well thought out personal letters are one of the most effective ways Americans have of influencing law-makers. But, members of Congress get hundreds of letters and emails every day. Whether you choose to use the Postal Service or email, here are some tips that will help your letter to Congress have impact.

### Keep it Simple

Your letter should address a single topic or issue. Typed, one-page letters are best. I recommend a three-paragraph letter structured like this:

1. Say why you are writing and who you are. List your "credentials." You must include your name and address, even when using email. Linked students must address any policy issue of interest to you but make sure it is a federal issue and not a local one (If not sure, email me).
2. Provide more detail. Be factual and not emotional. Provide specific rather than general information about how the topic affects you and others. If a certain bill is involved, cite the correct title or number whenever possible.
3. Close by requesting the action you want taken: a vote for or against a bill, or change in general policy.

The best letters are courteous, to the point, and include specific supporting examples.

### Addressing Members of Congress

The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) Senate (or House) Office Building  
United States Senate (or House of Representatives)  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (or Representative):

The above addresses should be used in email messages, as well as those sent through the Postal Service.

### Summary

Here are some key things you should always and never do in writing to your elected representatives.

1. Be courteous and respectful without "gushing."
2. Clearly and simply state the purpose of your letter. If it's about a certain bill, identify it correctly. If you need help in finding the number of a bill, go to [Congress.gov](http://Congress.gov) or email me.
3. Say who you are. Anonymous letters go nowhere. Even in email, include your correct name, address, phone number and email address. If you don't include at least your name and address, you will not get a response.
4. State any professional credentials or personal experience you may have, especially those pertaining to the subject of your letter. Many students write letters so they are used to getting such letters from folks like you.
5. Keep your letter short -- one page is best.
6. Use specific examples or evidence to support your position.
7. State what it is you want done or recommend a course of action.
8. Thank the member for taking the time to read your letter.

## **Legislative Contact Information**

*46<sup>th</sup> Legislative District in WA includes all of Northeast Seattle from Greenlake to 145<sup>th</sup> ST. and up to Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, etc.*

Our Pinehurst **state legislators** are:

**Representative Jessyn Farrell (D)**, Deputy Majority Whip  
370 John L. O'Brien Building, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 – 7818  
[Jessyn.Farrell@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Jessyn.Farrell@leg.wa.gov)  
Assistant's info: [Nigel.Herbig@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Nigel.Herbig@leg.wa.gov)  
<http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/legislators/jessyn-farrell/>

**Representative Gerry Pollet (D)**  
132C Legislative Building, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 – 7886  
[Gerry.Pollet@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Gerry.Pollet@leg.wa.gov)  
Assistant's info: [Angie.Weiss@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Angie.Weiss@leg.wa.gov)  
<http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/legislators/Gerry-Pollet/>

**State Senator David Frockt (D)**  
227 John A. Cherberg Building, PO Box 40446, Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 – 7690  
District Office: 155 NE 100th St #210, Seattle WA 98125, (206) 729-3243  
<http://sdc.wastateleg.org/Frockt/>  
[David.Frockt@leg.wa.gov](mailto:David.Frockt@leg.wa.gov)  
Assistant's info: [Jon.Rudicil@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Jon.Rudicil@leg.wa.gov)

**To check your district:** <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

**46<sup>th</sup> District Democratic Party:** [chair@46dems.org](mailto:chair@46dems.org), call 206.947.6529 or go to  
<http://www.46dems.org/>

**46<sup>th</sup> District Republican Party:** <https://46ldgop.wordpress.com/>

**At the federal level:** *the State of WA is represented by Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. North Seattle belongs to the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, represented in the House by Pramila Jayapal.*

**Pramila Jayapal**  
319 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: 202-225-3106  
District Office: 1904 3rd Ave., Suite 510, Seattle, WA 98101

**Patty Murray**  
154 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-2621/  
(866) 481-9186  
2988 Jackson Federal Building 915 2nd Avenue Seattle, Washington 98174 (206) 553-5545

**Maria Cantwell**

511 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-3441

915 Second Avenue, Suite 3206, Seattle, WA 98174 (206) 220-6400

**Websites and Apps for tracking issues:** 5calls.org; Countable app;

**Suggested Actions**

Pick one issue per day/week/etc. using these formats and to your 2 Senators and 1 Representative on their DC and Washington offices phone lines.

**Sample Postcards**

State the issue, State your Position, Give your name, city & zipcode

- I am opposed to the import of widgets or I am in favor of importing widgets.

**Calling Your Legislator**

- Hello, my name is Susie Smith in Seattle, zipcode 98125. I don't need a response. I am opposed to importing widgets. I encourage you to oppose the ban/bill/whatever applies. Thanks for your hard work and answering this call.