



A GUIDE TO HOW TO REACH OUT TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

CONTENTS

03

TIPS FOR CONTACTING YOUR
LEGISLATORS

05

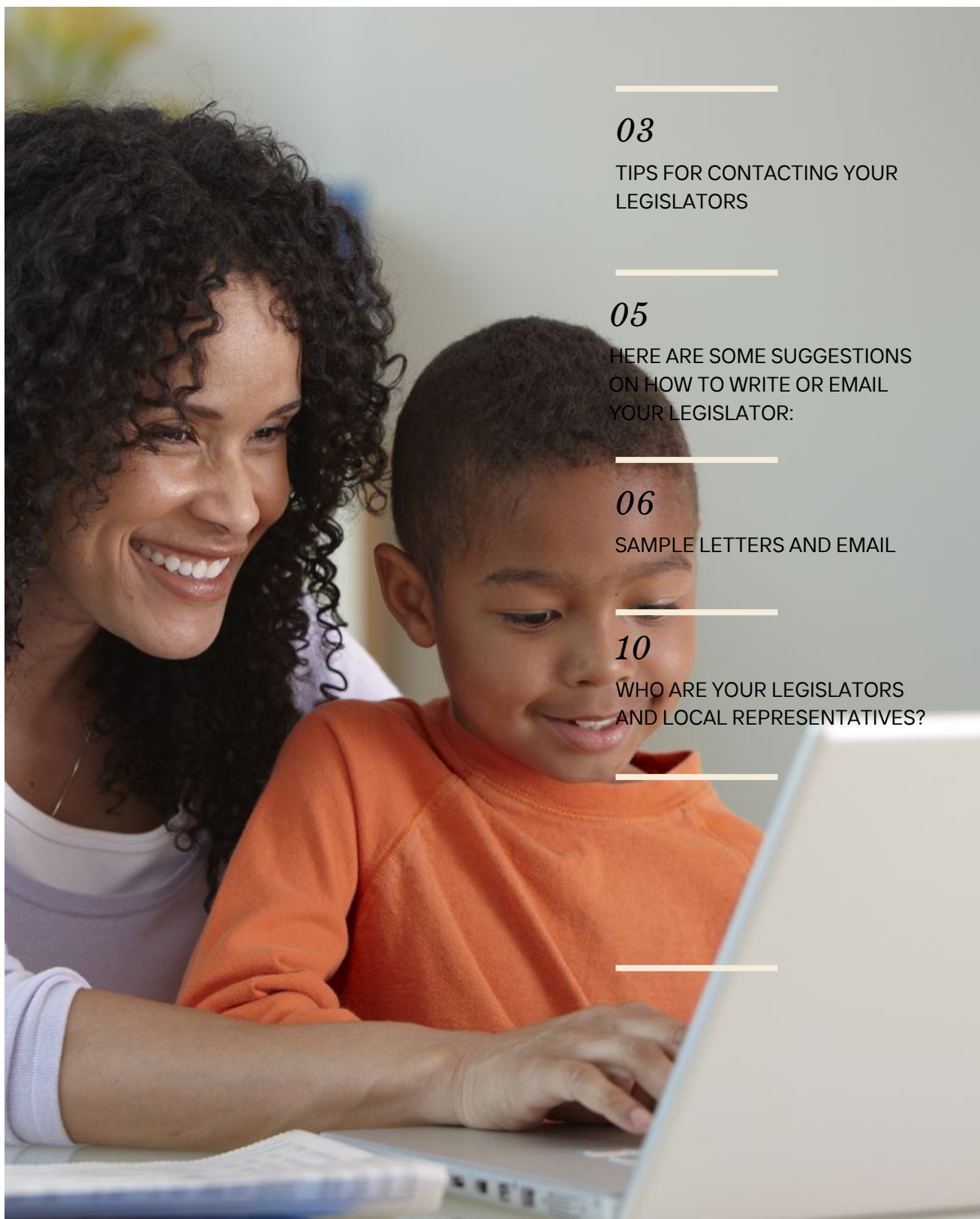
HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS
ON HOW TO WRITE OR EMAIL
YOUR LEGISLATOR:

06

SAMPLE LETTERS AND EMAIL

10

WHO ARE YOUR LEGISLATORS
AND LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES?





A GUIDE TO REACH OUT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

TIPS FOR CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATORS

- Please don't underestimate your influence: Legislators pay attention to the issues raised by voters in their communities, especially during an election year. The hometown connection is essential to getting a legislator's attention. Be sure you are registered to vote.
- Know your legislators: Before contacting your legislator, do a little homework. The North Carolina General Assembly website, www.ncleg.gov, is user-friendly and comprehensive. Look up your legislator's name, background, voting record, and committee assignments. You can also check bills' status, email legislators, and follow the legislative calendar. If you establish a relationship with your legislator, your letter or visit will have more impact than if you are a stranger.
- Remember the legislator's staff: Get to know the staff in your legislator's office. They often have more time to devote to your concerns and have considerable influence on the legislator. If you establish a relationship with your legislator and staff, your letter or visit will have more impact than if you are a stranger.

- Know your local officials: Legislators respond to the needs and desires of local officials. Ask local officials for their help in your advocacy efforts with your legislators. Find out who supports your issue and meet with others who share your common goal. Establish a unified position.
- Identify yourself as a constituent: Being a constituent is important, so always identify where you live and how you are connected to the community. Include your name, address, phone number, and email address in all correspondence.
- Know your opposition.
- Remember human nature: Legislators respond better to courtesy and appreciation. Legislators get more complaints than compliments. Flattering gets you more support for your position. Be polite, positive, and non-partisan.
- Invite your legislators or local officials to visit or join the PAC meetings. When legislators feel connected to your issues, they are more likely to offer support. Legislators appreciate interacting with their constituents, especially during an election year. Send a thank you after the visit, regardless of the outcome.
- If you can't answer a question, say so. Let your legislator know you will get the information and get back to them. This allows you to contact them again and reinforce your position. Always be honest – even if you think the truth will hurt you. Half-truths and withheld information may come back to haunt you. You have two invaluable things to offer – your expertise and your integrity.
- Gather support. Remember you are not alone: Expand your reach by asking other PAC's, family and friends, teachers, and healthcare providers to contact their legislators. Share the user-friendly website ww.ncleg.gov so they can identify the legislator in their districts and region.
- Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper. Get on a local radio or TV talk show. Hold a workshop.
- Leave a written position paper with the representative when you visit.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO WRITE OR EMAIL YOUR LEGISLATOR:

- Refrain from assuming you need to be an expert in legislative advocacy. You are the expert in knowing your child through lived experiences and what support you need for yourself and your family. Make contact with your legislator as a parent and a voter. Voice your concerns.
- Open up the letter by thanking the representative for other supportive efforts in the past. If they're new in their role, thank them for their commitment to public service. They are more likely to listen to you if you recognize their work.
- Tell your story. Your own story is the most persuasive message. Share your experiences and struggles, along with suggestions for solutions. Be positive and encouraging. Identify yourself as a constituent by including your name, address, phone number, and email address.
- Use your own words to express your message, not a form letter. If you are using a form letter, modify it to express your message in your own words.
- Address your letter properly. Elected representatives are addressed as "The Honorable" followed by their name.
- Send an email. Write short and frequent emails. Be brief and to the point. A rambling letter or email that takes up ten pages and never quite gets to the point will not be as persuasive as one that builds a case.
- Write them emails as if they were personal messages. Again, identify yourself in the email. To email a specific senator, use the following format: senator. (senator's last name) @senate.ca.gov Visit your legislator: <https://www.ncleg.gov/>
- Write legibly. Your letter doesn't have to be typed.
- Timing is critical. The best letter in the world won't have much impact if it arrives after your legislator has already voted on the bill.



SAMPLE LETTERS AND EMAIL

Make sure you tell your story. It's important for your message to have a BIG IMPACT, but stay brief and to the point. Try to keep the letter to one page. You can also use the letter text in an email.

This is your "ask."
You can insert
other issues
here: funding for
special education,
supportive
housing,
employment
supports, day
programs, etc.

Your street address
City, state, zip code
Phone number
date

The Honorable name
Address

Dear Representative/Senator last name,

On behalf of my child, my family and others with autism, I am writing to ask you to fund supports and services for people with I/DD, including autism, in the state's budget. Please ensure that the budget includes funding for increased Innovations waiver slots and single stream funds to the MCOs for those not getting other services.

These services are critical to my family and others in North Carolina with autism. [Give a brief description of the types of services you have and how they help. If you don't have services/supports, describe the challenges of that, and what it would mean if you did. If you are on a waiting list, mention the length of time.]

I realize that you are faced with many tough decisions as you prepare the state's budget. As someone who understand the challenges faced by those with autism, their families, I would urge you to invest in services and supports that ensure people can live in and contribute to their communities. Please let me know your position on making these investments in people with autism.

Sincerely,

Your name

This is where you
can talk about
your hopes for
the future: what
do you want life
to be like for you,
your child, your
family? Give some
examples.

Good afternoon Honorable Chuck Edwards,

I am writing to you from Marion County, NC. My daughter is 16 and has Cerebral Palsy. I am active in local advocacy to improve services for all of our children and youth and the often-forgotten adults with disabilities in our community.

I ask that you please help to widen and deepen the availability of much-needed services by voting to increase the pay rate of Direct Support Professionals to a minimum of \$18.00 per hour to ensure a sufficient direct care workforce, as well as to expand the number of slots for the Innovations Waiver, which enables home placement instead of institutionalization.

The Innovations Waiver has a 16,000-person waitlist, usually over ten years, to receive services, which places a significant burden on families and communities when caregivers cannot contribute to the workforce due to a lack of support for their children.

Direct Support Professionals should be considered as a career that can be developed from the community college level as well as part of a training process for those who want to go into a career in special education or specialized nursing.

Please support the disability community in promoting the legislation and budget changes that will sustain healthy and productive life.

Sincerely,

John Doe
555 Mulberry Lane
Hendersonville, NC 2000
828-555-5555



Good afternoon Honorable Chuck Edwards,

I am writing to you from Marion County, NC. My daughter is 16 and has Cerebral Palsy. I am active in local advocacy to improve services for all of our children and youth and the often-forgotten adults with disabilities in our community.

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Sincerely,

John Doe
555 Mulberry Lane
Hendersonville, NC 2000
828-555-5555

Dear Member of Congress:

Everyone should have access to mental health services they need, especially our youth. We urge you to address the crisis that our children are facing.

To effectively address the ongoing crisis in child and adolescent mental and behavioral health, a coordinated and sustained approach is necessary for the well-being of our country. Collaboration among federal agencies is also essential in establishing a comprehensive system of care to address mental and behavioral health needs for infants, children, and adolescents across the continuum. Specifically, they should include the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** Mental health services should be accessible to everyone who needs them, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.
- **Inclusivity:** Outreach programs should be inclusive of diverse communities, taking into account factors like language, culture, and identity.
- **Collaboration:** Mental health outreach efforts should be collaborative, involving a range of stakeholders, including mental health professionals, community organizations, and government agencies.
- **Evidence-based:** Outreach efforts should be grounded in evidence-based practices that are proven to be effective in supporting mental health.
- **Person-centered:** Mental health services should be tailored to meet the individual needs and preferences of each person, recognizing that mental health is a complex and multifaceted issue.

To truly ensure our children and families are able to get the treatment they need when they have mental health issues, we need your support. We urge you to take action to address the mental health crisis!

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Doe
444 Crow nest Lane
Polk, NC 55555

WHO ARE YOUR LEGISLATORS AND LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES?

You have many legislators. Federal legislators work in Washington, DC, as representatives or senators. State legislators serving Raleigh at the General Assembly decide about your autism services and support. You can find who represents you and their contact information at www.ncleg.net. Click on "Find Your Legislators" at the top. This page will inform you about all your federal and state elected officials. Put your address on each map to find your district number and the person representing that district.

- The North Carolina House of Representatives map is for your state legislators who are elected to the NC General Assembly's House.
- The North Carolina Senate map is for your state legislators who are elected to the NC General Assembly's Senate.
- The US House of Representatives map is for federal legislators elected to Congress in the House.
- The US senators who represent you in Congress can be found on the US Senate website: www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm?State=NC
- Your members of Congress have offices in Washington, DC, and North Carolina. Check with each member for ways to email them and find their local offices and mailing addresses.
- State legislators' Raleigh offices are either in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building.
- Three-digit office numbers such as "302" are in the Legislative Office Building.
- Four-digit offices such as "2206" are in the Legislative Building. (Your legislators also have offices in your local area; go to www.ncleg.net to find their local offices.)
- Following are the street addresses for the two buildings.

Legislative Building 300 N.
Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Legislative Office Building 16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

If you are writing to legislators' Raleigh offices, include the office number in the address and their name and chamber. Letters to House members are addressed to the "House of Representatives," and letters to Senate members to the "NC Senate."

Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301
Phone: (919) 733-4240
Fax: (919) 733-21

REPRESENTATIVE JAKE JOHNSON (REP)

House Deputy Majority Whip
Republican - District 113
Henderson, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford

Legislative Office:

300 N. Salisbury Street, Rm. 306B1

Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

919-715-4466

Mailing Address:

300 N. Salisbury Street, Rm. 306B1

Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Terms in House:

2.5 (0 in Senate)

Occupation:

Real Estate

Main Phone:

919-715-4466

Member's Email:

Jake.Johnson@ncleg.gov

Legislative Assistant:

Megan Kluttz

Website:

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Members/Biography/H/762>

SENATOR TIMOTHY D. MOFFITT (REP)

Republican - District 48

Henderson, Polk, Rutherford

Mailing Address:

16 West Jones Street, Rm. 2111

Raleigh, NC 27601

Terms in Senate:

1 (3+ in House)

Office Phone:

(919) 733-5745

Member's Email:

Tim.Moffitt@ncleg.gov

Legislative Assistant:

Dina Moffitt

-

Webpage:

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Members/Biography/S/438>

Form of Government in Polk County

Tommy Melton – Chairman

Paul (Little)- Vice Chairman

David Moore- Commissioner

Andre Overholt- Commissioner

Myron Yoder- Commissioner

Public Information Requests contact :

Kristy Tipton - Clerk to the Board

828-894-3301 ext. 239

For more information:

https://www.polknc.gov/commissioners/your_commissioners/index.php#.Um5hrIO5jPk

County Manager

D. Marche Pittman

County Manager

Contact us

(828)894-3301

-

For more information:

https://www.polknc.gov/county_manager.php

Congressman Chuck Edwards (Republican)- 11th

Congressional District

1505 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515-3311

Phone: 202-225-6401 (Washington DC office)

200 North Grove Street, Suite 121

Hendersonville, NC 28792

Phone: 828-435-7310

Contact: through website-

<https://edwards.house.gov/>