GI-Global Health Unit

**Letter to Congress about Global Health**

Now that we have completed the unit on global health issues, you are going to put what you learned into action. You will choose one of the global health issues we have covered and write a letter to your Congressional representative. Your letter will state your opinions about what should be done by the U.S. to help developing countries fight preventable diseases and save people (many of them children) from dying. As we know, many of these health issues have been eradicated or are easily preventable in technologically advanced and wealthier countries.

Follow these instructions to prepare your letter:

1. **Research if bills have already been created to address your global health issue**
2. Find out if members of Congress have any recent legislation that they have passed which is relevant to your health issue. To search for an issue, use the [Thomas Legislative Information System](http://thomas.loc.gov/). In the ‘**Search Bill Summary & Status’ box**, type the health issue you are interested in and click Search.
3. Read through the bills that are listed and see if there is one (or more) that you strongly support or feel could more strongly address your issue. If you can’t find any bills relevant to your issue, then your letter will not refer to a specific bill that has already been created.
4. **Keep it Simple**Your letter should address a single topic or issue. Typed, one-page letters are best. Write a three-paragraph letter structured like this:
5. Say why you are writing, what high school and class you are writing from, and who you are. If you want a response, you must include your name and address.
6. Provide more detail. Be factual not emotional. Provide specific rather than general information about how the topic affects you and others. Use specific information you learned in class to help make a strong argument for why the Congressman should support this cause. If a certain bill is involved, [cite the correct title or number](http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa020199.htm#Identifying) whenever possible.
7. Close by requesting the action you want taken: a vote for or against a bill, or change in general policy.
8. The best letters are courteous, to the point, and include specific supporting examples.

**For how to format letter, see next page:**

1. **Addressing Members of Congress**  
     
   **To Your Senator:**  
   The Honorable (full name)  
   (Room #) (Name) Senate Office Building  
   United States Senate  
   Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

**To Your Representative:**The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
  
Dear Representative:

The above addresses should be used in email messages, as well as those sent through the Postal Service.

1. **Finding Their Addresses**  
   Senate and House of Representatives

[U.S. Senators (web sites and mailing addresses)](https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

[Write Your U.S. Representative](https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml) (A service of the House that will assist you by identifying your Congressperson in the U.S. House of Representatives and providing contact information.)

1. **To Conclude**  
   Here are some key things you should always and never do in writing to your elected representatives.

**Always**

1. Be courteous and respectful without "gushing."
2. Clearly and simply state the purpose of your letter. If it's about a certain bill, [identify it correctly](http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa020199.htm#Identifying). If you need help in finding the number of a bill, use the [Thomas Legislative Information System](http://thomas.loc.gov/).
3. Say who you are. Anonymous letters go nowhere. Even in email, include your correct name, address, phone number and email address. If you don't include at least your name and address, you will not get a response.
4. State any professional credentials or personal experience you may have, especially those pertaining to the subject of your letter.
5. Keep your letter short -- one page is best.
6. Use specific examples or evidence to support your position.
7. State what it is you want done or recommend a course of action.
8. Thank the member for taking the time to read your letter.
9. PROOFREAD and make sure you have no grammatical errors. Have another student look over your letter before you send it in.

**Never**

* 1. Use vulgarity, profanity, or threats. The first two are just plain rude and the third one can get you a visit from the Secret Service. Simply stated, don't let your passion get in the way of making your point,
  2. Fail to include your name and address, even in email letters.
  3. Demand a response.

1. **Identifying Legislation**

If you intend to cite already existing legislation, cite these legislation identifiers when writing to members of Congress:

House Bills: **"H.R.**\_\_\_\_\_**"**  
House Resolutions: **"H.RES.**\_\_\_\_\_**"**  
House Joint Resolutions: **"H.J.RES.**\_\_\_\_\_**"**  
Senate Bills: **"S.**\_\_\_\_\_**"**  
Senate Resolutions: **"S.RES.**\_\_\_\_\_**"**  
Senate Joint Resolutions: **"S.J.RES.**\_\_\_\_\_**"**

1. EMAIL your letter to Mr. Sprintz so I can check it for content and double-check it for spelling/grammar.