



## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING OR EMAILING YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

**NOTE:** You should at all times refer to the person by their official title. Never call an elected official by their first name. (Example: "Greetings, Senator Adams" or "Good afternoon, Senator Adams" or "Dear Senator Adams.")

- **Make it personal.** These issues are not abstract. It is important that the legislator know how this directly affects you, your family, or people you know and care about. Legislators receive a lot of letters and emails so by making it personal, you make it stand out.
- **Get down to business quickly:** be brief, be direct, be simple and above all, be accurate. Do not philosophize. Know your topic and be prepared. Remember that your legislator hears many viewpoints. You want him/her to remember yours, so be factual.
- **Be friendly, be persuasive, be professional, and be courteous.** Do not belabor the point. Your role is to explain, inform and persuade. Do not threaten (such as saying I'll never vote for you again; an actual threat of harm will earn you a trip to jail).
- **Never make up a position** for Marriage Equality USA or give an answer to a question that you are not familiar with. Remember, the legislator is depending on you to give accurate information. If you don't know the answer to a question, do not guess. As a constituent, you are not expected to be an expert and to have every answer at your fingertips.
- **Always thank the legislator for his/her time** when concluding your letter/email.
- **Keep in mind** that many of the legislators have little or no direct knowledge or experience with LGBTQ issues or the bills that could affect the LGBTQ community.

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### Sample Letter/Email Supporting Marriage Equality

Dear [Senator, Representative, Assembly Member, etc.] [Last Name]:

I am a constituent of yours and I am writing to urge you to support the freedom to marry for same-sex couples, like (insert partner's name) and me, to marry the person they love and to protect our families. (Insert partner's name) and I have been together (X) years, we have (Y) children. We have lived and worked in (insert name of town) for (Z) years.

[Insert personal story on how this issue does / will affect you and / or the people you love.]

We believe that ALL loving and committed couples in (insert name of state, commonwealth, or territory) deserve the freedom to marry, and our families deserve the protections and recognition that marriage provides. Marriage makes families healthy, protects children, and makes our society stronger.

We hope you will help make (insert name of state, commonwealth, or territory) a safe, fair, and healthy place for ALL families by voting against this constitutional ban on marriage equality.

Sincerely,

Insert Full Name and Address