Letters to Officials

Most people in power keep close track of letters and emails written by the public. It’s one of the ways they gauge public opinion. Although a U.S. senator, a CEO, or the head of a nonprofit may not personally read your letter, they have assistants who read letters and tally opinions. Your letter or email will be read, and it might be answered.

Tell who you are. Give your name, address, phone, and email address. The people who read your letter want to know who you are, why you care, and how to reach you.

Focus on one issue. Don’t try to fight crime, air pollution, and unemployment all in one letter.

Keep it short and simple. State your ideas in the first paragraph. Get your entire message across in a page or less. People who read a lot of letters don’t have much time and will appreciate a short, clear letter.

Be polite. You can disagree, but never threaten or insult in a letter. Let your ideas do the talking.

Include supporting material. If you have any newspaper articles, letters to the editor, websites, or social media supporting your position, include it.