

Your voice matters.

Simply put, when elected leaders don't hear from you on issues that matter to you, they presume what they're doing is good enough. Write to let them know what may not be working and explain what you think is best for you and your community.

Best time to contact?

According to legislators we've talked with, the best time to contact an elected leader is outside of the legislative session in order to grab their full attention. This means setting up in-district meetings over the summer, making phone calls during a winter break, or sending out periodic letters or emails to touch base throughout the year.

Best way to contact?

Your elected officials have state provided email addresses. While email is an easy way to contact your legislators, it might not always be the best route to take. Consider getting creative and sending a handwritten or typed letter, mail a postcard or holiday card, or find a list of legislative twitter handles and push out your thoughts that way.

What if I don't hear from my elected official?

Keep track of your letters, emails, and posts. Don't give up. Chances are, they are getting your messages. They might even be getting multiple notes on the same issue. Keep calling, keep writing, and make it a point to call out that you haven't heard from them. (i.e. Dear Senator, I emailed you on January 20th and February 2nd but haven't heard from you. I would really appreciate your feedback on this issue. I will follow up again next week if I don't hear from you.
-Adam, District 15 Constituent)

SAMPLE LETTERS

Please add in your own information in the red spaces and edit as you see fit. This is just a launching point.

Hi [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name],

Hoping this note finds you well. My name is [name] and I am writing you today to touch base ahead of the 2020 South Dakota Legislative Session.

Last year, South Dakota lawmakers attempted to pass several anti-LGBTQ+ laws, all of which were noticed by local and national media outlets. Each bill proposed was thankfully stopped, but the damage is done. It is no surprise that LGBTQ+ people and their families oftentimes don't feel welcome here. In fact, many end up moving out of state to find their communities.

I'm writing to ask that we do better in 2020, and rise up to defend our LGBTQ+ and two-spirit peers. Thank you for your time and your service to South Dakota. Safe travels to and from Pierre. I will be in touch again.

--

Thank you,

[NAME]

Pronouns: [insert here]

C: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Address

This letter would be great to send to any lawmaker.

Good afternoon [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name]. I hope this note finds you well.

I am writing you today to draw attention to LGBTQ+ and two-spirit issues in South Dakota.

Being a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I worry about the anti-LGBTQ+ and two-spirit rhetoric that permeates within the halls of our capital. I hope that by writing you today I can address a few things to set the stage for 2020 and beyond.

It is unsettling to hear baseless and harmful testimony, like that of Florence Thompson in 2019. She says she is a registered lobbyist and claims that LGBTQ+ people are “indoctrinating children” in pre-K programs. My gut tells me that each of you would agree that this is false, and stand by the notion that honesty is the best policy when it comes to the law. I hope you take this to heart when creating laws in our state.

I am proud to live in South Dakota. However, I am profoundly ashamed to see our state's reputation tarnished time and time again by bills like House Bill 1108, 1205, and 1225 in 2019 and House Bill 1008 in 2016. As your [District number] constituent, I hope you do what you can to stop anti-LGTBQ+ legislation -- rise up to defend the people you were elected to represent.

Thank you for your time and your service to South Dakota. Safe travels to and from Pierre. I will be in touch again.

--

Thank you,

[NAME]

Pronouns: [insert here]

C: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Address

This letter would be great to send to a lawmaker you know has supported anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in the past.

Hello [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name],

Hoping this note finds you warm and well on this chilly January evening.

I'm writing you today to first thank you for running for elected office in South Dakota. Your time given to the Legislature is admirable, and it is truly great to see people like yourself dedicate time to our communities.

Secondly, I wanted to share a few things as one of your constituents. With the pending legislative session in mind, I hope you take time to consider my thoughts.

In the past, you have supported bills that could adversely affect LGBTQ+ South Dakotans. Bills like [Bill number] and [Bill number] aren't what South Dakotans want. In fact, they simply do more harm than good. It is woefully disheartening to see people like yourself who are elected to office support legislation that is offensive and discriminatory.

Being an LGBTQ+ South Dakotan in your district, I hope you look at and consider my point of view. I share this concern with over 20,000 self-identified LGBTQ+ South Dakotan adults.

I also encourage you to attend events like Black Hills Pride or Sioux Falls Pride, which welcome thousands of people to our communities. Take these free events as opportunities to get to know LGBTQ+ people and their families who you represent.

Thank you for your time, [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name].

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Thank you,

[NAME]

Pronouns: [insert here]

C: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Address

This letter would be great to send to a lawmaker you know has helped stop anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in the past.

Hello [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name],

Hoping this note finds you warm and well on this chilly January evening.

I'm writing you today to thank you for running for elected office in South Dakota. Your time given to the Legislature is admirable, and it is truly great to see people like yourself dedicate time to our communities.

Secondly, I wanted to share a few things as one of your constituents. With the pending legislative session in mind, I hope you take time to consider my thoughts.

In the past, you have helped stop bills that could adversely affect LGBTQ+ South Dakotans. Bills like [Bill number] and [Bill number] aren't what South Dakotans want. In fact, they simply do more harm than good. It is comforting to see elected officials like yourself help defeat legislation that is offensive and discriminatory.

Being an LGBTQ+ South Dakotan in your district, I appreciate the fact that your support.

In addition to being our ally in the Capitol, I encourage you to attend events like Pierre Area Pride Festival, Black Hills Pride, or Sioux Falls Pride outside of legislative session. Take these free events as opportunities to get to know LGBTQ+ people and their families who you represent even better.

Thank you, [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name].

[NAME]

Pronouns: [insert here]

C: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Address

This letter would be great to send to a lawmaker who you voted for that might not be acting the way you thought they would.

Hello [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name],

My name is [Name] and I'm a constituent in your district. On Election Day, I was glad to vote for you. When you were campaigning, I thought I could trust you to defend the well-being of people in our district. Sadly, I've been regretting that choice and feel a little duped.

In 2019, you voted to pass [Bill number], which clearly took aim at LGBTQ+ people and their families. Being an LGBTQ+ person in your district, I am woefully disappointed and hurt by your choice to do this. In 2020, I hope you consider the human toll of laws you're voting to pass.

Thank you for your time, [YOUR Legislator/Elected official's name].

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Thank you,

[NAME]

Pronouns: [insert here]

C: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Address