

Tips on Writing Letters to the Editor

1. **Keep it short** – Keep the letter to about 200 total words, which is about five short sentences.
2. **Make it timely** – The sooner you submit your letter after an article about the issue is published the more likely the newspaper is to print it.
3. **Don't be overly negative** – Most newspapers will not print harsh attacks.
4. **Personalize your letter.** Talk about how the issue will help your family or your community.

Basic format of your letter

- **Write a short title or heading** in the same style the newspaper using for all letters. The editors will likely change it, but your version may influence them.
- **Start with an opening sentence** that refers to the original article or news item. Example 1: *"After reading the article (insert the headline) I felt that I must respond."*
- **Show the letter to a few other people to get feedback.**
- **Submit the letter to the editor through your personal email account.**

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Hanover Evening Sun news@eveningsun.com 135 Baltimore Street P.O. Box 514 Hanover, PA 17331	The Patriot News letters@pennlive.com 2020 Technology Parkway Suite 300 Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Tips on Writing a Letter to Your Legislator

Things to keep in mind:

- Identify yourself as a constituent of their District
- Identify why you are writing and what the issue is in a sentence or two.
- Be brief and to the point. Try to keep the letter to one page if possible.
- Write the letter in your own voice, not in the appearance of a form letter. Personalize the letter with a relevant story or example from your life.
- Give specific reasons of why they should support your position. Again, keep it concise. Ground your argument in facts. Where possible, reference research that may have appeared in the media, or been conducted by a think tank.
- Handwritten letters are best. Taking the time to do so, shows that you care a lot about your position, and presumably have written something original (rather than copied from a template).

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