Writing a Letter to the Editor

Why Write Them?

* Letters to Editor can achieve advocacy goals because they reach a large audience, are often monitored by elected officials, can bring up information not addressed in a news article, and can create an impression of widespread support for or opposition to an issue

Tips on Writing Letters to the Editor

* Keep it short and focused on a single topic. Newspapers often have strict limits on the length of letters and have limited space to publish them. Ideally, a letter should be 150-200 words.
* o   Letters to the Editor are always in response to an article that has appeared in the paper, so REFER TO THE DATE AND specific issues raised in the article you are responding to.
* Start with a compelling introductory sentence that is followed by short, factual points that are clearly worded. Don’t make broad statements that cannot be backed up with facts.
* Personalizing the issue by providing an example of how it impacts a real person in the community helps readers to understand the issue and encourages them to take action.
* End with a call to action by asking readers to take an action on the issue, i.e. calling their member of Congress, signing up for the Newsletter.
* Always sign the letter personally and list your town of residence.