

# How to Write to Your Legislator

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## Get the Name and Address for Your Legislator

You can find the names and addresses of the all the elected officials who represent you by going to this website:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/sections/representatives/myrepresentative.aspx>.

Just enter your street address and city in the boxes and click button that says “Find Your Elected Officials.” The first two people listed will be your representative and senator in the Florida Legislature.

Once you know your legislators’ names, you can find their email addresses here:

<http://floridafaf.org/legislature/contact-your-legislator/>.



## Plan Your Message

Whether you are writing a letter or an email, you should keep your message short and to the point. Limit your letters to one page and limit emails to four short paragraphs.

- The first paragraph of your message should clearly state the issue or concern about which you are writing.
- The second and third paragraphs should provide some specific examples of how the issue affects you or other people in their districts. As you explain why this issue is important to you, be sure to use simple words and avoid abbreviations and acronyms that may make it difficult for the legislator to understand your message.
- The fourth paragraph should explain what you want your legislator to do about the issue.
- Close your message by thanking the legislator for their service and asking for a response.
- Sign your name.
- Include your address and phone number below your signature.

## Format Your Message

### ADDRESSING LETTERS

Include your name and address in the top left corner of the envelope.

Make sure to spell your legislator's name correctly and use the correct address.

**Address letters to representatives like this:**

The Honorable John Smith  
Florida House of Representatives  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

**Address letters to senators like this:**

Senator Jane Doe  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

**ADDRESSING EMAILS**

Make sure to enter the email address correctly and enter the topic you are writing about in the **subject field**.

**USING A PROPER GREETING**

Whether you are writing a letter or an email, your message should begin with a proper greeting. If you are writing to a representative, begin with "Dear Representative" and then their last name followed by a colon. For example:

Dear Representative Smith:

If you are writing to a senator, begin with "Dear Senator" and then their last name followed by a colon. For example:

Dear Senator Doe:

**ADDITIONAL TIPS**

- You want your message to be polite and look professional.
- Avoid using words in all capital letters as this is like yelling at someone.
- Avoid colored paper or backgrounds, fancy fonts and colored inks; instead, use plain paper (or white backgrounds in emails) and basic fonts written in black ink.
- Letters should be neatly written or typed. If people can't read your writing, then your message won't be read or understood.
- Keep a copy of your email or letter so you can refer to it later when you follow-up with your legislator.

## SAMPLE LETTER

September 19, 2014

The Honorable John Smith  
Florida House of Representatives  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Smith:

I am writing to you today because I am very concerned about the lack of services for people in your district with developmental disabilities. There is not enough money set aside for the iBudget Waiver to provide services to everyone who needs them. More than 20,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities are on a waiting list to receive services and many of them have been waiting for more than 5 years.

For example, my neighbor, Mary, is an 88-year-old woman caring for her 48-year-old niece who has an intellectual disability. Mary's health is getting worse and she can't provide the supervision her niece needs anymore.

If her niece could get companion services through the iBudget waiver, she could continue to care for her at home; but, without services, she may soon have to send her niece to live in an institution at a much greater cost to taxpayers.

I think the Legislature should set aside more money to serve people on the iBudget Waiver Waitlist. It's the right thing to do for families and for Florida.

Thank you for your service to our community. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Jane Doe  
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Pensacola, FL 12345  
(850) 123-4567