

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Gun Violence Prevention Action Team**

Pick-and-Choose List for the Drafting of a Personal Letter/Email to an Elected Official

Communication that is submitted electronically needn't contain the same degree of formality in the heading, and the official's web site will typically provide a form that one may readily complete. If a physical letter is prepared, its heading may be constructed as follows:

Date
Name
Address
Email address (optional)
Phone Number (optional)

The Honorable _____

Pennsylvania

PA House of Representatives, 155th District
Becky Corbin (717) 783-2520
52A East Wing PO Box 202155
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2155
bcorbin@pahousegop.com

PA House of Representatives, 157th District
Warren Kampf (717) 260-6166
153B East Wing PO Box 202157
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2157
repkampf.com/contact.aspx

PA Senate, 19th District
Andrew Dinniman (717) 787-5709
Senate Box 203019
Room: 182 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3019
andy@pasenate.com

Federal

U.S. House of Representatives, 6th District
Ryan Costello (202) 225-4315
326 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
<https://costello.house.gov/contact/email>

U.S. Senate
Pat Toomey (202) 224-4254
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
<https://www.toomey.senate.gov/?p=contact>

U.S. Senate
Bob Casey
(202) 224-6324
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
<https://www.casey.senate.gov/contact>

Dear Representative _____ - or - Dear Senator _____

The main message is best stated as concisely as possible, but it is helpful to start the letter with some personal information. Individually crafted appeals are known to carry more weight than form letters. The paragraphs of a letter are not normally numbered: the numbers below are provided to organize this guide, not your letter. The "bullet points" express a variety of viewpoints and are offered as guidance as you write your letter or email.

1. Introduction and Statement Expressing Your Concern

My name is _____ and I live in _____. I am very concerned about

- "gun" violence in our country;
- the safety of our children in school;
- the safety of my neighborhood;
- other - ;

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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2. Personal Statement (if applicable, support with facts)

- Share how recent (or past) events have affected you and your family;
- Share the number children/grandchildren that you have and their circumstances;
- Provide an example of a specific event in your life or community;
- Share your vision for the conditions that the citizens (especially the youth) of Pennsylvania and the U.S. deserve to have in order to thrive as individuals and together;
- Other;

3. What you see as key objectives

Examples (pick-and-choose or add: the list below is meant to cover a wide range of positions – express *your* viewpoint – the team is NOT telling you what to say or write); Again, these are examples only:

- “A gun, when used against people, can exact terrible suffering for the victims of violence. Therefore we need laws for the acquisition and use of guns”;
- “We should be working to strengthen gun laws, not weaken them”;
- “We should apply a reasonable interpretation of the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution of the United States”;
- “We need to keep guns out of the hands of irresponsible and troubled people”;
- “We must balance the right of gun ownership with the right of everyone to public safety”;

4. What you are asking your legislator to do; these, also, are examples, and cover a range of viewpoints – convey yours !

- “I would like you to stand up for common sense gun laws”;
- “I would like you to put my family’s safety ahead of the goals of the lobbying organizations that are driven by extreme idealism or the pursuit of profit”;
- “I urge you to support legislation that imposes severe consequences on those who circumvent, or attempt to circumvent existing laws and regulations regarding the purchase and use of firearms”;
- “I believe that we must enact a ban on ALL enhancements to firearms that enable the operator to fire more rapidly and to do so with fewer interruptions (reloads). The right to keep and bear items such as ‘bump stocks’ and high-capacity magazines is not protected by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution”;
- “Every school should provide physical security at its entrances;
- I support the posting of armed, specially trained ‘resource officers’ at every school”;
- “The well-documented, and much publicly-discussed ‘loopholes’ in our laws governing background checks for the purchase of firearms must be closed NOW”;
- “As a long-time defender of the Second Amendment, you have great credibility with hunters and other gun enthusiasts; I urge you to use that credibility to dispel the myth of the ‘slippery slope’ regarding reasonable measures concerning the types of guns citizens should have access to. Many hunters adamantly state that assault-style weapons, such as an AR-15 or AK-47 for example, serve no purpose in their pursuit of wild game”;
- “In addition to background checks, I favor mandatory training in the safe handling and storage of firearms as a prerequisite to receiving a permit to purchase a firearm. Several states have such a requirement; standardizing this across the country would be of substantial benefit”;

5. Sign off with your full name. If you provided your contact information at the start of the letter, as shown herein, you needn’t repeat it here, although your name, printed below the signature is helpful to the reader, especially if the signature is not easily deciphered.

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