

WRITING TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

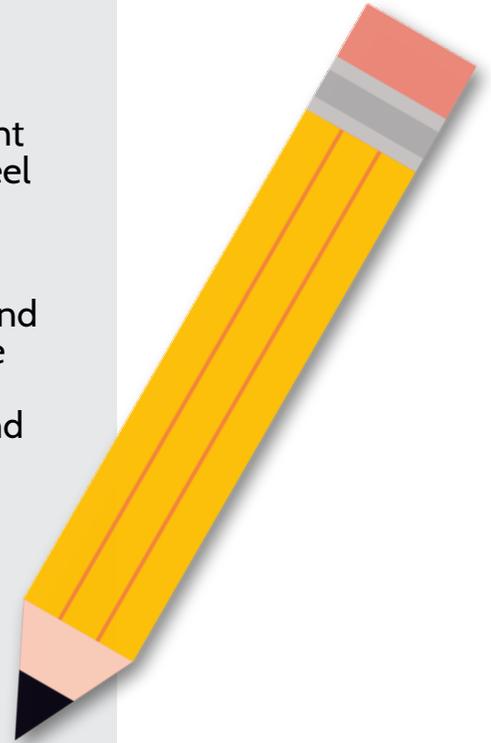


Why should you to take the time to write to your legislators?

Ultimately, representatives and senators are elected to represent their constituents. They need to know how their constituents feel about certain issues (such as retirement) when they make decisions that impact the people of Louisiana.

Although electronic communication (like email) is convenient and efficient, hand-written letters still have a significant impact. The more pieces of mail they receive, the more important the issue becomes. The letters become a visual representation of who and how many people their decisions affect.

In the past, LRTA has implemented successful letter-writing campaigns to urge legislators to oppose legislation that could have had detrimental impacts to the retirement system (such as hybrid plan bills) or support legislation that would benefit retired teachers and the retirement system. These campaigns were successful partly due to the sheer volume of letters legislators received from their constituents.



What should you say in your letter?

You should always include the W's in your letter: **who, what, when, where and why**. They should understand who you are and where you from. This information helps them make a personal connection to you. But, they also want to get down to business: what are you contacting them about and why? You should be clear about the bill you are contacting them about and what action you want them to take. Then, explain why you want to them to take that specific action. This is where you can use articles and research to back up your argument. LRTA shares these resources on their website, lta.net/articles. See the next page for more tips from LRTA on writing letters to your legislators.

Whom do I send the letter to? How do I get their contact information?

This will depend on the type of bill and where the bill is at in the legislative process. If the bill is still in committee, you should contact the committee members.

Legislators' contact information is available on the Legislature's website: LRTA will also specify which legislators to contact and their contact information when appropriate.

HOW TO WRITE TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

5 STEPS

- 1 ADDRESS** - properly and respectfully address the legislator.
For example: "Dear Representative Smith," or "Greetings Senator Doe."
- 2 INTRODUCE YOURSELF** - include a little information about yourself to make a personal connection with the legislator.
For example: "I taught in ABC Parish for 32 years," or "I grew up and taught kindergarten in XYZ Parish."
- 3 SPECIFICALLY ASK THEM TO TAKE ACTION** - this should be a direct, brief statement. Make sure to include the bill number and author.
For example: "I am writing to ask you to oppose HB 000 by Rep. John Doe."
- 4 EXPLAIN WHY YOU WANT THEM TO TAKE THIS ACTION** - Use research to back up your argument. You can find the latest research and articles at lrta.net/articles.
- 5 BEFORE YOU END YOUR LETTER, MAKE SURE TO REITERATE WHAT ACTION YOU WOULD LIKE FOR THEM TO TAKE AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME AND CONSIDERATION OF THE MATTER.**

TIPS!

- Keep the letters brief (one page if possible).
- Sign your letter with your signature.
- Write the letter in your own words. Do not just fill in the blanks of the samples.
- Only address one bill per letter.

