

Petitioning uses your collective voice as leverage for leaders to address issues of concern. It is an important way for citizens to communicate with their government. Your representatives work for you and it is their job to represent your interests. But they will not know how you want them to act on issues unless you express your opinion.

Petitioning is a process that starts with a formal letter identifying a position on an issue using evidence from credible sources and explanations on the effects on society. The formal letter needs to follow a business letter format that is adapted to accommodate the purpose of the petition and the formalities of government. Each number below is a component that needs to be included in the formal letter starting at the top of the letter and leaving a space between each component on the page. Each number is followed by guidelines that will help you be taken seriously when your petition is received.

1. Return address
  - a. Your name
  - b. Your address
  - c. Your city, state, and zip code
2. Date
  - a. The date it is being sent
3. Representative address
  - a. The Honorable (representative full name)
  - b. Their office address
  - c. Their office city, state, and zip code
4. Salutations
  - a. Dear (their title and last name),
5. Paragraph 1
  - a. Explain what you stand for as it pertains to the issue you are addressing
  - b. Identify the importance of the issue you want addressed
6. Paragraph 2
  - a. Provide specific information about how the issue affects you and/or others
  - b. Offer 2-3 arguments and/or statistics to support your position
7. Paragraph 3
  - a. Request that the recipient take some type of action, such as to provide a service, vote against a bill, or provide a response
  - b. Thank them for their time
8. Closing
  - a. Sincerely,
  - b. Your signature
  - c. Your name
9. Fundamentals
  - a. ALL your grammar and spelling should be correct
  - b. You should be using a varied sentence structure (do not use the first person "I" too much)
  - c. You should try to make the entire letter fit on one page

**Things to keep in mind when drafting your letter:**

- Make sure your recipient is in a position that can address your concerns
- Be brief and to the point
- Know your facts
- Be passionate and polite
- Make sure to use proper format