

Writing to Your Politicians - Tips & Template

This guide was compiled with resources from [Amnesty International](#), [RESULTS](#), [Black Lives Matter](#), and [NAACP](#).

TIPS:

- **Be succinct.** Aim for your letter to be no longer than one and a half pages. Keep to the point – focus on one issue and don't try and cover too many things in one letter.
- **Proof-read.** Check your letter for spelling and grammatical errors.
- **Follow up with your representative.** If you haven't had an acknowledgement of your letter after a couple of weeks, give their office a ring to check they have received your letter. The following template can be used to reach out to your Senator, Congressional Representative, Governor, or other state or local official.

TEMPLATE:

Part 1. SALUTATION Greet your representative and let them know how to reach you when they wish to respond.

Your Name

[insert full address]

[insert telephone number]

[insert email]

[insert date]

The Honorable [Representative, Senator, Governor, etc. Name]

House of Representatives, U.S Senate, Governor's Mansion, etc.

[insert office address]

Dear [insert politician's name],

Part 2. INTRODUCTION Introduce yourself, explaining clearly the purpose of the letter and why you are concerned. Include personal information about why you care about this issue.

My name is [insert name]. I am a [insert occupation] who has lived in [insert constituency] for [insert time].

[E.G. Donald Trump has stoked racism and White supremacy for the last four years and it's led to race-related violence. Three years ago Nazis and the "alt-right" marched on the campus of the University of

Virginia. The deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and most recently Jacob Blake have revealed what many have known for a while...we have a race problem in the US.]

[E.G. Over the past [insert time], the riots in Minneapolis have not only shown the world the systemic racism that is still pervasive in modern societies, it has also exposed the indifference that people in power have towards it. Since you are my representative for [insert state], I want to ask why you have not yet taken a stance on the murder of George Floyd at the hands of the police. Is there anything preventing you from speaking out against it? Can the people of our constituency expect to hear you speak out on this matter soon? I am expecting a detailed response to these questions.]

[E.G. I want you to understand how important the issue of racism is to me. The systematic oppression of nonwhite people needs to be actively fought against if we as a country truly believe that all people are born equal. The inaction of politicians to fight racism is not something that any reasonable person can stand for anymore. If you set out to make a change, it can happen. But it won't happen if you stand by and let it happen.]

Part 3. MAIN BODY Use the **EPIC** format to summarize your understanding and explain your position on the issue.

E = Engage your representative. Get their attention with a dramatic fact or short statement:

[E.G. African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of Whites. The imprisonment rate for African American women is 2x that of White women. Nationwide, African American children represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, and 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court. African American children represent 14% of the population.]

[E.G. The 13th amendment protects against cruel and unusual punishment, yet most of our prisons are at max capacity and have inhumane conditions, exploitation of labor, and absence of proper measures in place to respond adequately during states of emergency and national pandemics. Inmates are five times more likely to be infected by HIV than the general population. Approximately 10% to 20% of inmates suffer from a serious mental illness, which is often made worse during incarceration. Many of the formerly incarcerated also suffer from a loss of their rights as a result of their records.]

P = State the problem, explaining how decisions and actions on the issue will affect you and others.

[E.G. This issue impacts not only Black people, but people of any race, ethnicity, and nationality. I benefit as a [insert race] person from the institutionalized racism that pervades society and enough is enough. I can no longer sit idly by as members of community are targeted both explicitly and implicitly by government policies and institutions.]

[E.G. By a 28-point margin, Civiqs finds that a majority of American voters support the movement, up from a 17-point margin before the most recent wave of protests began (June 2020). If you truly represent me and the majority of your constituency, then you will act on this matter and show support for Black lives.]

I = Inform the politician about the solutions, acknowledging past support they have provided if any.

[E.G. As my representative/senator, it is your duty to serve and help the people in your constituency. And as a member of your constituency, it is my duty to ask what you're doing to help. So, what exactly have you done to combat racism in the US on a national and local level? Have you introduced any legislation that actively aims to either fight racism or lift people of color out of a disadvantaged position? What measures have you taken to ensure that racism within our community isn't allowed to thrive?]

C = Call to action. You need to let them know what you want them to do about it. If you are writing to oppose an action, offer an alternative.

[E.G. As my representative/senator, I call on you to stand with the protestors in the US and globally and work to eradicate the structural racial injustices that plague the US today.

I have five specific asks:

1. Please defund police and invest in communities instead. We need more funding for housing, social services, and public education. Investing more in our communities will prevent the need for large and abusive police forces.
2. Please ban ineffective police practices and mandate implicit bias training for police forces in our communities.
3. Please update reading lists and ensure Black history is taught in public schools, appropriately.
4. Please use your position to encourage charges be filed immediately against the murderers of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, & Jacob Blake.
5. Please ensure our community that protesters will not be met with excessive use of force, like that exhibited in Washington, D.C. on June 1, 2020.

Additionally, please personally commit to proactively increasing your understanding of these issues and to take a stand against structural racism in your position as a [Representative/Senator/etc.] of this constituency, whenever you encounter it.]

Part 4. CLOSING Thank your representative, offer to provide support if you are able, and ask for a response.

[E.G. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter/email. I hope you can provide a detailed response to the questions I have raised in this letter and I hope you take the issues I have raised seriously. I look forward to reading your response.]

Sincerely, [insert your name] [insert your address]