

# The Two Minute Letter

Here are some ideas for a good letter to Congress. Try to write using your own words.

**1) Put your name and address at the end of your letter AND on the envelope.**

*Members of Congress want to know that you are one of the people they represent.*

**2) Ask for specific action from Congress** (Use these sentences or your own words)

The farm bill that came out of the House of Representatives did not address the inequities of the commodity payment system. **Make sure the Senate version of the farm bill**

- **reforms farm commodity payments to provide more fairness to struggling family farmers in the U.S. & in developing countries**
- **includes significant improvements to nutrition, rural development and conservation.**

**3) Give a reason** (Say something about your motivation and/or state a fact. Choose from the list below or share your own reason)

- Current farm programs are designed to reward those who grow the most, concentrating payments among the largest producers.
- Our current farm policy has encouraged overproduction of a few crops, helping to keep prices artificially low and hurting farmers in our country and in poor countries.
- Many farmers would like to participate in conservation programs that reward good land stewardship, but cannot take part due to lack of funding in the programs.
- Some of the country's poorest areas are in rural America, where 1 out of 5 children are at risk of being hungry.
- By strengthening rural development programs, we can help struggling communities and generate much needed jobs.
- In the United States, 35 million people live in families that struggle to put food on the table. The Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against hunger in the U.S., but more families should be eligible, and benefits must be increased (food stamps now = \$1/person/meal).

## Sample Letter

Dear Sen. \_\_\_\_\_ ,

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am disappointed that the House of Representatives did not create a farm bill that truly addresses the inequities of the farm commodity payment system. The Senate can do better! Please do everything in your power to ensure that the Senate's version of the farm bill reforms farm commodity payments to provide more fairness to struggling family farmers here in the U.S. and in the poorest parts of the world. It should also include significant improvements to nutrition, rural development, and conservation.

These reforms are important because commodity payments have been structured to help the largest producers of a few crops, at the expense of other farmers and other programs. Meanwhile, rural poverty is high and growing, as is hunger throughout the United States. We need to change these priorities!

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Address

**4) Send your letter to Congress.** Put each letter in a separate envelope and address it. [Note: It will take 2-4 weeks for your letter to get to Congress, but that's okay. It will make an important difference for hungry people and struggling rural communities]. *Send your letter to:*

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510