

WRITING A MEMBER

These days it is rare to send a hard copy letter to a member of Congress or their staff, and not advised given congressional security protocols. Instead, utilize email to send any information or official correspondence. A few key tips to keep in mind when addressing your congressional offices:

State your purpose for writing in the first paragraph. Be courteous, include key information, and use examples to support your position. Keep the letter to one page.

ADDRESS HEADER TO A SENATOR. The Honorable (full name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

ADDRESSING THE LETTER. Dear Senator (last name)

ADDRESS HEADER TO A REPRESENTATIVE. The Honorable (full name), United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

ADDRESSING THE LETTER. Dear Representative (last name)

NOTE: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as: Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman; or Dear Mr. Speaker.

SENDING AN EMAIL. The Hill is a surprisingly casual place when it comes to communications and being too formal will show you as an outsider and demonstrate you don't have a relationship with the office. Here are a few key tips:

For Hill staffers, always use first names and a tone you would use with a business acquaintance.

Skip the formalities and keep the email to the point. This can be something as simple as "Hi John, FDA recently released a new draft guidance and I wanted to make sure you are aware of it. Our blood center is still working through all the details, but we are generally pleased to see FDA is making evidence-based changes that will improve the safety and availability of the blood supply. Let me know if you have any questions. Best, Bob".

Make sure to include your email signature so they have all your information.

When you want to link to a document make sure to paste the whole link, because of security on the IT system most links are stripped out of emails, and you want to make it as easy as possible for them to get to your information.