

## Make it personal and to the point...

Writing to your elected officials can be very effective, especially if the letter that you send is personal and to the point. The instructions below are for mailing a letter to legislators, but e-mail can be just as effective. To find the e-mail address you require, visit [www.senate.state.oh.us/](http://www.senate.state.oh.us/) or [www.house.state.oh.us/](http://www.house.state.oh.us/) and click on "Your Senators" or "Your Representatives."

### Tips for writing your letter

#### Address the letter correctly

This will ensure that your letter reaches its target. For state legislators address your letter to:

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Senator _____      | Representative _____ |
| Ohio Senate        | Ohio House           |
| Statehouse         | Riffe Center         |
| Columbus, OH 43215 | 77 S. High Street    |
|                    | Columbus, OH 43266   |

#### Use the standard business format

This will make the letter easy to read and show that you are serious (see sample letter on page 2).

#### Be specific

If you are writing about a bill that has been introduced, include the bill number and name (i.e. SB 199, the Construction and Demolition Debris Landfill bill) and if possible the names of the bill's main sponsor(s).

#### Keep it brief

Try to focus on one major point in your letter. If you attempt to tackle too many issues in a single letter your main point may be diluted or confused.

#### Back it up

If possible, provide a couple of brief, logical arguments as to why your legislator should support your position. If your local newspaper has editorialized in support of your issue or community members have written letters to the editor supporting your position, clip the articles and include them. If the OEC has created a fact sheet about the issue, print a copy and attach it.

#### Make it local

Legislators are most interested in the impact that bills have within their own districts. The more you can show that your issue will have a local impact, the more compelling your letter will be.

#### Make it personal

If you can tell a story about how this bill or issue will affect you or your family, be sure to include that information. If you have personal stationery, use it. If you have neat handwriting, consider hand-writing the letter.

#### Ask for a specific action

Do more than simply state your position on an issue. Ask your elected official to do something that supports your position (i.e. support, oppose, or co-sponsor a bill).

#### Follow up

Keep track of whether or not your legislator supports your position. If he/she does, write a thank you note or call to say thanks. If not, call or write to ask why and encourage them to support the issue down the road.



# Sample letter to an elected official

Your name  
Your address  
Your city, state, zip

Date

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Ohio Senate  
Statehouse  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a constituent in your district (only say this if it is true) and am writing to you today to urge you to support/oppose \_\_\_\_\_(insert issue or bill name/number).

I support this bill because \_\_\_\_\_. I have enclosed a fact sheet provided by the Ohio Environmental Council. This fact sheet helps demonstrate the reasons why this bill is so important. For instance, the fact sheet points out that \_\_\_\_\_.

Although this bill would affect our whole state, I feel that it is especially important to \_\_\_\_\_ (insert city, county, or township) because \_\_\_\_\_ (insert potential local impacts). This bill is important to my family because \_\_\_\_\_.

Please support \_\_\_\_\_(insert issue or bill name/number) by \_\_\_\_\_ (insert action). I look forward to hearing back from you regarding your position on this bill. If I can provide you with any additional information about this critical issue, please let me know.

Sincerely,

P.S. I have enclosed a couple of letters to the editor that I clipped from the \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of local paper). These letters were written by other members of our community who also support this bill.

## Resources

Use the following websites to find contact information for your legislator, status reports on bills, and fact sheets about legislation.

**The Ohio General Assembly**  
[www.legislature.state.oh.us/](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/)

**The Legislative Service Commission**  
[www.lsc.state.oh.us](http://www.lsc.state.oh.us)

**The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC)**  
[www.theoec.org](http://www.theoec.org)