Objectives

1. Review why media matters
2. Learn about the nuts and bolts of writing and submitting a letter to the editor
3. Spend some time writing our letters, preparing them for submission
4. Learn how to make the most of media once published
Advocacy Works!

Want To Be Heard? Show Up!
Influence on Washington D.C.-based congressional staffers by communication type.

- A Lot of Positive Influence
- Some Positive Influence

Bar chart showing various communication methods:
- In Person Visits From Constituents
- Contact from Constituents' Reps
- Individualized Emails
- Individualized Letters
- Local Editorial Referencing Pending Issue
- Comments During Telephone Town Hall
- Phone Calls
- Letter to the Editor Referencing Your Boss
- Lobbyist Visit
- Form Emails

Source: Congressional Management Foundation
*Bars do not add up to 100 because not all surveyed categories are displayed
Local Media is still the best way to get information and opinions about the community one lives in.
Why Work with the Media?

• **Powerful tool**
  - Editorial page most read section in the paper
  - Best source of local information and opinions

• **Strong media work can move decision-makers** to alter their behavior, positions, and perceptions on an issue
  - Asheville Citizen-Times Circulation: 26,347 daily; 36,208 Sunday

• **Educates the public**
  - Builds political will
  - Reaches wide audience
  - Engages new people
Secret to Getting Published (Shhhhhh...)  

1. Write  
2. Submit  
3. Repeat
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who writes it?</th>
<th>News</th>
<th>Editorials</th>
<th>Letters to the Editor</th>
<th>Op-Eds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Us</td>
<td>Us</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Opinion Media Madlibs

____________________ should ____________________.

(person)                      (action)
What is a Letter to the Editor?

It’s a contribution to a new or on-going community conversation
✓ New angle
✓ Unusual
✓ Local
✓ Personal
✓ Important
Dear Editor:

Mitt Romney wants to cut PBS Kids. But I won't stand for it. He probably thinks that because little kids watch it they won't care. But PBS helped me learn to read. I do better in school because of PBS Kids. PBS is not just TV to me.

From Stella K. Linn, age 7
W. Des Moines, IA 50265

Oath Keepers honor oaths to Constitution

Recently the Oath Keepers organization has come under reach, teach and inspire all of us to step back and think about what that oath actually means. Those of us who have taken this oath have not only a moral obligation, but a legal obligation to

to me.

In 2012 the auto deaths are death each day in Nationwide, 40 percent of

In 11 years been 2,000 in the United States to kill with autos. I'm immune to that deaths.

Look at ties for drunk Salvador you your last ex squad. Bulgaria for a second Africa's pen prison and a first offense Sweden and one year in a offense. It is revoked if they require license and at political.

The Iowa pass means drunken drive us in step w

— Dr. W

Ryan, the ones

Paul Ryan, President (rate to us h rights" bot Courts C. buque Stop Ryan is doing some of our mand thei what Jesus when he su neighbor s

As a pr
Influence of Letters to the Editor

Cornyn, Senate should pass a relief package

Re: Aug. 16 article, “Americans waiting on help, but Congress is in recess.”

I am appalled that the Senate recessed for three weeks without passing emergency legislation to address the pandemic and economic crisis. Sen. John Cornyn shows he is a leader by standing behind Sen. Mitch McConnell on TV. How about he and his colleagues take action to deal with the emergency America faces?

Sen. Cornyn and the Senate need to go back to work and pass a COVID-19 package that provides $100 billion emergency rental assistance to avert the catastrophe of 20 million Americans evicted. What about the more than 25 million workers who got their last $600 supplement with their unemployment check at the end of July? And, according to experts, they need to provide $20 billion to keep the wheels from falling off international humanitarian health work.

This is a real crisis for real Americans. We need real leaders who will take real action right now.

Mark Coats, Austin

Cornyn: I’ll keep fighting for more pandemic relief

Re: Aug. 18 letter to the editor, “Cornyn, Senate should pass a relief package.”

In his Aug. 18 letter, a writer expressed his desire for Congress to do more to help Texans suffering from the economic consequences of the pandemic. We’ve passed five coronavirus relief packages so far, and I share his frustration that we’re stalled on a sixth.

To date, Congress has passed trillions of dollars in coronavirus relief, including $312 billion in public health funding and $28 billion for COVID-19 testing. We’ve sent recovery checks of up to $1,200 per individual, boosted unemployment benefits with an additional $600 per week, and appropriated more than $25 billion to help Americans suffering from food insecurity.

Still, we need to do more for Texans who are out of a job through no fault of their own. I support an extension of enhanced federal unemployment benefits, another round of recovery checks, and more funding for schools and childcare. I’ll keep fighting to deliver that for Texans.

John Cornyn, U.S. Senator, Austin
Letters to the Editor

• 150 – 200 words (check paper’s website)

• 3 key pieces:
  a) Local or timely hook (best to respond to a story)
  b) Why it matters
  c) Call to action
EPIC Format for Writing & Speaking

**ENGAGE**: Something to capture their attention

**PROBLEM**: Outline the problem, paint a picture to help them understand

**INFORM ON SOLUTION**: Explain how your solution will confront the problem

**CALL TO ACTION**: Yes or no request

Local, Timely Hook

Why it Matters

Call to Action
Letters to the Editor

Structure

How it appears
1. Local & timely hook
2. Why it matters
3. Call to action

How you write it
1. Call to action
2. Why it matters
3. Local & timely hook
Ditch the power struggles and help working people. Re: Aug. 16 article, “Americans waiting on help, but Congress is in recess.” I am amazed at the hard-heartedness of our federal government. Elected officials in Washington are worrying about spending too much when people have lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

How do they think our economy will recover and tax dollars be collected if people are homeless and buried in debt? How will people return to work when companies are going out of business? How will landlords pay their mortgages and taxes when renters can’t pay their rent?

Congress needs to put aside their power struggles and find solutions benefiting the people in this country. Pass a bill providing $100 billion in rent relief. Pass a bill assisting small businesses to stay solvent. Pass a bill to stop evictions. The hard-working people that kept our economy humming until the pandemic arrived deserve this respect.

Eloise Sutherland, Austin
Break the stalemate in Congress: A global pandemic requires a global response. Congress and the White House are indifferent to the world’s cry for relief. The U.S. must support low-income countries to deal with the immediate crisis and to strengthen healthcare systems. About 80 percent of tuberculosis, HIV and malaria programs worldwide have reported disruptions in services.

Public health experts warn the coronavirus is likely to set back years of painstaking progress against TB, HIV and malaria. Many kids are already missing out on life-saving vaccines. Food insecurity and starvation are also rising fast in Africa and Asia due to severe lockdowns. Whether it’s COVID-19 or other ongoing global health emergencies, we need a strong response from Congress here and around the world.

I’m counting on Congress and the White House to break the current stalemate and pass an emergency response package that includes no less than $20 billion for international development, including $4 billion for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, $4 billion for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance and $2 billion for anti-hunger relief. We must act now.

Pat Payne, Castro Valley
Letters to the Editor

Structure

How it appears
1. Local & timely hook
2. Why it matters
3. Call to action

How you write it
1. CALL TO ACTION
2. Why it matters
3. Local & timely hook
Call to Action: RESULTS Will Provide Action Alerts, Monthly Action Sheets

Global Poverty
I call on Congress to break the stalemate in DC and pass an emergency response package that addresses the urgent needs of Americans and includes no less than $20 billion for international development and global health.

US Poverty
It's time for Congress and President Trump to resume negotiations now and enact a COVID-19 deal that includes $100 billion in emergency rental assistance and a national moratorium on evictions.
Call to Action: RESULTS Will Provide
Action Alerts, Monthly Action Sheets

Combined
I call on my Representative and Senators to break the stalemate in DC and pass an emergency response package that includes $100 billion rental assistance and an eviction moratorium for Americans, and no less than $20 billion for international development and global health.
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—Pat Payne, Castro Valley
August 26, 2020
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Eloise Sutherland, Austin
August 21, 2020
Letters to the Editor

Structure

How it appears
1. Local & timely hook
2. Why it matters
3. Call to action

How you write it
1. Call to action
2. WHY IT MATTERS
3. Local & timely hook
Why it matters

Why do I care about this issue?

What makes this issue compelling now?

Why does my member of Congress need to know about it?
Public health experts warn the coronavirus is likely to set back years of painstaking progress against TB, HIV and malaria. Many kids are already missing out on life-saving vaccines. Food insecurity and starvation are also rising fast in Africa and Asia due to severe lockdowns. Whether it’s COVID-19 or other ongoing global health emergencies, we need a strong response from Congress here and around the world.

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Eloise Sutherland, Austin
August 21, 2020
“Thanks for your piece on the digital divide (DIGITAL DIVIDE, Sept. 1, 2020). Once again, the poorest among us are disadvantaged in ways that affect their entire lives. Some studies project that students lacking adequate internet access during COVID will never catch up in their education. We are seeing the same kind of divide everyday when it comes to food and housing. COVID has made it worse in NC.”
Another massive divide we must not forget, is the global divide. In many low-income countries the pandemic is undermining decades of progress in fighting disease. Millions of children are missing out on life-saving vaccines and food insecurity and starvation are rising fast. Organizations like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance are out of emergency funds and the stakes are great.

I call on our Representative and Senators to break the stalemate in DC and pass an emergency response package that includes $100 billion rental assistance and an eviction moratorium for Americans, and no less than $20 billion for international development and global health needs. The bill should also address the digital divide for American students who need it. It’s time to get back to the people’s work.
Local and Timely Hook

“Thanks for keeping us up to date on COVID-19 in Buncombe County (Death total up 6 over last week, Sept. 1, 2020). We must keep this pandemic in front of if we want to get in front of it. Regular reporting keeps us vigilant.”
I wish Congress was more vigilant about their response to COVID-19 as well—they left DC for a long recess without passing an emergency COVID spending bill, leaving millions of people in danger of eviction in the U.S. or death globally. **In many low-income countries the pandemic is undermining decades of progress in fighting disease.** Millions of children are missing out on life-saving vaccines and food insecurity and starvation are rising fast. Global organizations like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance are out of emergency funds and the stakes are great.

I call on our Representative and Senators to break the stalemate in DC and pass an emergency response package that includes $100 billion rental assistance and an eviction moratorium for Americans, and no less than $20 billion for international development and global health needs. It’s time to get back to the people’s work.
Local, Timely Hook

It brings hope to read about how our community has come together to address the coronavirus outbreak (cite article). And just as we are struggling here, we must also remember the challenges face by nations with fewer resources.
Local and timely hook

Coronavirus
Local election
Poverty and homelessness
Recession
Public health
Education
New stadium spending
Pop culture

2020 election coverage
Candidate profiles
Back to school
Gridlock in DC
Local or national budget cuts
Student housing
Tax issue
Charity drives
Short Letters Work Too

1: Hook) As Congress prepares for the next stage of the coronavirus response, it should include support for poverty-stricken countries so that they can deal with the immediate crisis and strengthen their health care systems in the long run.

3: Call to Action) I call on Sens. Bob Casey, D-Pa., and Pat Toomey, R-Pa., to give their support to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. 2: Why it Matters) This is a global pandemic, and it requires a global response. This is a good place to start.

LILY CALLAWAY
Lawrenceville, PA
April 20, 2020
Get a draft letter to start your LTE on the RESULTS Website

- Action Alerts
- Monthly Actions
100 percent of letters not sent never get published!

Submitting your LTE:
• E-mail it directly to the paper (e.g. letters@kcstar.com - look on paper’s website for address)
• Submit it through your paper’s website (usually an online form)
• Submit it through the RESULTS website (https://results.org/volunteers/action-center/)
• Mailing a hard copy to your local paper (takes longer)

**Important!** Most papers require you to include your name and contact info to be published. If you are a new writer, they will sometimes contact you to verify authorship.
RESULTS Website = Very Easy
Direct to the Paper = Pretty Easy
Media Success Checklist

- Find a hook
- Edit the template
- Check your word count
- Check for 3 key pieces
- Hit “send”!
- Send it to Congress
- Send it to RESULTS
- Repeat
Share your skills with others

- Getting published is **empowering and fun**
  - Fast and visible
- Media actions a great way to **get people interested in advocacy**
- **Invite others** to write letters with you
  - Call a friend and ask him/her to write an LTE (support)
  - Collaborate on writing an op-ed
  - Hold an online training (use this PPT – it’s easy!)
  - Make it a game – who can get published first?
- **Always follow up** after to celebrate success/try again
Persistence and Patience

• Keep at it!
• If one paper doesn’t publish, try another
• If you get rejected multiple times, contact the editor and ask what they look for in letters
• Work at building relationships with editorial staff and reporters
• Send all you published media to your legislators
Next Steps

1. **Send in a letter to the editor** on housing and/or global health
   - Find online actions at: [https://results.org/volunteers/action-center/](https://results.org/volunteers/action-center/)
   - Let us know when you get published at [www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSMedia](http://www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSMedia)

2. **Send published letters to key aides and deliver them in lobby meeting**

3. **Invite others** you know to share your letter and write their own letters too

4. If you are an LTE pro, **consider an op-ed or editorial**
   - Contact Jos Linn or Ken Patterson for help
Resources

• **RESULTS Media Tools:** [https://results.org/volunteers/media-tools/](https://results.org/volunteers/media-tools/)

• **RESULTS Online Media Actions:** [https://results.org/volunteers/action-center/](https://results.org/volunteers/action-center/)

• **RESULTS Media Report Form:** [www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSMedia](www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSMedia)

• **RESULTS Advocacy Basics:** [https://results.org/volunteers/advocacy-basics/](https://results.org/volunteers/advocacy-basics/)

• **Staff Media Support:** Jos Linn, [jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org)

• **RESULTS Training Resources:** [https://results.org/volunteers/training-webinars/](https://results.org/volunteers/training-webinars/)