

Contact Your MLA! An Activists' Letter-Writing Toolkit

Brought to you by SEIU-West – Political Action & Education

The Political Action & Awareness Committee of SEIU-West encourages you to act on your right as a constituency member! While Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) tend to knock on your door or call you during election time that does not mean that once campaign season is over that their work of hearing your voice is done! SEIU-West wants to ensure that your representative hears your voice and that MLAs are held accountable each and every day.

We made a “quick links for writing your MLA” section on the SEIU West’s webpage, which will provide you with all the details you need in writing your MLA. But first, questions...

Q&A →

QUESTION #1: Who is my MLA?

A list of Saskatchewan’s MLAs are listed on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan’s website, listed here: <http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/>

QUESTION #2: Why should I write a letter to my MLA? Will this make any difference?

Writing publicly elected officials and expressing your concerns and/or suggestions in a professional and respectful way is a dominant and empowering tool to lobby your government as well as your employer – it is also a vital part of the democratic process. Writing a letter (as opposed to an email), makes a statement, especially when your SEIU-West brothers and sisters are also contributing to letter writing. MLAs tend to interpret one letter as an indication that at least ten other people feel the same way. Letter writing is another way to assert SEIU-West members’ message and to support your union’s campaigns. Our government and employers need to hear from a diversity of voices about the requirement to resolve issues swiftly and fairly.

QUESTION # 3: I don’t know how to write! What if I sound foolish?

Firstly, your voice is important so you should feel confident in your right to communicate with your MLA. Further, it doesn’t matter how you write it. It’s all about whether your message was informed and clear. SEIU-West is also providing a **template letter** that provides a guideline as to how the structure of your letter can be – this template is available on our website: www.seiuwest.ca The point is not to impress the MLA with details – keep it short and simple. The aim is to speak honestly and clearly about why there is an issue at hand.

QUESTION #4: How do I choose what to write about? I have a lot of concerns and/or suggestions for my MLA, can I choose more than one issue to write about?

Each letter should include only one issue. Again - short, simple, and to the point is the most effective way of not only writing a letter to your MLA, but also in succeeding. It is important to maintain focus otherwise you may end up losing sight of the original goal. Be sure to concentrate on one issue and once you have achieved your goal, you can move onto the next issue!

QUESTION #5: I have many concerns, but I'm not sure how to find the facts. What do I do?

Good question. It is so important to know the facts before you write your letter. SEIU-West is happy to supply you with some facts about issues we've noticed the government has not been attentive in solving. On our website (www.seiuwest.ca), we have a 'grading the government' section which highlights important social justice concerns for the province of Saskatchewan. They range from poverty to sustainably.

QUESTION # 6: How can I get my SEIU West brothers and sisters to join me in a letter writing campaign?

First off, great idea! The more individual letters sent, the more effective the letter writing campaign will be! It is helpful to organize an informal meet-up with your comrades at SEIU West in order to discuss shared concerns. You can choose a specific time and location to meet at work during lunch for example - tell interested attendees to bring a bag lunch! SEIU-West has also provided a **poster template** available at www.seiuwest.ca to post on your union bulletin board where you can set up a MLA letter writing meet-up.

Materials You Need To Write Your MLA→

- Template letter
- Extra pens
- Paper
- Envelope
- Stamp
- MLA contact information *visit <http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/> to find your MLA site
- Fact sheets/research about the issue
- Preparation for a personal story