

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Writing a letter to the editor is an effective way to get your message out. Letters to the editor are an impactful way to share your message with your local community. Letters to the editor are also a powerful tool to reach your member of Congress. If you mention your member of Congress in your letter, often Congressional staff will include the “clipping” from your letter in the daily press clips that the member of Congress will read each morning.

TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD LETTER TO THE EDITOR

KNOW THE REQUIREMENTS: Check the website of the paper you plan to submit your letter to and find what their submission requirements are. Most ask for a short (typically 200 words) letter that can be submitted online or through email. If they don’t list submission guidelines online, you can always call and ask what the process is for submitting a letter to the editor.

PICK YOUR TOPIC AND WRITE!: Pick a topic you are passionate about. Letters are more likely to get published if they are personal and something you can directly relate to. Follow the peg, problem, promise model below if you need help getting started.

POLISH YOUR PIECE: Make sure to proofread and edit your letter. We recommend working with your Heritage Action regional coordinator to polish and finalize your letter.

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER: Once your letter is ready to go, submit it to the paper through their recommended submission channel. Typically letters are submitted through an online form or through a designated email address. If it gets published, send us a copy so we can celebrate with you! If your letter isn’t published, it’s a great chance to turn it into an email or letter to send directly to the congressional office.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR FORMULA

This is a formula to write a successful letter to the editor. Letters come in all formats, but the format below is a recommended format to start.

- 1 PEG:** This is an interesting fact, anecdote or story to get people interested in your letter. For example, a personal story on how a specific issue has impacted your work or family.
- 2 PROBLEM:** Here is where you directly address a bill or debate happening before Congress. This is where you can point out, with facts and reasoning, why your argument is right. We recommend 2-3 facts or arguments that link back to your main point.
- 3 PROMISE:** The final section is a promise or solution to solve the problem you’ve introduced. This often takes the form of telling your congressman to vote a certain way on a piece of legislation.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PEG, PROBLEM AND PROMISE WORKING TOGETHER:

As a doctor of six years who has cared for over 500 patients in the Cleveland area, your characterization of [thing] in your July 5th piece, [Article], leaves out some crucial details. Your article said that premiums did not increase as a result of Obamacare. However, a recent Department of Health and Human Services report found that average monthly premiums increased from \$224 in 2013 to \$476 in 2017. That constitutes a 105 percent increase in only four years. My own premiums here in Ohio saw a 76 percent increase during that time period. Ohioans have suffered enough. It’s time for Senator Portman to vote in favor of real repeal of Obamacare.