**Writing An Advocacy Letter to Your Representative**

Writing your legislators is a personal and effective method to educate your representative about issues that are important to you. Written communication can work to motivate them to respond to your request.

Here’s tips and recommendations on crafting your advocacy letter:

Content:

1. Introduce yourself; it’s important to mention that you’re a constituent
2. State the main point of your message in the first paragraph – don’t bury the lead!
3. Add a personal story or narrative; if this isn’t something you’re comfortable with, add facts and other relevant information to support your point.

Remember:

* Keep your message brief (1 page) and focused on one issue or topic.
* Be courteous and clear: Maybe you haven’t always seen eye-to-eye with your representative, but your point will be more effective if you aren’t attacking them. Be clear, direct, and respectful.

[Date]

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your City, State, Zip Code]

[Your email address/phone number]

[Legislator’s Title and Name]

[Legislator’s Address]

[Legislator’s City, State, Zip Code]

Dear Representative [Name],

My name is [Name], and I am a constituent who lives in [community]. I am writing to ask for you to introduce legislation that would require the Hawai‘i State Department of Education (DOE) to provide consistent, quality programming on healthy relationships in schools, K-12. [Optional: mention any relation to a Hawai‘i school: are you a school alum, or a parent of a Hawai‘i student?].

By providing early skill-building opportunities for keiki to have healthy friendships and family relationships, we can work to prevent multiple forms of violence from occurring, such as bullying, peer violence, and dating/domestic violence. Research suggests that violence is preventable if communities take action. In Hawai‘i, 35% of women and 24% of men experience intimate partner violence during their lifetime. Domestic violence is a significant, widespread public health and safety issue.

[Include a personal story or connection here— why is this ‘ask’ important to you? For example, how has violence impacted you or someone you love? What information do you wish you had access to as a young person? Etc.]

Hawai‘i can take proactive steps to stop violence before it has a chance to happen. While the Hawai‘i Board of Education requires sexual health education that “helps students develop relationships and communication skills to form healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection and are free from violence, coercion and intimidation,” provision of the information in quality and quantity is inconsistent across the state.

This is why we need legislation that requires the DOE to ensure equitable access to healthy relationship education programming for all students. By bolstering existing standards for healthy relationship education in the state, Hawai‘i can take steps towards eliminating violence in our communities.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

[Your Name]