

Correspondence Samples

Sample EMail

Subject Line: SAY NO TO: TAKS, STAAR & End of Course Exams

Body of Email:

Congressman (or Senator) Doe,

As a concerned parent and member of your district, I strongly support stopping the use of one-time, high-stakes, standardized tests to assess students, teachers and school districts. The state could save hundreds of millions of dollars by stoping this practice. Assessments should be fluid and take in to consideration the whole child. It should measure growth over the child's entire education and should be used as a tool to personalize education, set up growth goals and strengthen the student-teacher learning relationship. A child's year should never be based on one test on one day.

Thank you for your service to our district. I look forward to seeing you step up as a leader on this issue.

Name

Address

email

Sample Phone Conversation

Staff Member: Thank you for calling Congressman (or Senator) Smith's office, how may I help you?

Caller: Hello, My name is _____ (your name) from _____ (City and State) and I am calling on behalf of the Plano PTAs.

Staff Member: Wonderful, what can I do for you?

Caller: As a concerned member of the Congressman's (or Senator's) district, I support leaving it up to school districts to decide which courses in their curriculum fit into 4x4, giving districts more freedom to personalize each child's educational experience while maintaining high standards. Will the Congressman (or Senator) support this as well? (Feel free to insert any helpful information you might have at this time, along with why it is of concern to the member of Congress's constituents. But remember, be brief!)

Staff Member: Congressman (or Senator) Smith feels ... Thank you for sharing your concerns with us, I will relay your comments on to the member of Congress.

Caller: Thank you, have a great day.

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Things to Remember when Corresponding with Your Members of Congress

- 1 Always be polite and courteous. Members of Congress and their legislative staff are considerably less likely to respond to rude or profane letters.
- 2 Be concise. Remember that each congressional office has dozens of legislative issues to cover and hundreds of constituent requests each day.
- 3 Include your home or work address in every letter, even in e-mails. Letters and e-mail with no return address are likely to be disregarded.
- 4 Thank the member of Congress for taking the time to read your letter.
- 5 Remember that correspondence with any elected official is about building an ongoing relationship and persuading them to think of you as a resource. Even if an elected official does not agree with your point of view on an issue today, they might in the future.

Faxing and Emailing is Faster than Snail Mailing

Faxes and emails are an effective form of communication when advocating a Congressional office. Due to the heightened security measures on Capitol Hill, a letter can take between two and four weeks to reach a Congressional office. However, if you fax or email that same letter, the office will receive it immediately. This is especially important when what you are advocating for is time sensitive; the best example of this is when you are asking the member of Congress to vote a certain way on an upcoming bill. If you mailed the letter, they would likely receive it long after the vote has passed.

When you are faxing a letter to your congressional office, as with other forms of communication, remember to be concise. A staff member is not likely to read a four page letter in its entirety, but a straight-to-the-point three paragraph letter will prove to be very effective.

E-mailing a member of Congress is an especially easy and concise way to communicate with their office. Some e-mails can be as short as a single paragraph urging your member of Congress to vote a certain way or to advocate for a certain issue. Because they will only see your message on a computer screen and not in physical form like they would a faxed letter, make sure the important information contained in your e-mail jumps out at them. You can do this by putting what action you are requesting they take in the subject line (ex: YES on H.R. 3). By doing this, even if the member or his/her staff does not take the time to you read your letter in its entirety, they will still have received the message that one of their constituents feels a certain way about an issue. By using PTA Takes Action Center you can email your members of Congress directly, using a PTA action alert on current legislative issues affecting the education, health and wellbeing of our children.

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Sample Letter (Best to Fax Letter)

The Honorable (full name)
(Capitol Office #)
Capitol Address
Capitol Phone
Capitol Fax

Dear Representative (insert name):

As a member of the Texas and Plano Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and your constituent, I would like to encourage you to listen to and work with local School Board members and school Superintendents before making budgets cuts to education. Our school administrators understand all to well what economic position our state is in this year. School administrators are in the best position to know where cuts and adjustments can be made without affecting our children's education. Administrators from across the state have already begun working together to come up with solutions that will work for all districts. As a parent, voter and tax payer in Texas and your district, I urge you to listen to those in education when making budget decisions regarding the education of our children.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns and for your continued service to our district. I look forward to seeing you make the best decisions for our children regarding education funding.

Sincerely:
(Insert name and address, optional email)