

## Writing a Letter to Your Legislator

### Starting out

- 1) Consider the following questions: What change do you want to see? What message do you want to deliver? What, specifically, are you asking your legislators to do?
- 2) Do background research. Visit [www.FreeSpeechForPeople.org](http://www.FreeSpeechForPeople.org) and click on 'Resources' for more information. Also, for the latest news, visit the Free Speech For People Blog.
- 3) You might want to try and find out:
  - Statistics/Facts—has any relevant research been done which could support your case?
  - Who has done what. What actions have been taken by the government? By the opposition? By organizations who are passionate about the issue?
  - Any other interesting facts? Has there been a recent demonstration? Has the issue received any media attention?
- 4) Which politician? Make sure you address the letter to the right politician. Visit <http://www.votesmart.org> to find your legislators.

### Writing the Letter

#### *Language*

Use formal language but remember you are expressing your point of view, so phrases like 'I feel' and 'I want to see' are good to include.

#### *Be polite*

Being abusive or offensive won't do you any favors—you can be firm and state your case without being rude.

#### *Layout*

Contact details:

- Include your name and contact details in the top right-hand corner of the page
- Include their name and contact details underneath on the left-hand side of the page

Form of address:

- Dear Representative, Senator, Formal Title

### Introduction:

- State what the issue is
  - Example: I am concerned about the impact of the recent Supreme Court decision in Citizens United vs. FEC. Allowing corporations to spend unlimited amounts in our public elections jeopardizes our democracy.
- State what you want done about it
  - Example: To correct the damage the Supreme Court has done to the First Amendment, we need to pass a constitutional amendment of our own that puts people ahead of corporations.

### Body:

- Focus on two or three main points which support your view. Use examples from your research as evidence.

### Conclusion:

- Reiterate your view expressed in the introduction
- Pick one strong example from your letter to back up your point
- Ask for the politician to respond to your letter
- Conclude with a salutation, e.g. regards, yours sincerely