



AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

## **TIPS FOR ADVOCATES ON WRITING LETTERS**

**BE BRIEF** – Boil your message down to one page or less and attach any detailed information, charts, etc. on separate sheets.

**BE DIRECT** – Tell the elected official what action you want him/her to take, such as introduce legislation, cosponsor a bill, vote for (or against) a bill in committee, or on the floor. Ask him/her to respond to your letter. Be sure to include your address and phone number.

**BE CIVIL** – Don't threaten, insult, wisecrack or name call.

**DON'T OVERDO IT** – Don't write too often. Make your letters timely so your legislator can take positive action to help.

**PERSONALIZE** – Use your own words. You don't need to type the letter – handwritten letters are very effective if you have legible handwriting. Avoid form letters and postcards.

**FOCUS ON ONE ISSUE** – Your letter will have the most impact if you speak out on one issue at a time.

**HAVE THE FACTS** – The more facts you know, the better. Refer to legislation by title or number. Cite experts to back up your arguments.

**COMPLIMENT** – Elected officials are human and like to be recognized and thanked for their work. Always write a thank you note if the elected official does what you ask.

**REMEMBER – ON ANY ONE ISSUE, EVEN A FEW LETTERS CAN HAVE AN IMPACT. EVEN ONE LETTER, WITH A CLEAR-CUT PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT CAN BE A DECISIVE FACTOR!**