

How to Write to Members of the House of Lords on Pro-Life Issues

As a grassroots campaigning organisation, SPUC's great strength is in our network of supporters up and down the country. Our power lies in the mass of our supporters lobbying politicians at once. While the focus is most often on MPs, bills or amendments on life issues may arise in the House of Lords, or legislation passed in the Commons passes to the Lords, making it important to engage with Peers. This briefing explains how to write letters to Peers, with tips to make them as effective as possible. On our website, you can also find briefings on how to write to MPs and MSPs.

WHAT IS THE HOUSE OF LORDS?

The House of Lords is the upper house of the British Parliament at Westminster. Unlike MPs who are elected, Members of the House of Lords (also called Peers) are appointed to the role for life. The House of Lords currently consists of The Lords Spiritual (Church of England Bishops), 92 hereditary Peers, and Peers nominated by the Prime Minister under the Life Peerages Act of 1958. Life Peers come from all walks of life, and may or may not have a political background.

The House of Lords scrutinises legislation, holds the government to account, and considers and reports upon public policy. Peers may also seek to introduce legislation or propose amendments to bills. All bills introduced in the House of Commons also must pass through the Lords. Peers cannot reject Bills that fulfill a manifesto pledge, or those involving taxation or expenditures. As abortion and assisted suicide have traditionally been treated as matters of conscience, these limitations do not tend to apply. Lords therefore have the power to amend or reject legislation on these matters, even if approved by the House of Commons.

WHO DO I WRITE TO?

Unlike with MPs, you are not represented by particular Peers in the House of Lords. Therefore, you can write to as many Peers as you are able to. But, with hundreds of Peers, how do you choose which Peers to write to?

If you can, do some research on Peers. Many will have their own website, and you can also search Hansard (the record of parliamentary debates) online to see the issues that Peers have spoken on.

Here are some further suggestions:

YOUR FORMER MP

Many former MPs are appointed to the House of Lords. If a former MP of yours is now a Peer, this is a great reason to select them to contact.

PERSONAL CONNECTION

Is there a member of the House of Lords who attended your school or is from your hometown, or works in the same field as you? These kinds of personal links can make connecting with them in your letter easier.



Society for the **Protection**
of Unborn Children

SELECT COMMITTEES

Many Peers sit on Select Committees, small groups of members who meet outside the chamber and are appointed to consider specific policy areas. If a Peer sits on a particularly relevant select committee, then they would be worthwhile to write to.

SHOULD I WRITE OR EMAIL?

Emails are a good quick way to contact politicians, particularly if you are pushed for time and because there are so many Peers. However, it is not the best way, as emails do not have the same impact as a physical paper letter. Additionally, many members of the House of Lords do not have email addresses publicly available. Writing a physical paper letter is one of the most effective ways to be a pro-life influence on Peers. We have been told by politicians that as few as six letters on the same subject will be enough to get their attention.

For paper letters, the address is simply: [Name of Peer], House of Lords, London, SW1A 0PW.

SOME TIPS TO MAKE YOUR LETTER EFFECTIVE:

PERSONALIZATION MATTERS

For the greatest impact, write your letter in your own words. Politicians quickly spot copy-and-paste messages and value genuine, personal ones more. Use SPUC briefings for facts, but express them in your own way. You don't need to be eloquent—just be clear. A personal story makes your message even stronger.

GIVE THE WHY

If the Lords are reviewing Commons-passed legislation, explain why the Commons was wrong and why the Lords should block or amend it. SPUC will provide briefings to help.

REMEMBER...

You are the expert. Peers are not experts on every subject. They have their own favourite topics and specific areas of interest; most will know relatively little about life issues until you tell them, especially on the nuances of particular policies or bills. They need to be educated, and on this issue, with the help of our briefing material, you are the expert.

Please send us any replies you get! Either post them to SPUC HQ or scan and email to news@spuc.org.uk.

CONCLUSION

Posted letters remain one of the most effective advocacy tools. Let's make our voices heard by engaging with members of the House of Lords through thoughtful and personalized correspondence. Thank you for your dedication to this worthy cause.

