

LETTER TO THE EDITOR HOW TO

(Adapted from Salzman's "Making the News" and SPIN Project Materials)

What is a Letter to the Editor?

- Letters to the editor (LTE's) most often discuss a recent event/issue covered by a publication, radio station, or TV program.
- They are your chance to "sound-off" to your community about issues in the news. **They are widely read**—so make them an important part of your media strategy.

Elements / Hints

- It is much easier to publish a letter to the editor than it is to place an op-ed.
- Your letter has the best chance of being published if it is a reaction to a story in the paper. Respond as quickly as you can.
- Read the letters page—you will learn how to develop an effective letter-writing style, and you will see if someone has already responded with your idea.
- Keep it short and concise—150-200 words. The paper will take the liberty to shorten your letter to suit its format; the more it has to cut, the less control you have of what gets printed. Lead with your most important information.
- Focus on one main point and make a compelling case.
- Write in short paragraphs, with no more than three sentences per paragraph.
- Don't write too often. Once every three months is about as often as you should write.
- Avoid personal attacks.
- Put your full name, address and phone number at the top of the page and sign the letter at the bottom. You must include a phone number for verification purposes.
- Follow up to see if the letter was received.