**LAW CLASS**

**The First Amendment**

**FREEDOM TO PETITION**

The freedom to petition means you can write a letter to the mayor, congressperson, president or any public official, and ask the government to focus attention on unresolved issues, provide information about unpopular policies or share your thoughts about governmental changes.

The term “petitioning” has come to mean any nonviolent, legal means of encouraging or disapproving government action and can include:

* lobbying,
* emailing campaigns,
* filing lawsuits,
* supporting referenda or
* collecting signatures for ballot initiatives.

The key point to remember is that the government cannot forbid you from telling public officials when you have a problem or a complaint.