



Committee Outreach Template Letter

How This Letter Can Be Used for Advocacy

This sample letter can be adapted and shared with committee members and legislative staff when legislation is being considered that would impose fines, penalties, arrests, incarceration, or other criminal sanctions on people experiencing homelessness. Customize the language to reflect your organization's experience, local data, and the specific bill under consideration.

Sample Committee Letter Opposing the Bill

Subject: Urgent: Vote No on H.B. 1662

Dear [Committee Member],

My name is [your name], and I am the [your role/title] of [organization/affiliation] in [city/location]. Since 2008, in partnership with the Housing Finance Agency, [organization/affiliation] has assisted in the development of over 2,000 units that serve chronically homeless individuals, families, and veterans, achieving a 90% housing stability rate.

Due to the success of this work, we know that arresting, detaining, and incarcerating individuals experiencing homelessness will not help and will only make matters worse. Therefore, I am writing to urge you to vote no on H.B. 1662 in the upcoming committee hearing.

H.B. 1662 threatens to undermine this progress by imposing a one-size-fits-all approach and diverting resources from effective, data-driven programs. Here are our key concerns:

[Insert a brief description of the local solution, program, funding proposal, or policy change you are advocating for as an alternative. Need ideas? You can also review CSH's template legislation and policy resources for examples of proven solutions that communities can advance.]

Reliance on Expensive Crisis Response Systems: The implementation of H.B. 1662 would necessitate significant reliance on expensive crisis response systems, including police, emergency medical services, detoxification centers, the court system, and jails. When individuals are released from these settings, they are often discharged back into homelessness, perpetuating a costly homeless-to-jail cycle. Cities and counties typically spend **\$6,875 less per person** by avoiding engagements with costly criminal and emergency response systems. These offsets can be reinvested in services and housing supports.



Policing is Counterproductive to Solving Homelessness: Arresting, detaining, and incarcerating individuals experiencing homelessness for non-violent, victimless crimes serve no public interest. It is a waste of taxpayer dollars and creates additional barriers for homeless individuals to secure employment and housing. It will have no impact on reducing the number of people or families experiencing homelessness.

Local Control and Fiscal Responsibility: Empowering local authorities to manage their own responses ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and that solutions are tailored to the unique needs of each community. Local leaders, with their in-depth knowledge of their communities, are best positioned to address these challenges effectively.

We acknowledge the pressure you are facing from constituents to help people who are sleeping outside, and we agree that more can be done. However, it is essential to recognize the importance of local control and fiscal responsibility in addressing homelessness.

We urge you to prioritize local autonomy and fiscal responsibility and to advance solutions that will actually reduce homelessness. Please vote no on H.B. 1662 to protect the progress that has been made and to support effective, evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[your role/title] at [organization/affiliation]

The sample above is intended to demonstrate structure and messaging. Adapt it to reflect local conditions, organizational expertise, and the specific legislation under consideration.

When to Use This Template

Committee hearings and committee votes are often the most influential stages of the legislative process. Committee staff and legislators review large volumes of information before deciding whether to advance, amend, or oppose legislation. This letter provides a concise, evidence-based summary of your organization's position and highlights the practical impacts of a bill on constituents, programs, systems, and public resources.



Use this letter:

- Prior to a committee hearing.
- Prior to a committee vote.
- When providing additional context that may not be included in formal testimony.
- To reinforce concerns or support for legislation after meetings with legislative offices.
- To share local expertise, data, and implementation considerations with committee members and staff.

Best Practices

- Keep the letter to one page whenever possible.
- Clearly state your position in the subject line and opening paragraph.
- Focus on 2-4 key arguments.
- Include local data, outcomes, or examples whenever available.
- Emphasize impacts on constituents, service systems, and public resources.
- Remain respectful and solution-oriented, even when opposing legislation.
- End with a clear request for action.

Where to Send the Letter

Who should receive the letter:

- The Committee Chair
- The Vice Chair (if applicable)
- Members of the committee
- Committee staff assigned to the committee
- Relevant legislative leadership like the Speaker of the House, Majority/ Minority Leader, etc. staff (when appropriate)
- Your organization's legislative contacts, lobbyists, or coalition partners, if applicable

When Should It Be Sent?

- Ideally **3-7 days before a committee hearing or vote**
- No later than **24 hours before the hearing or vote**
- After testimony is submitted, if additional information or clarification is needed
- Following meetings with legislators or staff to reinforce key points



How Should It Be Sent?

Email is the preferred method. When sending:

- Use a clear subject line to indicate why you are emailing them.
- Send the letter in the body of the email whenever possible.
- Attach a PDF version on organizational letterhead if available.
- Include your contact information and invite staff to follow up with questions.

Finding Committee Members and Contact Information

Many state legislative websites also allow users to sign up for committee notices, agendas, hearing schedules, and bill status alerts. These tools can help you identify outreach opportunities before hearings and votes occur.

To locate committee contacts:

1. Visit the state legislature's website.
2. Navigate to the "Committees" section.
3. Select the relevant committee.
4. Review the committee roster and member contact information.
5. Download or copy email addresses into your outreach list.

Messaging Considerations

The sample language in this resource is designed to be **non-partisan, solutions-focused, and broadly applicable across diverse political environments**, including states and communities where lawmakers may respond more strongly to messages about fiscal responsibility, local control, public safety, government efficiency, and evidence-based outcomes.

The examples intentionally avoid partisan framing and instead focus on:

- Cost-effective use of taxpayer resources
- Local decision-making and flexibility
- Evidence-based solutions
- Improved community outcomes
- Reducing homelessness through housing and services
- Public system efficiency and accountability

Advocates should review and adapt these messages to reflect local conditions, legislative priorities, and the preferences of policymakers in their state or community. Messaging that resonates in one state or district may require modification in another.



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