

ADVOCACY BY LETTER, POSTCARD, OR EMAIL

Writing to your legislator is an important and critical way to influence legislation. Letters, postcards, and emails written to the elected officials that represent your district are especially important.

- TAKE THE TIME TO CRAFT A KEY MESSAGE – Your key message doesn't have to be perfect or entirely original. You can expand on a message from a group's newsletter, action alert, or template, but it's important to add personalization to your message. This makes it stand out.
 - What is your ask? (Check out "[Developing Effective Messages](#)" in the toolkit for more.)
- Write in your own words and be sure to include your own thoughts and stories. Tell the reader how the legislation will affect you, friends, family, neighbors, and other folks in your district and community.
- Share as much knowledge as you can on the subject, but don't worry if you're not an expert! Your personal experience is the best testimony that you can offer.
- Avoid sending stock/form letters and emails if you can. If you do send one, be sure to personalize it.
- Don't threaten the legislator, bully them, or get nasty. This will not sway them in your direction.
- Be brief, stick to one subject at a time, and refer to bills by name and number. If you need help finding a bill number, contact the FAN office so we can help! You can also call the [Legislative Hotline](#) for help.
- If you ask the reader a question and you don't get a response from them, follow up with shortly after and ask clearly and politely for a response to your question or ask.
- When a legislator votes as you asked, send them a thank-you note or email!
 - If they voted differently than you asked, you can still send a (respectful) follow-up note or email.

In short, an effective way to deliver your key message includes:

- Who you are (**I am a voter in your district and belong to the 350-member Pizza-Eating Voters Association**).
- A brief description of the bill (your issue) and what it will do (**We are writing to ask your support of House Bill 1234 when it comes before your Committee. This bill would require all public feeding programs -- e.g., school lunches, senior citizen meals -- to serve pizza three times a week**).
- Why you care (**My child frequently skips what's offered for lunch at their school, but they always eat pizza. The more pizza offered, the more I can be confident that my child will eat**).
- Why your elected official should care (**Pizza can be an appealing and cost-effective way to meet the nutrition needs of children and seniors in our district**).
- Who else supports this bill or issue (**This bill is supported by a broad coalition of pizza makers, tomato growers, sausage producers, and the local Weight Watchers**).
- Repeat the outcome you want, or your ask, in slightly different words (**Please make this possible, by voting for HB 1234 in Committee and again once it comes to the House Floor**).
- Your name, address, and telephone number (**Please feel free to contact us; we would be happy to answer any questions or be of other assistance to you in this matter. Thank you!**)
 - You can also separately include/attach a fact sheet with more information on your issue.