Make Your Voice Heard

In this story, you learned about how Congress is the branch of government that directly represents the people. As members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate get to work, let them know what issues they should fight for. Do you want them to address gun violence? Does your school need more funding? Tell them! Follow these four simple steps to write a persuasive letter or email to a legislator from your state about an issue you care about—and make your voice heard!

STEP 1: Introduction
First, think of an issue that you’re passionate about and choose a lawmaker from your state to contact. (It could be a federal, state, or local legislator.) Begin your letter by saying who you are. Then summarize the issue and explain why you care about this topic. Remember to address your letter to a specific legislator, followed by a colon (:).

EXAMPLE:
Dear _______________________________________

My name is ____________________________________, and I’m a _____-grader at _______________________.

I care about ___________________________________ because ____________________________________________

STEP 2: Find facts that support your point of view.
What information might convince this lawmaker to agree with you? Look for facts from reliable sources, including Junior Scholastic, books, and websites ending in .gov or .org. Choose the three strongest points that best support your position.

EXAMPLE: Did you know that ____________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

STEP 3: Ask for specific changes.
Seeking specific changes related to the issue can make a legislator more likely to act. For example, if you are worried about concussions in youth football, you could ask a legislator to introduce a bill banning tackle football for kids. Then explain the difference it would make.

EXAMPLE: As a legislator, you can help by ____________________________. That would make a big impact because ____________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

STEP 4: Edit
Using your notes above, write your letter on a separate sheet of paper. Have someone read it over and suggest any improvements. When you're done revising, mail or email your finished letter to the legislator.