

## Letter-Writing Guidelines

When you write a letter, you want to make sure that you follow specific guidelines and formatting requirements. By doing so, you accomplish two things: first, your letter will have all of the necessary content, which makes it easier to get your point across; second, your letter will look nicer and be taken more seriously by the reader.

When you write to your governor, you want to use a business letter template, which looks like this:

Your name Street Address City, State Zip	←	<i>This is the sender's address. Put your address here.</i>
February 4, 20XX	←	<i>This is the date that you wrote the letter.</i>
Governor Olive Doyle Street Address City, State zip	←	<i>This is the receiver's address. Put your representative's address here.</i>
Dear Governor Doyle:	←	<i>Open with a polite salutation.</i>
<p>Body of the letter -- this consists of roughly 3-5 paragraphs. These paragraphs introduce the issue that you are asking about, discuss your concerns, and explain why the issue is particularly important to you. Its concluding paragraph thanks your governor for his/her attention.</p>		
Sincerely,  <i>Your signature</i>  Your name printed	←	<i>This is where you close the letter. After you write "Sincerely," skip about four spaces then clearly print your name. In the space you just left, sign your name in cursive.</i>

The body of your letter should contain the following:

- An introduction: introduce yourself and explain why you are writing this letter. This is where you tell the governor that you would like to know his or her stance on a particular issue.
- Support: in this case, you want to explain why this is important to you.
- Additional support: you want to include some personal details explaining why this matters.
- Conclusion: here you provide a polite thank you and restate your request.

This might seem like a lot, but don't worry -- each paragraph is only a few sentences. You want to get right to the point with your letter. Be specific with your request and then explain why it is important. Do not let your emotions get in the way!

Use the template to plan your letter. When you are ready, write your final copy on a clear sheet of paper in your best and your neatest handwriting. If you are able to type your letter, do so; but if not, don't worry. Governors still read handwritten letters!