



How to Write Your Legislator

Communicating with your elected official is a crucial part of the democratic process. SVdP Georgia wants legislators to consider SVdP to be a trusted source of information and data about poverty in Georgia and its impact on the people we serve. Building this relationship is done in a variety of ways including regular correspondence between Vincentians and their legislators.

Helpful tips:

- While it may be tempting to send out a mass e-mail or letter to all members of the legislature, only the members who represent your district will respond to what you have to say.
- Always be polite and courteous.
- Emails are the most effective form of communication especially for time sensitive communications. Email addresses are readily available on legislator's websites in the contact tab.
- Be as concise as possible and include the action you want her/him to take in the subject line (ex. Vote yes on HB101). One to three paragraphs is sufficient.
- The first paragraph should explain who you are (a constituent), why you are writing, and your connection to SVdP.
- The second paragraph should include any relevant local data and a personal story from your work with SVdP that illustrate the extent of the problem.
- The third paragraph should indicate what action you would like taken.
- Never include attachments. They will not be opened. Everything should be in the body of the email.
- Include your home or work address in every letter, even in e-mails.
- Thank your legislator for taking the time to read your letter.
- Remember that you are trying to build a relationship. Your official may not agree with you on an issue today, but they might in the future.

Sample email:

To: Representative Susan Cox

Re: Vote YES on HB101 The Medicaid Expansion Act

As a resident of your district, I am writing to ask you to vote YES for HB101, The Medicaid Expansion Act. As a volunteer with St. Vincent de Paul, I am committed to helping those struggling to be self -sufficient.

Through SVdP I have been working to assist Tom, who was recently evicted from his home in your district. This neighbor in need is unable to pay his rent because of the huge amount of medical debt he incurred after being diagnosed with cancer. Although Tom works two jobs, he does not receive health benefits at either job. Because of the cost, he had not seen a doctor in over 5 years and did not have routine cancer screening. Sadly, once his cancer was diagnosed, it was very advanced and very expensive to treat.

I was shocked to learn that Tom's situation is not uncommon as nearly half a million Georgians work without health benefits and do not qualify for ACA subsidies because they make too much to qualify for Medicaid and too little to qualify for the ACA. This is literally a matter of life and death as there are many hard- working people like Tom in Georgia who are foregoing preventative screenings due to cost. The Medicaid Expansion would have provided preventative screenings and have paid for Tom's cancer treatment.

Please Vote YES next Tuesday. Thank you for your time, and consideration of this request.

Jane Smith

10 Apple Lane

Roswell, Georgia 30076