

SCCS Tips on letter writing and organizing a letter writing campaign

Senator Paul Simon once said, "Anyone who sits down and writes a letter about hunger to their Member of Congress, literally has to be saving a life with that letter." Surely the same is true for child survival and child health.

Some helpful suggestions to remember when writing to members of Congress:

- **Mention** a specific issue and/or bill. Your letter will be more effective if it concentrates on a specific issue or a particular bill.
- **Be personal.** Express your heart-felt emotions as well as your knowledge or experience on the issue, whether it's from an adopted sibling or a trip abroad.
- **If possible, type your letter.** Make sure that you include your name and return address on the envelope and in the letter.
- **Be courteous, to the point, and include key information.** Use examples to support your position. If possible, relate to local issues using local statistics.
- **Address** only one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.
- **Ask** the Congressperson to respond to you with his or her opinion. Do not get discouraged if you do not get a response. Keep in mind that members of Congress are very busy. Your letter will be read. If they do not respond immediately, write again. You can even do this as a "letter-to-the-editor" of your local paper. Persistence will eventually pay off.
- **Ensure** that they receive the letter. When the legislation is in session, send your letter to the state house; out of session, use the district address.
- **Follow-up.** Make a quick call to confirm that they received the letter and thank the member again.

In a big letter writing campaign, the methods are slightly different. The aim is to get as many letters to the Congressmen as possible. You might want to have a ready-made letter that people can just sign, or you might want to have a suggested outline for writing a letter, including key facts. Encourage people to sign or write the letter on the spot, and provide pens, paper, envelopes and information about the issue.