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**Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee**

**Effective letter writing**

People often wonder if it’s really worth the effort to write a letter or email to their Member of Parliament or Senator. This especially the case if the response they receive seems like a standard response, or doesn’t really respond to the questions raised.

It’s very important that people write letters or emails – they are read by the Parliamentarian’s Office, and if in government, also by the relevant department.

It’s your letter to a Parliamentarian that matters, not the response you receive.

Correspondence to Parliamentarians in Government are logged, and usually counted, so the department can say with some confidence what issues the public is concerned about.

Here are some suggested tips to get you started:

1. Keep it short and simple, stay with one topic (or highlight the intersections of topics).
2. Paragraph 1: share who you are and why you are writing. Include your professional or life experience credentials – for example: ‘As a parent with children in public school…’ or ‘ As a small business owner…’
3. Paragraph 2: The issue you are concerned about and the action you want taken. Alternatively you might want to thank the Parliamentarian for an action they are taking and explain why it matters to you.
4. Para 3: Stay with one topic and highlight a few main points. Most importantly, include how the issue affects you, your family or your community. Your personal story is more moving than you may think. Provide specific, rather than general information, about how the topic impacts your life and others you know. **Ask a question or request an action.**
5. Paragraph 4: In closing, re-state what it is that you want done and thank the Parliamentarian for taking the time to read your letter and say that you ‘look forward to their response’.