

3.4 Engage your local representative – letter writing to elected officials

Duration: 15 – 45 minutes

Number of people who can take part: no maximum

Learning objective: understand how local issues connect to politics and how to lobby and participate in democratic processes

Materials needed: paper, envelopes, and pens to write letters; a microphone and sound system if it's a large group; laptop, data projector and screen if relevant; seating; name placard for speaker(s)

Before your event:

1. Select and connect with your event speaker(s). Be specific on what theme/issue you'd like them to speak to at your event, and how it connects to an actionable item you can write to your Member of Parliament (MP) or other elected official about as well as how it connects to the work of the union. Find out if your speaker(s) has any technology requirements, for example a projector for a PowerPoint.
2. Decide who will introduce the speaker(s) and help with event tech, moderate a question and answer period after the talk, and walk participants through writing letters to their chosen elected official(s) afterwards.
3. Draft some questions to ask your speaker(s) after their talk, to guide your audience in discussion in case no one in the audience has questions.
4. Write name placard(s) for your speaker(s), to display as they are speaking.

At your event:

1. Welcome everyone and introduce your speaker(s).
2. Summarize the work of the union connected to the chosen topic.
3. Explain, briefly, why it's important for constituents to engage their elected officials on topics of importance to them.
4. Speaker(s) gives their talk.
5. Moderate a question and answer period, using some of your pre-written questions in case the audience is quiet.
6. Thank your speakers and invite them to participate in letter writing with the group.
7. Summarize the key points from the speakers that you'd like participants to mention in their letters to their chosen elected official.
8. Participants (and you!) write your letters to your chosen elected official.
9. Ask a handful of people to share with the group what they've written.

After your event:

1. Mail the letters to your chosen elected official – no postage required!