

## **YOUR “LETTERS” COUNT**

Your Elected Officials Need to Hear from **YOU**. They Depend on **YOU** to educate Them.

In a letter writing campaign, 10, 20 or 50 letters can be seen as a groundswell of support.

Timing is important – your organization or coalition will alert you.

Most elected officials are conscientious about their mail and consider the views of their constituents when they deliberate an issue. Your letter should be personal and thoughtful.

### **HOW TO WRITE** (snail-mail, fax or e-mail):

- Write your own letter. Use the correct salutation – Dear Senator/Representative. Use your own words to express your thoughts. Do not use post cards or form letters. . Typed letters are easier to read, but handwritten letters are acceptable, if they are legible. Make your letter no more than one page.
- State your reason for writing. Be specific. Explain how the issue affects you and those around you. Remember the personal story and use “person first” language. Include a photo, if available.
- Use the Bill number, author and title, if you are writing about legislation.
- Call to action: Clearly state what action you are seeking – support, or oppose. Do not use jargon or acronyms.
- Use statistics carefully. Give your elected official good reasons to support your position.
- Be respectful and sincere. Be reasonable, specific and positive. Don’t threaten. Ask your elected official to state his/her position on the issue in a written reply.
- Thank your elected official for their time and attention, for the support, for the vote.
- Put your return address, e-mail address and phone number in your letter. Envelopes can be thrown away.
- Send copies of your letter to your organization or coalition so that they can maintain a file of all correspondence.
- Write again. But wait at least three or four weeks before you do so. When you establish a record of correspondence you will develop clout on future issues.
- Encourage others to write letters. Numbers count.