

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Make it a **PERSONAL** letter in your own words, writing in the same way you would talk to your family and friends about the issue.
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- Be **COURTEOUS**, avoid threats or foul language.
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- Talk about only **ONE SUBJECT** in each letter. Be sure you clearly define it, e.g., a military pay raise.
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- Give the **REASONS** for your concern. Explain how the issue can affect you and your family.
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- Be **BRIEF**. A one-page letter is ideal. A letter beyond two pages loses its effectiveness.
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- Be **SPECIFIC**. Come to the point; if you want your representative to support or vote against a piece of legislation, say so.
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- **AVOID COPYING** other letters except when speed, volume and common content are important, as in a widespread campaign to fight a particular bill. However, even small adjustments can avoid having yours appear like a form letter.
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- Be **REASONABLE**. Do not ask for the impossible. Do not say, "I will never vote for you again." That will not help your cause.
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- Be **FRIENDLY**. Despite your own personal opinions, members of Congress have a demanding job. You're only one of many thousands of voters.
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- Be sure to **REQUEST A RESPONSE**, as you want to know their position on the issue and get a better insight into the legislation.
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- **DO NOT IGNORE** your own senators or representative and write to one from another state because you disagree with your congressman.
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- Do not send a **CARBON COPY** to one senator or representative when you have addressed the letter to another legislator. Write separate letters.

THINGS TO AVOID

- **DO NOT** become a constant "**PEN PAL**." Write as often as you want, but do not write on every issue that comes up.
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- **DO NOT PRETEND** to have great political influence. Write as an individual, not as a spokesman for your chapter or division. Some of your peers may not agree with you.
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- **DO NOT** write and **CHASTISE** your representative or senators if they did not vote as you thought they should. If you wish, send a short note saying that you are disappointed in their vote and politely ask why they voted as they did.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- Use your own **PERSONAL STATIONERY**.
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- Be sure your **FULL NAME** and **ADDRESS** is on the envelope as well as in the letter, as envelopes have a habit of getting lost.
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- Write legibly or type your letter. Use only **ONE SIDE** of your stationery.

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- Sign your **NAME** legibly. It is also best to print your name below your signature.
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- Use your **TITLE**. SSgt; CMSgt; Mrs. Jones; the wife of MSgt Robert J. Jones, USAF; SMSgt H.J. Jones (Retired).
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- Do write "As a member of the **AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION**, I am concerned ..."
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- **RETAIN A COPY** of your letter and any material you may have included as an enclosure.
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- **TIMING IS IMPORTANT**. When public hearings are being held, your letter will have impact. AFSA will alert you as soon as possible as to just when you should write.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- *Upon writing your first letter, you will immediately be in the top one-half of one percent of all voters.*
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- Do not use your military e-mail to send a letter, we are interested voters when we write, the Air Force in general may not hold your personal position. We don't speak for the Air Force.
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- You can say you are a member of AFSA but don't say or imply that you speak for AFSA. **Only our Lobbyists can legally speak on behalf of AFSA.** Again, we are individual voters.
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- Try and schedule a meeting with your elected official when they are in town. Faces to names can't be beat for personalizing your letter writing campaign.
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- If not satisfied with an answer, be persistent and stay positive, don't say, "I'll never vote for you again". That won't help your cause.
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- Good old fashioned hand written letters can't be beat if your hand writing is legible, if not use a computer but be sure you sign your letter.
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- Once again, mention you are a member of AFSA but don't say, "On behalf of AFSA", or "this is AFSA stance". Say it is your stance, you believe, you want, you feel, and as I see it.