

How to Lobby From Your Kitchen Table



A Guide to Making Your Voice Heard for Your Family, Community, State and Nation

Since 1979, Concerned Women for America (CWA) has been working to protect and promote Biblical values among all citizens—first through prayer, then education and finally by influencing our society—thereby reversing the decline in moral values in our nation. But that work requires the involvement of many concerned citizens like you. As a Christian, you are in a strategic position to help return this nation to sound moral principles. How? By lobbying from your own home, or even your kitchen table.

To lobby simply means to promote or secure the passage of legislation by influencing public officials. Many special interest groups have full-time lobbyists in Washington, D.C. They are paid to present that group’s views to senators and representatives and to ask for their votes on key legislation.

But there is no more influential lobbyist to a senator or representative than the voter back home. So right from your own kitchen table you, too, can be a lobbyist—and it is as easy as writing or calling your local, state and national government officials. You can have a tremendous influence on our nation if you will only take the time to make your voice heard.

Edmund Burke once said, “all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” That applies to good women, too. If liberal leaders and activists do not speak for you on important issues like abortion and family rights, then you must speak up for yourself. Let’s look at how easy it really is.

As a kitchen-table lobbyist, it is important that you are well informed in order to be effective. Simply by reading your local newspaper and other news publications, you will be able to educate yourself on many of the critical issues of the day.

To help keep you informed, Concerned Women for America provides e-alerts (<https://secure.cwfa.org/cwfa/subscribe.aspx>), an up to the minute update on legislation on which we

need for you to take action. CWA also offers “On the Horizon,” a weekly article that gives a review of the legislation CWA is currently working on as well as the buzz on Capitol Hill about it. On our Website (www.cwfa.org) there are a variety of papers, [brochures](#), [pamphlets](#), [recent articles](#), [books](#) and more to help keep you educated on the issues. To enhance your letter, you may wish to include copies of articles that support your position. (Link to brochures and pamphlets at <http://www.cwfa.org/brochures/index.asp>, link to recent articles at <http://www.cwfa.org/recentarchive.asp>, and link to books at [With these tools, you will be well educated and able to give an informed opinion on any issue. Then it is up to you to express your opinion to your elected representatives.](http://www.shopcwfa.org/categorylist.asp?myMode=2&c=491262%3ANew+Releases&cid=488636&c1=CWFA+Online+Store&stc=488636&smc=491262&sbc=.)</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Once you’re informed on the issues, all it takes are writing materials or a computer and postage stamps. Or you may communicate through CWA’s Web site. This provides information on current issues (<http://cwfa.capwiz.com/cwfa/issues/?style=D&>) that need your quick response. You may simply fill in your name and other information and then click “send” to get your message on its way to your legislators, the President or the appropriate official. Now you are a kitchen-table lobbyist!

How to Write Your Legislators

The letters you write are very significant. Many legislators believe that your one letter represents the views of at least 100 other voters who did not take the time to express their opinion.

Your senators or representative may not see your letter personally. But you can be sure that a legislative assistant is carefully reading the mail to learn what the voters back home are thinking. Here are a few tips to remember when you write:

Be Informed

Get your facts straight. Quote experts on the topic or use actual news clippings to help prove your point.

Be Specific

State the specific issue that concerns you and, if possible, include the bill number and/or title.

Be Polite

You should be firm, but courteous. Anger and sarcasm will not win any points with your reader.

Be Original

The letter you write yourself is the most effective. But if you have time to send only a form letter, petition or pre-printed postcard, do that.

Make it Easy to Read

Typed letters are best, but handwritten letters are acceptable. Write as neatly as possible.

Ask for an Answer

You'll be surprised how fast you'll get a letter back! Ask your legislator to state his views on an issue, and ask how he intends to vote.

Be Brief

Cover only one topic and try to keep your letter to only one page.

Say Thanks

Most people write only when they disagree with the way their legislator votes. It's important to let him know you appreciate a favorable vote, too. Legislators appreciate encouragement!

Don't Preach

Remember, you want to influence your legislator's vote, not convert him to your religion.

When to Write

Just before a key vote, your legislator will receive a flood of mail. Your letter will be worth much more if you write as soon as a bill is introduced, then follow up your letter before the vote.

How to Address Your Letters

Use the addresses below when you write your senator or representatives:

The Honorable (first and last name)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable (first and last name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Use the salutation "Dear Senator (last name)" or "Dear Representative (last name)." You will find the names and addresses of state and local officials at www.cwfa.org/legislation, your public library or through your local voter registration office.

How to Write Letters to the Editor

Another powerful way to speak out on current issues is to write a letter to the editor. Often this is the only way to get a Christian viewpoint into print.

Letters to the editor in both newspapers and magazines are well read. You can have a lasting impact in both your community and the nation with a well-written letter to the editor. Here are some tips that will help when you write:

Follow the printed guidelines of the newspaper or newsmagazine

Most publications will not print letters longer than 250 words. Keep in mind that the editor may cut some of your letter. State your point as briefly as possible.

Avoid hysteria and name calling

If you write a letter in the heat of anger, you may be red-faced when you see it in print.

Cover only one topic

Make your letter simple and direct, and be sure of your facts. Use short quotes to support your viewpoint. Also, if you are writing in response to a specific article you read in the newspaper or magazine, be sure to note it. Editors are more likely to print those letters that refer to articles from their publication.

Sign your name and give Your phone number

Most editors refuse to publish anonymous letters and will usually call to verify that you are the author of the letter. Some may even require your address.

Write while the issue is hot

Your letter will have the greatest impact if you respond within one or two days.

Becoming a Part of CWA

To even have a greater impact, you can become a part of Concerned Women for America by sending in a \$25 donation to the address on this brochure or by calling 800-458-8797. Once you've joined, CWA provides numerous opportunities for involvement.

“Project 535”

One of CWA's most effective programs is “Project 535,” which is designed to be the family's direct link to the 535 members of Congress. It trains CWA members to act as liaisons to legislators. A “Project 535” Home District Liaison is assigned to her U.S. representative or one of her U.S. senators to keep in touch with his office in his home district. She will provide him with data and information regarding CWA's positions.

CWA members who live in, or are able to travel to the Washington, D.C. area, serve as volunteer “535” Capitol Hill Liaisons. They assist CWA's national office in its monthly lobbying projects, distributing information to the congressional offices before key votes, and alerting

each home district when action is needed.

Action in the states is initiated from the national office, as the “Project 535” Home District Liaisons distribute lobbying reports to their respective State Directors. These women then contact their Prayer/Action Chapter members who pray and take action by calling or writing their legislators.

CWA also provides opportunities for involvement on the [state and local levels](#). These volunteer positions include:

State or Area Director - represents CWA and coordinates activities within her area or state.

Steering Committee - serves as a support network for the State Director. Each member performs a specific function such as communications, record keeping or legislative activity.

Prayer/Action Chapter Leader - plans and oversees Prayer/Action chapter meetings where concerned Americans gather regularly to pray for state and national leaders and the issues they face – and then take action.

Home Team Captain - communicates by fax, e-mail or telephone chains to a team of activists to generate a quick response to legislative developments. Whatever the issue, you can have an impact in your community. The opportunities are numerous.

If you would like to join [“Project 535”](#), the CWA leadership in your state, or want to attend a chapter, contact your CWA State Director. See our Web site listings at www.cwfa.org/states. Or call the [Field Department](#) in our national office at 800-458-8797.



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