**Letter of Concern to a Government Official**

Writing or emailing a letter of concern to a government official provides students an opportunity to express their opinions and reactions about a current issue. This writing strategy will prepare students to participate as a concerned citizen on public issues.

Instructions:

1. Discuss issues that concern local, state or national levels
2. Review the student samples and discuss the format
3. Students pre-write their ideas and share with their groups or with the whole class
4. Students write their letters of concern
5. Using peer review, students strengthen their letters, examining conventions and format

Writing Format for Students:

**Opening Paragraph:**

Identify the focus of your letter in a way that makes the reader want to read on.

**Body Paragraphs:**

In each paragraph of the letter, cover one main point related to your issue, including specific facts, statistics and examples that support the paragraph’s main point. Also include steps you want government officials to take. Start a new paragraph whenever there is a shift in your ideas or emphasis.

**Concluding Paragraph:**

Summarize your main points and remind officials of the actions you want taken.

**Resources:**

Websites to use for finding the official you want to write to:

US House of Reps: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> (type in your zipcode)

US Senators (IL): Mark Kirk (<http://www.kirk.senate.gov/?p=offices>) and Dick Durbin (http://www.durbin.senate.gov/contact/)

State legislators:

<http://il--nea.capwiz.com/nea/il/directory/statedir.tt?state=IL&lvl=state&action=myreps_form> (type in your zipcode)

***VISUAL FORMAT:***

Your Address

Date

Title of Person

Their Address

Dear:

**Paragraph 1:**

Introduce yourself and then start your introduction with your focus idea/issue of concern

**Paragraph 2:**

Additional paragraph with specifics to support your ideas

**Paragraph 3:**

Additional paragraph with specifics to support your ideas or proposed solutions (if needed)

**Paragraph 4:**

Additional paragraph with specifics to support your ideas or proposed solutions (if needed)

**Paragraph 5:**

A conclusion summarizes the main points that your letter was making and thanking them for their time

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name