

Tips for Writing a Letter to Your Representative or Senator

Keep it short. Be concise and limit your letter to one or two pages.

Grammar. Use correct grammar and short sentences.

Use the appropriate address and salutation. Use the correct title, address, and salutation, and remember to use spell check after completing your letter.

Identify yourself. Let your legislator know that you are a constituent, a social worker, and a member of the National Association of Social Workers.

Be polite. Like most of us, legislators will respond better to positive communication. Start by recognizing their support on other legislation.

Explain your position. Talk about how the legislation has affected you or the people you serve. Include the NASW recommendations in your letter.

Ask for a response. Be clear about what you would like your legislator to do.

Establish yourself as a resource. You are an expert in your field and can offer to provide additional information regarding the field, the issue, and the effect of proposed legislation.

Type or Write legibly. Handwritten letters can be as persuasive as typed letters, but your handwriting must be legible. Generally, writing in a professional capacity related to your employment lends credibility. If your letter is part of a letter-writing campaign, a handwritten letter gives the appearance of a grassroots "ordinary citizen" communication, rather than a communication from a "special interest group."

Personal Story. Use a personal story, if possible, to show how important the issue is to you.

Spell Check. Proofread and spell check the entire document for any errors.