

ADVOCATE FOR THE VULNERABLE BY WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Why Write A Letter To The Editor?

Writing a letter to the editor is a powerful way to use your voice to advocate for those living in poverty around the world. Your letter, whether in a local newspaper or a national publication, will be read by the public, including members of Congress! You don't have to be an expert in international poverty-focused relief and development, nor do you need to be an expert writer in order to have your letter published. Let your passion and heart for vulnerable populations shine through your writing. The following tips will help get your letter published:

STEP #1: DO YOUR PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Consult your local newspaper's guidelines and previously published LTEs in order to grasp an understanding of their regulations as well as the letters they typically publish before writing your letter. If using their website, look at their "opinion page" or "contact us" section. For print newspaper, check out their editorial page. Get a clear understanding before writing the Editor.

STEP #2: WRITE YOUR LETTER

Draw In The Reader

At the beginning of the letter, draw the reader in using a passionate, well-stated argument. Create a connection with the reader, exhibiting how they too will be affected or should care about the issue about which you are writing. Grab the reader's attention with witty humor or thoughtful knowledge.

Make It Short And Know The Word Limit

Keep your word count between 120 to 200 words. Use short paragraphs and avoid complex sentences structures by removing non-essential words and phrases such as, "I think that".

Find A Timely Hook

You increase the likelihood of being published by connecting your opinion with a relevant topic of discussion. The most effective way to do this is to respond to a recent article or editorial published within the last week by the same newspaper.

Make A Single Point And Specific Recommendation

Focus on one specific issue. Use both critical and positive reinforcement to emphasize your point. Harness the power of statistics in stating your case.

Name Your Representative And/Or Senators

Policy makers and their staff carefully monitor and track publications. Specifically name your member of Congress in order to capture their attention. If your letter is published, take the extra step and send a copy to your representative.

Use Your Unique Voice And Humanize Your Article

Engage the issue with your personal insight rather than simply reiterating the opinions and views of other individuals or organizations. Create original and unique content for each Editor. If you send an Editor to multiple news publications, each should be different.

End Strong

End your last paragraph with a bang. Summarize your argument, leave a lasting impression, and finish with a call to action.

Provide your contact information at the bottom of the piece, as news outlets won't publish a letter without this information.

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email

STEP #3: SEND YOUR LETTER

Send your message to the chosen news outlet via email as text only with no attachments. Don't add any organizations or individuals in the cc: of the email. Food for the Hungry would also love to receive your letter. Send a copy of it to Food for the Hungry at policy@fh.org in a separate email, but not in the email sent to the news outlet.

STEP #4: ENJOY READING YOUR LETTER IN YOUR NEWSPAPER

It may take a week or more from the time a newspaper receives your letter to the time it gets published. News magazines and weekly papers take even longer. Small-circulation newspapers usually print most of the letters they receive, while it's more challenging to get a letter printed in a major newspaper. If your letter doesn't get published, remember that sending the letter still has

influence. The more letters the paper receives about poverty-focused humanitarian relief and development, the more likely they will print related opinions and news stories in the future.

Example Of A Letter To The Editor:

Re: "Bono Tells Senate That National Security Is Dependent on Foreign Aid"
(First Draft, nytimes.com, April 13):

Bono said that aid "is national security." Retired military leaders have also made the case for greater investment in civilian tools, like foreign assistance. Defense and military efforts are vital to our national security goals, but cannot fully address the multifaceted challenges we face today.

Foreign assistance is critical to achieving our national security objectives, laying the groundwork for developing countries today to become bigger partners tomorrow.

The price tag on this invaluable element of our national power rings in at less than 1 percent of the total federal budget. For fiscal year 2017, the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development foreign assistance request totals \$34 billion.

That sliver of the budget pie bolsters our national security by supporting activities that counter Daesh (the Islamic State) and violent extremism, mitigate crisis in Syria and Iraq, address the underlying factors of migration from Central America and more.

Our foreign assistance dollars are working overtime to bolster our national security, and needs show no signs of abating. Our budget request is critical to ensuring our responsiveness to these complex crises and American leadership in this global landscape.

HEATHER HIGGINBOTTOM (Source)

Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, Washington

Please take a moment to write a letter and use your voice
to advocate for those living in poverty around the world.

