



## EveryChild California's Guide to Writing a Letter to Your Elected Officials

Writing a personal letter is a great way to communicate with your elected officials. Elected officials are happy to receive personal letters from constituents, as they know it takes time to write a letter with a well-thought out message.

**Before writing the letter:** Find out who your elected officials are by visiting: [findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov](http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov).

**Writing the letter:** Here are some tips for writing an effective letter.

- **Keep it short** - Limit your letter to one page.
- **Identify yourself** - In the first paragraph of your letter state who you are and the city/zip code that you live in. It is very important that your elected official knows that you are their constituent.
- **Identify the issue** - In the first paragraph also clearly state the issue that your letter addresses (a bill, the budget, etc.). If your letter is referring to a specific bill, identify it by name and number if possible (i.e. AB 123 or SB 4456). If you need to look up a bill number visit: [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov)
- **Focus on your main points** - If you have it, share key statistics, compelling facts, or condensed background information. Keep your points short and clearly focused on the issue. Try not to overload your letter with excess information, your message might get lost in the excessive content.
- **Personalize your letter** - A personal message or story shows how passionate you are about an issue. Tell your elected officials why the issue is important to you and tell how the issue affects you, your program and your community.
- **Ask for action** - Ask for a specific action you would like for your elected official to take on the issue (i.e. supporting certain legislation, not supporting certain legislation, etc.) and/or other ways your elected official can help with the same issue (i.e. creating a program to address a need in the community, expanding services, etc.)
- **Ask for a reply** - Thank you elected official for reading the letter and ask for a reply with their position on the issue and how they will address the issue. Be clear to include your name and address on both your letter and envelope to ensure appropriate delivery of your elected official's response to you.
- **After writing the letter:** Follow the issue and any steps your elected official takes to address the issue. As your elected official makes decisions on the issue, contact him/her to either say thank you for addressing the issue in a manner that you feel is appropriate or to express your desire to see him/her address the issue differently