

TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR (LTE) OR OP-ED PIECE

While it may make sense to submit letters to large newspapers like the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press, the reality is your letter is competing with hundreds of other submissions for publication.

Submitting a letter to your local newspaper has a far better chance of being published and read.

Legislators pay close attention to their local newspapers. During a legislative session, when legislators are often away from their districts, monitoring local news coverage is one of the best ways for them to stay up to date on the issues their constituents care about most.

Be sure to follow the guidelines, like the deadline of the newspaper and the word count limit (often between 150-250 words for LTEs). Some newspapers list their guidelines on their website and some do not. If you're not sure about your newspaper's guidelines, call the newspaper and ask the editor.

It is common practice for newspapers to only publish letters written by residents who live in the community where the newspaper is circulated. To make verification easier for your newspaper, list your home address, phone number, and email address at the end of your letter. (Personal contact information is never published; it is only used to verify that you live in the community.)

If your letter gets published, write a short email to the editor thanking him or her. It's also a good idea to share the letter with your elected officials, colleagues, and social media networks.