



## Writing Letters

The following are some helpful guidelines for a successful letter:

**Identify yourself** - A letter will be given the most serious consideration if it is typewritten on business/personal letterhead. Include your name and address and, if applicable, how the issue in question impacts your practice.

**Be Specific** - If you want him or her to support or oppose a particular bill, tell them. State your position early in the letter using the specific bill number or legislative issue.

**Be Informed** - Only use verifiable facts. If you are knowledgeable about an issue and the legislative process, your opinion will carry more weight.

**Be Brief** - Whenever possible, condense your arguments down to one page or less. A longer letter is less likely to be completely read.

**Avoid “Jargon”** - Use plain language and avoid complex medical terms.

**Personalize the Letter** - Don't send form letters or postcards. Your position will be better received if it is in your own words. Use personal stories or examples that will make the issue more real to the legislator.

**Don't Demand** - Threats don't work. ASK for a legislator's vote. Avoid being argumentative, condescending, or making accusations.

**Request a Reply** - Let the legislator know that you are interested in his/her position on the issue; ask for a response to your letter. Include your address, phone, and/or fax number in case they need further information.

**Follow Through** - Send a thank-you letter when a legislator responds or votes the way you requested. Legislators seldom receive such correspondence commending/thanking them for their vote. Such letters WILL be remembered and appreciated.

**NOTE: Please follow these guidelines for addressing envelopes and correspondence:**

Address:

The Honorable John Doe  
Alabama State House  
Montgomery AL 36130

Salutation:

Dear Governor Riley  
Dear Senator Smith  
Dear Representative Jones