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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

February 4, 2004

Dear Friends:

Every year, Congress votes on hundreds of issues, like Social Security, Medicare, health care, agriculture, homeland security and education. Serving as one of 435 members of the United States Congress, establishing the priorities and vision for the future of all Americans, is an awesome responsibility and one that I, and my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, take very seriously. We are honored to work for you and recognize that an integral part of our service to you is hearing from you. Whether we hear from you at town hall meetings, one-on-one appointments, or email, fax, telephone or letter, we get the opportunity to personalize issues that are debated everyday. To help you be more effective in communicating with your Senator and Member of Congress, I have provided a few tips for you.

### **Writing a letter by mail, fax, or email**

- The purpose of your letter should be stated in the first paragraph. If the letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly. House bills are noted as "H.R. xxx" (H.R. 1) and Senate bills are noted as "S. xxx" (S. 1). Visit the public legislative information site, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>, for bill numbers and descriptions.
- The letter should be courteous, to the point, address only one issue and include information that will support your position. If possible, keep the letter to one page.

### **Personal visit**

- Know what you want to achieve from your meeting. If necessary, make notes to ensure you don't miss any points that you want to make.
- Request a meeting with the member at least three weeks in advance making sure you explain the purpose of the meeting and whom you represent, if you are with an organization. Be sure to ask for the staff that handles your issue of interest that way you can follow up with a specific person.
- Be prompt and patient. It is not uncommon for the Member to be late or to have a meeting interrupted due to a crowded schedule.
- Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or states.

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(870) 536-3376  
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**EL DORADO**  
UNION COUNTY COURT HOUSE  
SUITE 406  
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**PRESCOTT**  
221 WEST MAIN STREET  
PRESCOTT, AR 71857  
(870) 887-6787  
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Clearly illustrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the Member's constituents. Be prepared to answer questions and provide additional information in the event the Member expresses interest in the issue or asks questions.

- Clearly ask the Member for what you want. For example, you want him/her to cosponsor legislation or contact a person.
- Follow up the meeting with a thank-you letter that outlines the items covered during the meeting and reiterating what you want the Member to do or confirming what the Member agreed to do.

This is your government. My colleagues and I are here to help you get prompt, respectful treatment from your federal government. Your experiences and opinions help shape the priorities of your elected officials. That is why we need to know what you think and value your contact to us. Best of luck to you in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Ross". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mike Ross  
Member of Congress

MR/scb