

How to Write a Letter to Your Legislator

[Your legislators like to hear opinions and be kept informed of conditions in the district.]

Dos

- BE BRIEF and respectful.
- If writing about a specific bill, describe it by number or its popular name.
- State subject matter and your position [“for” or “support”] or [“against” or “oppose”] in the first and last sentences of your letter.
- State relevant info about yourself: Are you a voter? A member of the politician’s party? a taxpayer? your age group? your sex? outdoor sportsman? a recreational boater?
- They appreciate intelligent, well-thought-out letters that present a definite position.
- Make a concrete statement of the reasons for your position.
- Letters should be timed to arrive while the issue is alive.
- Remember to follow through with a thank-you letter.

DON'Ts

- Letters that demand votes for or against a certain bill without giving any reasoning are not very influential.
- DON’T BE RUDE. Threats of defeat at the next election are not effective.
- Do not ask for a vote commitment on a particular bill before the committee in charge of the subject has had a chance to hear the evidence and make its report.
- Form letters are not as influential as a simple letter drawing on your own experience.
- Congressional courtesy requires legislators to refer letters from non-constituents to the proper offices. Best to confine your letter-writing to members of your own district or members of the committee specifically considering a bill.
- Do not engage in letter writing overkill. Quality, not quantity, is what counts.

SAMPLE LETTER

Peter Pardini
300 Range Road
Besttown, CT 06300

[Insert DATE]

Representative (name) [When writing to a representative]
Honorable (name) [When writing to a senator]
[The following for a state legislator]
Legislative Office Building, Room ??? [or use their district/home address]
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Spenda:

Subject: S.B. No. ??? - AN ACT TO CLOSE GUN
CLUBS

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to oppose this proposed bill.

I have been a member of the Pachaug Outdoor club for 19 years, a club whose objective is to unite sports people and lovers of outdoor life. As such, the club also has shooting ranges and supports the shooting sports.

I feel that the intention of the persons promoting this bill is just to make it easier for the "new neighbors" to close down clubs or ranges in hopes of increasing home values in the wake of the current economic down-turn.

The bill cites safety, but how many range accidents have there been? The Center for Disease Control cites that: "Firearm misuse causes only a small number of accidental deaths in the U.S. For example, compared to accidental death from firearms, you are:
Four times more likely to burn to death or drown,
17 times more likely to be poisoned,
19 times more likely to fall, and
53 times more likely to die in an automobile accident.

According to the 2005-2006 National Safety Council 'Injury Facts' report, firearms were involved in less than 1% of all accidental fatalities. This figure accounts for all accidental shootings involving firearms and does not accurately address the much safer track record of the target shooting sports. With self imposed restrictive rules of use and providing a formal place to shoot, gun clubs has been particularly safe.

Gun clubs have been in existence for many years. They allow for residents to have a safe environment to have fun and to learn, develop and practice the safe use of a firearm, and attain good marksmanship; a skill that is needed to be an ethical hunter, and a skill that is needed for responsible self protection.

Again, I urge you to consider this and oppose this proposed bill.

Thank you,
[SIGN]

Peter Pardini