

Tips for Effectively Writing Legislators

Contacting state senators and representatives is a simple and effective way to support world language education. Emails and letters provide an avenue for you to share your views and urge legislators to support topics you care about. The Oregon Roadmap believes personal letters from constituents create more of an impact than generic ones, so we do not provide form letters. These tips, however, can help you write your own personal and effective letter.

1. Address the Letter Appropriately.

Correspondence with a state senator should be addressed “Dear Honorable (Full Name)” or “Dear Senator (Last Name).” Letters to representatives should begin “The Honorable (Full Name)” or “Dear Representative (Last Name).”

2. Keep your letter brief.

Letters should be no more than one page, and a paragraph or two is fine.

3. Begin your letter by stating why you are writing.

State your position and reason for writing. If you are writing about a particular bill, include the bill number. A House bill is identified as HB and a Senate bill as SB.

4. Choose one or two key points.

Clearly identify and explain one or two reasons why the legislator should agree with your position.

5. Personalize your letter.

Tell the legislator how a specific topic or piece of legislation will affect you, your family, or your business.

6. Use a respectful tone.

Courteous letters are more well received. It’s okay to disagree with a legislator, but keep the letter’s tone respectful.

7. Include your return address in the letter.

Ask the legislator to write back with his or her position on the topic you are writing about.

8. End your letter by asking the legislator to take action.

Ask the legislator for his or her help and explain the action you would like to see happen. Thank him or her for taking the time to consider your views.

9. Proofread before sending.

Poor grammar and punctuation can detract from your position.