**Writing a letter to your representative.**

Sometimes, getting policy that you support passed takes a little extra advocacy. Use this letter writing template to craft your own personal, message based letter to your representative to address the issues that you are facing as an afterschool professional, student or champion.

1. **Start with an introduction.**

Give the candidate a simple introduction. This is as easy as stating your name and one other fact, such as why you are attending the event.

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. **Give a short story.**

Giving a short story helps the candidate connect the question back to real life situations and gives more power and humanity to the question. This also tends to make them feel like they have to give their best answer because they want to win you over. Write a quick two or three sentence to tell a story related to the issue you would like to ask about.

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1. **Tie in the issue.**

This is where you would give a follow up to your story that tells how you first-hand have experience with the issue you are asking about. Again, this doesn’t need to be long, just a quick sentence or two statement.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Hard ask.**

This is where you flat out ask the candidate what they would do to help solve your problem. Do not offer them a solution, just ask the most basic question about the issue that you can and let them elaborate on it in their answer.

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1. **Put it all together.**

**1. Start with an introduction.**

Give the candidate a simple introduction. This is as easy as stating your name and one other fact, such as why you are attending the event.

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_Emilee Harris\_\_\_\_ and I am an afterschool advocate.

 **2. Give a short story.**

Giving a short story helps the candidate connect the question back to real life situations and gives more power and humanity to the question. This also tends to make them feel like they have to give their best answer because they want to win you over. Write a quick two or three sentence to tell a story related to the issue you would like to ask about.

In my professional life, I work with a team to serve afterschool programs from across the state by offering professional development and technical assistance, among many other things. The number one barrier we encounter in conversations with our network is the issue of funding. A lot of the before school, after school and summer programs across the state have a hard time making ends meet and struggle with staffing while also being able to offer impactful enrichment opportunities for students.

 **3. Tie in the issue.**

This is where you would give a follow up to your story that tells how you first-hand have experience with the issue you are asking about. Again, this doesn’t need to be long, just a quick sentence or two statement.

If provided with an adequate level of funding, afterschool programs will be able to provide Iowa’s youth with quality enrichment opportunities, further strengthening our students’ education. Every $1 investment into youth is proven to return $10 in the future, and by providing funds for our students to receive enrichment through afterschool programming we ensure a stronger workforce for the Iowa’s future.

 **4. Hard ask.**

This is where you flat out ask the candidate what they would do to help solve your problem. Do not offer them a solution, just ask the most basic question about the issue that you can and let them elaborate on it in their answer.

Can I expect your support in identifying additional state funding opportunities for afterschool this legislative session?

 **5. Put it all together.**

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_Emilee Harris\_\_\_\_ and I am an afterschool advocate. In my professional life, I work with a team to serve afterschool programs from across the state by offering professional development and technical assistance, among many other things. The number one barrier we encounter in conversations with our network is the issue of funding. A lot of the before school, after school and summer programs across the state have a hard time making ends meet and struggle with staffing while also being able to offer impactful enrichment opportunities for students. If provided with an adequate level of funding, afterschool programs will be able to provide Iowa’s youth with quality enrichment opportunities, further strengthening our students’ education. Every $1 investment into youth is proven to return $10 in the future, and by providing funds for our students to receive enrichment through afterschool programming we ensure a stronger workforce for the Iowa’s future. Can I expect your support in identifying additional state funding opportunities for afterschool this legislative session?