

QUICK TIPS ON LETTERS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- 1) It is best to keep the letter short, to the point, and polite.
- 2) Thank the official for any past efforts they have done on behalf of your program/after-school issues (for example, if they signed the letter to the Governor mentioned above).
- 3) Personalize the letter with specific references to your program or any personal interactions you have had with the official (for example, if you met them at some event or at the program site).
- 4) Handwritten letters are even better than typed, as they show they came from someone who has taken the time and effort to contact them.
- 5) Letters from youth and parents are especially effective.
- 6) Give your address and phone number for follow-up contact and to show the official you are one of their constituents.

SAMPLE LETTER TO ELECTED OFFICIALS

Dear Governor Blagojevich: ***OR*** Dear Senator [*your state senator's name here*]:
OR Dear Representative [*your state representative's name here*]:

I write you on behalf of the Teen REACH after-school program that helps families and young people across the state of Illinois.

If we want to keep our kids safe and improve learning, social, and healthy development, we need to increase our investment in this quality out-of-school time program, not cut it. Our community desperately needs the \$2.6 million restored to this program that were cut in the Governor's proposed FY06 budget.

The proposed cuts in Teen REACH would devastate programs across the state, turning young people out into the streets, at risk to crime and other risky choices. The Teen REACH program has proven to be effective in helping our youth make the right choices and in helping families and actually saves the state funds by keeping youth out of trouble. This program should be expanded, not cut.

The Teen REACH after-school program is an essential part of the prevention services of our community. It is aimed at preventing teen pregnancy, alcohol and other drug use and teen violence. Teen REACH is working in communities across the state by providing quality youth development programs during the hours after school lets out and before parents are home from work, forming essential support for workforce development. Last year Teen REACH served more than 32,000 children and teens at 269 sites—important progress of which we can be proud, but still far short of meeting the need. Under this budget, far fewer will be served unless we restore the funds.

These are essential services and must be maintained. This program needs your support now.

Sincerely,

Jane/Joe Doe

[INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER]