

## **WRITE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Elected officials carefully monitor newspapers to gauge local opinion. By mentioning your senators or representative by name and stating the specific legislative action you would like them to take, you can guarantee that your letter will catch the attention of your members of Congress.

### **Keep it short**

Try to limit your letter to 100-200 words or less, and focus on a single issue. In the first paragraph, state your main point and why the issue is important to you. (What impact does the issue have on the local community? How are you personally invested in a particular policy or piece of legislation?) Provide facts, quotes, and numbers in the second. Use the last paragraph to restate your point and make your recommendation.

### **Respond to a news story**

Open with a specific reference to a recent news story, editorial, or previous letter. "Recent" means no older than a few days. For national papers, no further back than 48 hours.

### **Make a local connection**

Your letter will be of more interest to editors of your local paper if you highlight the local impact of a national or foreign policy issue.

### **Demonstrate your reach**

If you know that your opinion also represents that of others, be sure to mention it. However, if you want to submit a letter signed from representatives of more than one group, be aware that most newspapers limit signatures to two or three names.

### **Consider your options**

Submit letters to your local paper for the best chance of publication, though you may certainly submit to national publications as well. Other options include suburban or neighborhood papers, specialized magazines, ethnic press, religious publications, and college alumni magazines.