

ASNA LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

Letter Writing (see page 3 for an example)

1. Be brief, but informative.
2. Include only one topic per letter.
3. State your reason for letter in first paragraph.
4. Be specific and include key information.
5. If you want them to co-sponsor, say so.
6. Sign your name, with credentials (CRNP, RN, LPN, etc.)
7. Close with a thank you.
8. May be typed or handwritten.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. Post Cards:

Legislators need to receive many, and preferably handwritten, to make a difference.

2. Petitions:

Only if you have thousands of names.

3. Telephone Calls:

Be brief and have your facts together. The message will probably be placed on an answering machine or taken by a secretary. If you want the legislator to return your call, say so; otherwise they will not.

4. Testifying at Legislative Hearings:

ASNA will brief you individually.

5. Fax or Email:

Refer to www.nursingworld.org and connect to N-STAT

Legislative DON'Ts

- Don't threaten if they do not vote with you.
- Don't hold a grudge if they vote with the other side.
- Don't go unprepared.

N-State (Nurses Strategic Action Plan)

This is a national grassroots rapid response and legislative action network which allows nurses to be heard more clearly and forcefully, and provides them with the means to quickly mobilize and influence national policy. In short, N-STAT increases nurses political clout in Washington. When immediate action is needed, the nurse is sent pertinent information about the issue (talking points) and the names and addresses of their congressional members who can impact the issue. You may join N-STATE by contacting ASNA or by visiting ANA online at www.nursingworld.org

AN-PAC (Alabama Nurses Political Action Committee)

ASNA's Political Action Committee has been very active since 1979. We have supported registered nurses running for the Alabama Legislature as well as other candidates. The PAC has also supported some of our legislative initiatives. Tax deductible contributions may be made to the PAC by contacting ASNA.

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COMMUNICATION TIPS

Personal Visit

1. Call ahead for an appointment (when possible).
2. Prepare in advance; know background of the legislator, such as usual voting history, groups they support, occupation, committee membership, when they will be due for re-election, etc. Also, know history of the legislation – who supports it and who does not; is this ASNA's first attempt with this legislation, etc.
3. Be on time.
4. If going with a group, select one person to speak on behalf of the group. Limit group to no more than 5 individuals (otherwise the legislator will make a speech and not listen you!)
5. When you meet with the legislator, introduce yourself as a nurse, shake their hand firmly, and, if from their district, mention this and state why you are there. Be sure to know bill numbers.
6. Ask the legislator their position on the bill. If they are in favor, ask them to co-sponsor (if they have not already agreed).
7. Provide additional clarification about the bill if needed.
8. Offer to be a resource to them about nursing, health care, or other issues you feel deeply about.
9. Be courteous no matter how they react.
10. Be succinct – not too technical – and leave a fact sheet about the bill with the legislator.
11. After the visit, follow up with a thank you note.
12. **NOTE:** If the legislator is not expecting you and is not in their office, leave a brief note stating that you were there, sorry to have missed them, and a request to support your issue.

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ANATOMY OF A GOOD CONSTITUENT LETTER

Jane Doe, RN
123 Healthcare Lane
Anytown, AL 30000
(Day) 205-123-4567
(Evening) 205-234-5678
janedoe@internetking.net

Use Letterhead

February 1, 2008

The Honorable Sen Ator
Alabama Senate
Alabama State House
Montgomery, AL 36130

← Appropriate Heading

Re: SB xxx – Support ← State Purpose

Dear Senator Ator:

I am writing in support of SB xxx introduced by Senator _____ which seeks to _____.

Restate your support and purpose.

I have been a nurse for _____ years. My experience has shown _____.

Why you are concerned.

Recent data from XYZ State Agency indicates an increase in _____ statewide of over ____%. In your district, more than _____ persons are faced with the problem of _____ each day.

Hard facts from across the state.

SB xxx would solve this problem in the following ways:

How the bill will address this problem.

The problem of _____ will not be solved without appropriate legislative action. IF I can provide additional information to you on this critical issue please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Offer your assistance.

I would very much appreciate your response on this.

Always end a letter by asking the legislator for a response.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, RN