

Identify the Ohio senator or representative for where you live. Write a letter to one of them about an issue that you'd like for them to address. Don't just complain, but state the case for what your issue is, what they can do to improve on the situation, and why it's important to you.

Use standard business format. This makes it easy to read and shows you are serious.

Be specific. If you are writing about a bill that has been introduced, include the bill number and name (i.e. SB 199, the Debris Landfill bill) and, if possible, the names of the bill's main sponsor(s).

Keep it brief. Focus on one major point. If you attempt to tackle too many issues in one letter, your main point may be diluted or confused.

Back it up. If possible, provide a couple of brief, logical arguments as to why your legislator should support your position. If your local newspaper has editorialized in support of your issue, or community members have written letters to the editor supporting your position, clip the articles and include them. If the OEC has created a fact sheet about the issue, include it.

Make it local. Legislators are most interested in the impacts that bills will have in their districts. The more that you demonstrate that the issue will have a local impact, the more compelling your letter will be.

Make it personal. If you can tell a story about how this bill or issue will affect you or your family, be sure to include it. If you have personal stationary, use it. If you have neat handwriting, consider hand-writing the letter.

Ask for a specific action. Do more than state your position on an issue. Ask your elected official to do something that supports your position (i.e. support, oppose, or co-sponsor a bill).

Follow up. Keep track of whether or not your legislator supports your position. If he/she does, write an e-mail or note or call to say thanks. If not, call or write to ask why not and encourage them to support the issue down the road.

Sample letter:

Date

The Honorable

Office Address

Ohio House of Representatives/Ohio Senate

City, State, Zip

Dear Representative/Senator:

As you know, the looming changes to the Medicaid managed care (MCO) sales tax will cause a significant revenue shortfall for the state, counties and transit authorities. In 2016, this tax represented \$209 million (8.2%) of all county and transit authority sales tax collections.

The proposal included in Governor Kasich's FY2018/19 budget fully replaces the lost MCO sales tax revenue to the state for this budget cycle, but provides counties a one-time allocation that ranges from approximately 3 months to a year or more of the forgone revenue.

Permissive sales tax revenue represents over 50% of the county general revenue fund and is the lifeblood of important public safety and child protective services – two areas where needs are growing due to the opiate epidemic.

Counties value our partnership with the state, which allows us to administer programs that serve our collective constituents. However, the proposal included in the Governor's budget undermines the fiscal stability of county revenues.

Please see the resolution included with this letter, which calls for Ohio to develop a plan that provides equal treatment for the state and counties in the FY18/19 budget and encourages a long term solution for everyone who is affected.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Address