

Taking action for what we believe

Contacting an elected official: Many people don't write or e-mail their elected officials because they find it intimidating, or wonder if it makes any difference. Yet, if we don't do so, our point of view will be undercounted. *The solution:* A simple 4-6 sentence note, written in 5 or 10 minutes. Begin by asking yourself what approach might be helpful to your particular member of Congress (e.g. thanking them for past leadership). Early on state what you want your elected official to do. Then add several sentences with your reasons and perhaps a statistic. In your last sentence restate what you want and ask for a response. If you get inspired and write more, fine. Here are two examples of letters to elected officials of varying points of view.

Sample letters on hunger

Dear Representative Jones,

The continuing Iraq War and Middle East conflict remind us that military options have grave limits in solving conflicts. Thus, I was dismayed to see the Administration and Congress considering tens of billions in new funding to the military, but very little new money for the International Affairs programs that address extreme poverty and hunger in the world, key underlying causes of conflict.

I hope that you will work to cut funding for military spending and expand programs that reduce violence in the world. Specifically: increase poverty-related development aid by at least \$5 billion and pass the Global Poverty Act (S. 2433). Thank you for listening. I'd appreciate a reply on what you're doing about these concerns

Your constituent,
Mary Q. Public

Dear Senator Smith,

Members of our church are discussing this year's federal budget proposal. I was disturbed to find that Congress is again proposing to spend 100 times as much on military solutions to conflict as on all the various US programs that address hunger and extreme poverty – root causes of much violence.

I would like to see you work to cut military spending in areas that don't really add to our security. Please work to increase funding by at least \$5 billion for programs addressing hunger and extreme poverty – root causes of conflict – and to pass the Global Poverty Act (S. 2433) to better coordinate those programs.

I look forward to hearing about your efforts in these areas.

Sincerely yours,
John Q. Citizen

Make the most of your letter: Send it to a local newspaper, too! Newspapers publish letters in part by how many they receive on a particular issue. Even if your letter isn't chosen it can help another one from the same point of view get printed – encouraging readers to learn more and take action. LPF would also be happy to see what you come up with: lpf@ecunet.org 1710 11th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122-2420.

For further information, see: www.lutheranpeace.org www.lutheranpeace.blogspot.com 4-08 lpf