

## Letter Written to an Elected or Appointed Official

(points = 1)

Social justice is one of the core values on which the social work profession is based. “Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients.” (NASW Code of Ethics Preamble).

One way of addressing this value is to speak out about issues that affect clients and the social work profession. A letter to an elected or appointed official about a social policy issue can be powerful and effective. The NASW website is a valuable source of information on key legislation affecting our profession and our clients. The site also contains specific information on how to write an effective letter.

Information about advocacy can be found at:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/advocacy/default.asp>

### Summary of Assignment:

With the approval of your field instructor, an **original** letter written to an elected or appointed official on a social policy issue that affects the clients served by the field agency, can be counted as one of the field assignments.

Here are some things you might include in your letter:

- State your name, your role (e.g., a graduate student in social work at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee), and if you are a constituent of the legislator be sure to state that fact.
- Identify clearly the issue that you are writing about. It is always helpful to let the public official know why you are professionally and/or personally interested in this issue, and why this issue is important.
- Include a statement as to what you are asking of the elected official. For example, you might be asking them to:
  - support a particular bill
  - sign on as a co-sponsor
  - hold a public hearing
  - advocate for a particular matter
  - attend a function
- Invite the public official to get back to you to discuss this matter further, especially if you have expertise in a particular area, and that you would be available to / or welcome an opportunity to meet with the elected official to answer questions or to further clarify this issue. Include your contact information so the legislator knows how to contact you.
- Find your elected officials: <https://www.usa.gov/agencies>

**Note: You should not use agency letterhead or an agency email account for this assignment.**