

SAMPLE STORIES

ANSWER KEY

USE THIS TO PRACTICE AT HOME!

Sample Story 1

1

Dear Senator Wagoner,

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My name is **Jesse Rowling and I'm a concerned constituent** of the 36th legislative district. I'm writing you to as a person in recovery who is **greatly concerned about the lack of residential behavioral health treatment.** I'm also writing you as a **fellow Wildcat, as I too attended Marymont High.** As someone who has experienced many crisis and has been homeless for a large portion of my life, I can firmly say that it is impossible to enter recovery while homeless.

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Towards the end of my time at Marymont I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and tried multiple times to take my life. I became extremely violent which led to homelessness and substance use. After years of wandering, as a 35 year old man, I finally received help in the form of residential behavioral health. There was a team of 10 people all helping me with different aspects of my recovery and entry back into society. Now, I've moved back to the 36th district, have a stable job, am sober, and haven't been in crisis for one year. I am grateful for the help I did receive, but am resentful that I didn't have this support at an early age.

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~~Had there been a program like this in the 36th district, I could have been in recovery 17 years ago. I could have pursued my dream of being a pilot. I realize I can still do this now but it is much harder at this stage in my life. Now it is more likely that I become the person who throws luggage into the plane.~~

Extr

My life has taken a turn for the positive and plan on doing everything in my power to stay on this path. However, I hope we can work together and give others an early chance at success that I didn't have. **Please vote yes on SB 3209** which will double the amount of funding and housing stock available for residential behavioral health services. This would fund services like what I needed to enter recovery. **I do not have transportation to get to Olympia, but I plan to write and call anyone it takes to make this happen.**

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Thank you for your commitment to your constituents and for holding a town hall last month, I appreciated the chance to meet you in person. Thank you for your consideration,

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Jesse Rowling
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600 Lincoln St Snohomish, WA 98290

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Note:
The extra portion is important to Jesse, but distracts from the issue!

Sample Story 2

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Dear Rep. Kagi,

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My name is Corrine Diaz I'm one of your constituents, and also a twin of someone with Schizophrenia.

My brother, Marcus Diaz, was diagnosed 20 years ago and has never gotten adequate treatment.

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Since his diagnosis at 24 years old, he has never spent more than 10 months out of jail or prison. Marcus is a class members of the Trueblood lawsuit. **He has been to Western State hospital more times that I care to remember, the cycle is seemingly endless.**

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Issue #1

However, after his most recent arrest Marcus was diverted into a program funded through the Trueblood fines. Marcus is finally getting some help! However, I'm concerned about what will happen when the program ends. Will he know where to find help if he enters crisis? Will he find housing or continue wandering? Will he be able to keep his medicine organized? **I wish there were more community based organizations which could continue to help him.**

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Issue #2

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Is there anything you can do to create more community based options for people like my brother? I know **you are a very active advocate for human services** and I thank you for all of your work but there is so much more work to be done. **I'm not sure if there is anything I can do to help but please let me know if I can do something.**

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Thank you so much for all you do.

Corrine Diaz

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1201 N 175th St
Shoreline, WA 98133
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Notes:

1. Use the full title "Representative"
4. There are two issues but not clearly stated. Explain that #2 is a result of #1 & that #2 leads back to #1

6. Make this a direct statement with a specific ask.

Sample Story 3

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Dear Representative Monica Stonier,

2 **As a constituent of the 49th legislative district** I feel compelled to alert you to the state of your constituents with mental illness. **My son Charles has been waiting 3 months in Clark County Jail for a bed in Western State Hospital which doesn't seem to be coming.** 4

Charles has been charged with a misdemeanor, the maximum sentencing time for this is 90 days. At this point he has already served his time, but has not yet been sentenced. Charles needs to get restoration services before he may go to trial, and the prosecutor refuses to dismiss his charges. This seems entirely discriminatory and a violation of civil rights. **My son is getting worse and worse as he sits in solitary confinement, on suicide watch, in a dirty jail cell.** 5 My son doesn't need to be prosecuted, he needs to get serious help.

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Today I'm writing to ask for your support in this upcoming legislative session. There will be bills about the *Trueblood* lawsuit and I hope you will think of my son. As your constituent, I ask for you to pass laws and give funding to legislation that helps people like my son get help before they end up in jail.

Additionally, any and all help you may be able to provide to get him to Western State would be much appreciated. **I'd be happy to meet with you in person or share more details about my son's struggle to find proper mental health services.** 7

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Thank you for your service.

Jean Gallagher

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Mother of a *Trueblood* Class Member
Constituent of the 49th Legislative District
409-522-6395
soccermom2212@comcast.net

Notes:

1. Last name only is fine.
2. Start with name.
8. Thank you is nice, but a little more goes a long way!
9. Address is always a nice touch but not needed.

Sample Story 4

Dear Paul,¹

How is your summer going? I hope it's going well and you're taking some time for yourself before things get busy with the legislative session. **I'm writing to you midday from my couch, because I can't find a job or even a volunteer gig.**⁵

You see I have Schizophrenia but am now in recovery. However, while I was in crisis I went to the local ER for help. But they really didn't help me, they actually made things worse for me. While there I was in psychosis and hit a nurse who wanted to draw blood, but at the time that's not what I thought was happening. This situation caused me to go to jail, become a Trueblood class member, and have a felony on my record. A lot of things have happened to me, and I've done a lot of things during psychosis but this has really messed things up for me.

Even though I'm in recovery, and have been for four and a half years, I can't find a job. Which means I have no income, and still live with my parents. **But soon enough, my parents won't be able to work anymore, and then the three of us will be unemployed.** I asked Jay to pardon me for this felony but am still waiting to hear back. Everyone who wants to work should be able to work, and I don't want more people to be stuck in this same situation.

I understand the nurses and police officers may be hit a lot more than others if it wasn't for this law but I didn't do it intentionally. This was a symptom of my mental illness.¹ **Paul I ask you to implement a clause that prevents this from staying on the records of those with mental illness.** Since I do not have a job, or really anything else to do, **I will dedicate my time to working on this issue. Please let me know if there is something specific I may do to help.**⁷

8 Thank you for your role on the Health Care and Wellness committee for all these years. It's good to know that my Representative is paying attention to this area!

Thanks a ton, I hope to meet you someday soon.

Kamal Robinson

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Orchards, WA 98682

Notes:

1. Even if you know them personally, remind them of their position.
2. Start with name.
4. Issue isn't clearly stated.
7. Could be a stronger way to say this.

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