9to5's Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper can be an effective way to raise awareness about an issue and encourage people in your community to take action.

Getting started:

- Choose a newspaper to submit your letter to – the more local, the more likely to be printed.
- If you're not already familiar with the newspaper, get a copy or look online at the Letters to the Editor section. Note the length, tone, and topics of letters that have been published recently.
- Locate submission guidelines: generally there's an email address to submit your letter to, and they ask for your full name, home address and phone number.

The content of your letter:

- Keep your letter short and concise – between 150 and 300 words.
- State your point clearly in the first paragraph of your letter. Focus your letter around single point or issue.
- If possible, give your letter a "hook". Connect it to an upcoming holiday, something happening in the news, or in response to something that had been previously published in that paper.
- Make your letter as personal and local as possible – share your own experience with the issue, or include pertinent local statistics
- If you know it, include useful information, like the last day to register to vote in your state, or the website where people can request a copy of their ballot. Be sure to verify that this information is correct.

Remaining non-partisan:

9to5 is a non-partisan organization, which means that we do not support or oppose any political parties or candidates. When acting as a 9to5 member, you are held to the same standard. For letters to the editor, general guidelines are:

- Avoid referencing any political party (Democrats, Republicans, etc)
- Avoid naming or referring to any candidates for elected office
- Avoid naming current electoral races or positions (Mayor, City Council, State Senate, etc)

Before submitting your letter to the editor, please send it to Lindsey@9to5.org, so we have a copy as well. If you'd like any help with editing or cutting down the length, let me know and I'll be happy to help.