Women March @ Home
Letter to Your Representative
Activity

Use these directions to learn more about who represents you in local and state government, and write a letter to a representative about an issue you care about.

Materials:
● Internet access
● a notebook
  (a few sheets of loose paper or a computer also works)
● a writing implement
  (pencil, pen, etc. or a computer also works)

There are many layers of government in the United States. There is one Federal and 50 State governments.

Federal government is charged by the Constitution with governing national concerns for the whole country and its headquarters are in Washington D.C.. It is governed by Congress, the President, and the Federal judicial system.

State government is in charge of New York concerns its headquarters are in Albany, headed by a governor, state legislature and state courts.

Local governments in New York State include the governments of counties, cities, towns, and villages. Your town or city mayor is an example of a local government official.

Most Americans have more daily contact with their state and local governments than with the federal government. Police departments, libraries, and schools, public transportation, waste collection, and housing usually fall under the oversight of state and local governments.

In this activity, you’ll explore who your particular elected officials and representatives are, learn more about who does what in different jobs, and write a letter to a representative about an issue you care about.
Women March @ Home
Letter to Your Representative
Activity

Instructions:

1. Take a look at the website here if you live in New York City and here if you live elsewhere to find out who your local, state, and federal representatives are by typing in your address.

2. On the My Representatives Fact Sheet, write down the name of the State, City or Town and County you live in.

3. Explore the people who work in your local, state, and federal governments.
   a. Who are your mayor, governor, and U.S. Senators? Record their names on the My Representatives Fact Sheet
   b. What are the people in those jobs responsible for?

4. Choose a person who represents you at any level of government and do some research into what their office is all about. Many of them have websites! Some questions you might consider are:
   a. What are they responsible for?
   b. Who elects them?
   c. What is one of their greatest accomplishments?
   Record three pieces of information you found out on the My Representatives Fact Sheet.

5. Think about an issue you care about that affects you and your community. It could be something small that affects you on a local level like trash pickup in your neighborhood or something larger on a state or country-wide level like access to high-quality Education or LGBTQ+ youth safety throughout the U.S.

6. Choose a representative to contact about your chosen issue. They can be the one you researched already or a different official who deals more directly with the issue you care about.

   Elected officials rely on the people they represent to tell them how they should vote and what issues they should work on during their term in
Women March @ Home
Letter to Your Representative
Activity

office. Kids included! One of the best ways to tell elected officials what
community issue you care about is to write them a letter.

7. Record their address on the My Representatives Fact Sheet. Some
websites will provide a mailing address where you can mail a letter and
others will provide an email address so that you can email your message. It
is your choice how you want to contact them.

8. Using the template on page 5 of this document, write a letter to your
chosen representative. Make sure to use your own words to describe why
you believe your chosen issue is important and how it affects you and your
community. You can copy and paste the template or handwrite your letter.
Feel free to make it your own and alter the template to best fit your
message.

9. Send it in! Mail or email your letter to your chosen representative and
encourage your friends and family to write in too!
   a. Discuss your letter with a member of your family--why is this issue
      important to you? How can you be part of the solution?
   b. What are other issues you care about and what other representatives
can you contact to share your concerns? Your voice matters!
Women March @ Home
Letter to Your Representative
Activity

My Representatives Fact Sheet

I live in ______________________ State

I live in ______________________ City or Town

I live in ______________________ County

My mayor is ______________________

My State Governor is ______________________

My U.S. Senators are ______________________ and ______________________

The representative I chose is to learn more about is: ______________________

Three things I learned about them:

1. ______________________
2. ______________________
3. ______________________

Address of my chosen representative (email or mailing address):

____________________________________________
____________________________________________
____________________________________________
Women March @ Home
Letter to Your Representative Activity

Letter Template

Here is a sample letter that can help you write your own letter to an elected official. You can fill in the blanks where you see words in [brackets]:

Dear [Mayor/Representative/Senator/Governor] [NAME],

My name is [NAME] and I am a student at [SCHOOL] in [TOWN/CITY]. I live at [ADDRESS] in [TOWN/CITY]. I am writing to you today because I am concerned about [ISSUE]. This is an issue that affects me, my family, and my community because [HOW IT AFFECTS YOU]. I believe that this issue is important because [WHY IT IS IMPORTANT]. I hope that you can help me find a solution to this problem in our community, and I hope that you will consider bringing this issue to our [TOWN/CITY COUNCIL/STATE LEGISLATURE/CONGRESS].

Thank you very much for your attention to this issue. With your help, I believe that we can find a solution.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Letter template adapted from http://kidgovernor.org/