

ADVOCACY TIPS FOR WRITING LEGISLATORS

Do's

- DO address them properly:

*The Honorable John Smith
CA State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
Dear Senator Smith:*

*The Honorable Jane Brown
CA State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
Dear Assemblymember Brown:*

- DO write legibly.
- DO be brief and to the point.
- DO mention the specific bill in question, if possible.
- DO use your own words and avoid the appearance of a form letter.
- DO use your own stationery.
- DO give your reasons for supporting or opposing a bill.
- DO be courteous and reasonable.
- DO make sure you include your address and telephone number and sign your name clearly.
- DO congratulate the legislator on his or her actions you liked.
- DO include newspaper articles or editorials that support your view.
- DO send information to the heads of committees that will hear the bill(s) in question.
- DO double-check your information to make sure it is accurate.
- DO send your letters before action is to be taken. Proper timing is vital.
- DO use correct grammar and short sentences.

ADVOCACY TIPS FOR WRITING LEGISLATORS

Don'ts

- DON'T be long winded.
- DON'T adopt a righteous tone.
- DON'T demand anything.
- DON'T be rude or threatening. Remember that you may be asking for favorable votes in the future.
- DON'T mention more than one bill in a letter, if possible.
- DON'T forget that relatively few letters often can have a heavy impact. A few short letters carry much more weight than one long one.
- DON'T remind the legislator that you are a taxpayer.
- DON'T apologize for writing or for taking valuable time.
- DON'T be vague or deceptive.
- DON'T write only to those lawmakers who either agree or disagree with you.
- DON'T send carbon copies of letters to other legislators. Make them look like originals.
- DON'T use form letters.
- DON'T even hint that you think there is something sleazy or dishonorable about the art of politics- even if you feel that way.
- DON'T assume that every legislator is an expert on every issue.