



Speak Out: Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor of your local newspaper are frequently read by elected officials who want to know what topics are of most concern to their constituents. Writing to the editor is a good way to get the attention of your elected officials and spread your message out to a broad audience. Here are some tips to help ensure your letter gets published.

Preparation

- ✓ Know your newspapers' writing guidelines, submission deadline and email address. You can send submissions to daily news outlets anytime (for example: *Portland Press Herald*, *Bangor Daily News*, *Sun Journal*, *Journal Tribune*, *Times Record*). Local weeklies have one weekly deadline for publication and posting online. Find this information on the news outlet's webpage, often under the Opinion tab.
- ✓ Choose a timely issue. If the issue has been recently addressed in the paper, reference the article in your letter.



The Letter

- ✓ Keep your letter short and to the point – about 200 words.
- ✓ Use facts from a credible source, but stop at one or two statistics. Be sure to cite your source in your letter.
- ✓ State your main point or topic clearly and use simple, direct language.
- ✓ Personalize your message and write with passion.
- ✓ Call to action: State clearly the action your elected official should take to address the issue.

Follow Up

- ✓ Include your full name, town, and telephone number. The news outlet will often contact you to verify that you are the actual letter writer.
- ✓ Contact the Editor if the letter isn't published within a week; ask about the delay and the likely publication date.