

Advocacy Tools

Writing a Letter to the Editor



What is a letter to the editor?

A letter to the editor is a short message written by a reader and sent to a newspaper or magazine. It's typically used to:

- **React** to a recent article or story.
- **Share an opinion** on a current issue or topic.
- **Correct** something the publication got wrong.
- **Add perspective** that the original story missed.

Publications choose which ones to print, so they tend to favor letters that are timely, clear, and make a point.



How should I write a letter to the editor ?

- **Read other letters to the editor.** Look at the newspaper or magazine (online or in print). See how other people have written letters other than the editor. This will help you organize your thoughts.
- **Start writing!** Letters to the editor are usually short, signed with the writer's name and town, and written for a general audience.
 - **Introduce yourself.** Who are you?
 - **Introduce your issue.** Why are you writing this? What happened? Why does it need attention?
 - **Explain why this issue is important.** Is it part of a bigger problem? How does it impact you - and especially others in your community.
 - **Call for action.** What do you want people to take away from this issue? What do you want to see happen? Is there something you want them to do as well?





How do I send in a letter to the editor?

Each magazine or newspaper will have their own process. Some have online forms, others have emails you need to use. Make sure you submit ASAP to the event you are taking about or the story you are referencing. Usually 1-2 days.

It is sometimes helpful to include 2-3 links to articles about your topic. You can just add them to the bottom of your letter. This helps editors decide whether the issue is going to be important to their readers.



Dear Editor,

My name is Jane, and I am a person with a disability living in Cityville. I am writing to urge our elected officials to protect and fully fund Medicaid – a program that is not a luxury for people like me. It's a lifeline.

Medicaid covers the personal care attendants who help me get out of bed, bathe, prepare meals each day, and get ready for work. Without this support, I could not live independently in my community, hold a job, or participate in civic life. Cuts to Medicaid do not save money – they shift the burden onto families, emergency rooms, and nursing facilities, which cost far more.

People with disabilities are not a burden. We are neighbors, taxpayers, and contributors to this community. We deserve the same opportunity to live full, dignified lives as anyone else. That opportunity depends on a fully funded Medicaid program.

I ask readers to contact their state legislators and urge them to stand firm in support of Medicaid funding. Our lives are quite literally on the line.

Respectfully,
Jane Doe
Cityville, Iowa

