

CATHOLICS

CONFRONT

GLOBAL

POVERTY

WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LETTER TO YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Yes, snail mail is still one of most effective ways to communicate with your members of Congress and influence their policy decisions! Below are some tips to help you draft an effective and powerful letter.

Step 1: RELAX

- You don't have to be an expert on the issue. The fact that you care about the issue and the people impacted is enough.

Step 2: CREDENTIAL YOURSELF

- First and foremost, state that you are a constituent.
- List the organization that you represent or are a member of (i.e., parish and diocese, college or university, youth group, etc.).
- Let them know if you're a member of Catholics Confront Global Poverty, or CCGP, an initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services.

Step 3: KEEP IT SHORT

- Be concise, limiting your letter to one page if possible.
- After establishing yourself as a constituent, identify the issue you're concerned about. What do you want them to do? Why do you care about it?

Step 4: BE YOURSELF

- Be sure to state why this issue matters to you: Is your faith calling you to respond to this issue? Have you traveled or met someone impacted by this issue? Including a personal story makes your letter more compelling and helps it stand out.

Step 5: ASK

- What do you want your legislator to do? Be clear and specific; for example, "Vote yes in support of bill [name and number]."

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Use the appropriate address and salutation. See the sample letter.
- Be polite. Like most of us, members of Congress will respond better to positive communication.
- Write legibly if you're handwriting your letter!
- Proofread your letter for typos and other mistakes.
- Check the member's website and social media accounts to see where they stand on the issue.

JOIN US

1-866-608-5978
info@confrontglobalpoverty.org
confrontglobalpoverty.org

MAILING YOUR LETTER

Because of security procedures on Capitol Hill, we recommend that you mail your letter to your member's district office. You can easily find out your legislators' district office locations by visiting their websites, or house.gov and senate.gov.

SAMPLE LETTER

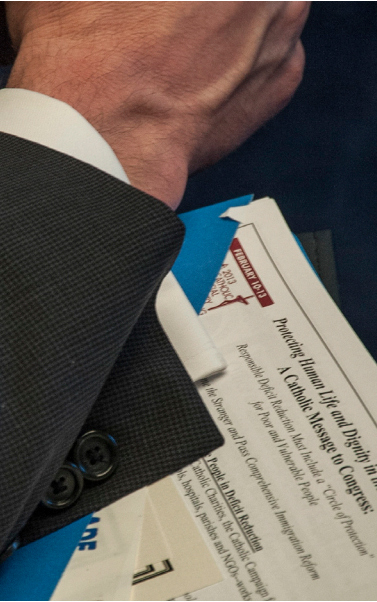


Photo by Karen Kasmauski
for CRS

The Honorable Jane Q. Smith
U.S. House of Representatives (or U.S. Senate)
Full Street Address — Line 1
Continued Street Address — Line 2
City, State and ZIP Code

Dear Representative (or Senator) Smith,

PARAGRAPH 1

My name is Maria, and I am writing because I am concerned about poverty and violence affecting our brothers and sisters overseas. My family and I were once refugees fleeing violence, and I know that innocent people suffer the most in times of war.

PARAGRAPH 2

I am a parishioner at St. Anthony de Padua Church in San Antonio, Texas, where I participate in various ministries to help local families in need.

PARAGRAPH 3

I ask you to support continued humanitarian assistance to suffering people, by supporting robust funding for international humanitarian accounts.

PARAGRAPH 4

This is an issue that's very important to others in my parish as well. We look forward to hearing back from you on this issue. Please know that Catholic Relief Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops can be a resource to you as you work on this issue in Congress.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Thank you for your attention to these issues. As a concerned citizen and a committed Catholic, I believe that we have an obligation to those who are suffering, whether they are our neighbors here at home, or our neighbors overseas.

Sincerely (or another closing remark),

Your Name

Your Return Address (this is how the member's office can determine that you're a constituent)

A partnership between the
United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops
and Catholic Relief Services

