**Tips on Writing to a Member of Congress**

A letter or email is the most popular choice of communication when contacting a congressional office. Every Member of Congress has an email address and a website. To find information about your Congressman/Congresswoman, follow the link [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), click on “Representative” and for your Senator [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). Information about sending an email or a letter is available on each Member’s website.

- Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter or email. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H.R. ____ , Senate bill: S ____.
- Be courteous, to the point, and include key information, using examples to support your position.
- Address only one issue in each letter or email; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.

**Addressing Correspondence:**

- **To a Senator:**
  The Honorable (Full Name)  
  United States Senate  
  Washington, DC  20510  
  Dear Senator  [Last Name]:

- **To a Representative:**
  The Honorable (Full Name)  
  House of Representatives  
  Washington DC  20515  
  Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms.  [Last Name]:

**Note:** When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as:

Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman: or Dear Mr. Speaker:

AANP has letters on our Advocacy Center that address the issues facing nurse practitioners, i.e., Home Health, DME and Veterans Affairs. We encourage you to utilize this resource and personalize these letters to your Member of Congress. It is important to note that email is the best way to communicate with your elected officials. Letters sent through the US Mail can take weeks to get to Congressional offices.

**Tips on Writing to a New Member of Congress:**

When addressing correspondence to a recently elected member of Congress who has not been sworn in yet, it is proper to address them as:

- **To a Senator:**
  The Honorable (Full Name)  
  Senator-elect  
  United States Senate  
  Washington, DC  20510  
  Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms.  [Last Name]:

- **To a Representative:**
  The Honorable (Full Name)  
  Representative-elect  
  House of Representatives  
  Washington, DC  20515  
  Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms.  [Last Name]:
**Tips on Telephoning Congress:**
The phone numbers of the offices of your senators and representatives are available on their websites. You can also call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your senators’ and/or representative’s office.

- Telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member, not the Member of Congress. Identify yourself as a constituent, and state your name, your hometown and the issue about which you wish to comment. Always be polite in your tone and language, and do not assume that the person initially taking your call is familiar with the issue you are calling to discuss.

- If transferred to the Health LA (legislative assistant), or if you are placed into the staffer’s voicemail, reintroduce yourself and identify the topic you are calling to discuss. If you are instructed to leave a message with the receptionist, repeat your name and continue with the message that you wish to deliver.

  “My name is ________, I am a nurse practitioner from ________, and I would like to speak with the Health LA about a piece of legislation that pertains to NPs.”

- Make a few brief points as to why the issue is of concern to you, your community, and the nation and why the Member should take action. You may want to use written notes to help you stay on topic and remain clear while articulating your message.

- Be clear about what you are asking the Member to do (e.g., cosponsor a particular bill).

- Keep your call brief, unless the staffer asks you questions and seems engaged in the discussion. Offer to send additional or follow-up information to the staffer and request their preferred mode of communication (e.g., email address).

- Thank the staffer for his/her time and indicate that you appreciate his/her willingness to listen and record your comments. Be sure to record the name of the staffer and the day and time you spoke, so you can have it for future use and in the case you need to follow-up. It is important to keep in touch with the offices of your Member of Congress to establish a relationship with the Member and his/her staff and make yourself available as a resource.