**SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATORS**

Legislators receive many emails and letters from their constituents every day. Our Lupus Legislative Action Center provides template emails on specific issues we are advocating for and offers automated tools you can use to email your legislators directly. Or you can use our templates to guide your own handwritten personalized letters, which are the most influential.

If you develop your own, the following elements can make an email or letter most effective:

* State where you live to establish that you are their constituent
* State the purpose in the first paragraph
* Keep length short and to the point
* Refer to the number and year of the bill (e.g. H.R. 460, 2013-2014)
* Focus on one issue
* Describe the problem your request would help solve
* Support your points with examples and personal experience
* Include your name and contact information

Use the sample letter on the next page as a starting point to create your own personalized letter.

[Date]

The Honorable [Recipient's Name]

[Recipient's Address]

RE: Request Funding Support for the Nation's Science

Dear [Recipient's Title and Name]:

I live in [TOWN | STATE] and am one of your constituents. I ask that you please support increased funding to strengthen biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health.

I am writing on behalf of the millions worldwide suffering from the prototypical autoimmune disease lupus – a leading cause of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease among young women. Lupus strikes at random, attacking virtually any organ and tissue; too often people with lupus land in the ER and many must drop out of the workforce.

Like all your constituents with this type of debilitating chronic disease, people with lupus rely on the full continuum of biomedical research conducted by NIH, including basic research, translational studies and clinical trials. Only one treatment has been approved by the FDA specifically for lupus in nearly 60 years.

[ADD PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THAT ILLUSTRATE WHY CURRENT TREATMENTS ARE NOT ADEQUATE AND NEW TREATMENTS ARE NEEDED]

Funding by the private sector has delivered many important breakthroughs. But to turn innovation into treatments, we need a strong biomedical research enterprise led by NIH. Please consider:

* NIH research has produced tangible improvements in diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease.
* But NIH funding was stagnant for several years.
* Tomorrow’s advances depend on today’s investments in NIH research.

To continue our national commitment to research and fighting lupus and other diseases, I ask that you significantly increase funding for NIH in the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill for Fiscal Year [YEAR].

Thank you for your support of people with lupus and all chronic illnesses!

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name, Address, Email]