

## **Guidance on Writing a Letter to the Editor**

1. Review your local paper's guidelines for publishing letters to the editor (limits on word count, format and methods to submit for publication). This information can be found online under the "Opinion" section of your paper's web site.
2. If you're responding to a claim in a specific editorial or an article about the budget cuts, cite the article and immediately explain that proposed cuts to XX program will leave your community less secure.
3. If you aren't writing to respond to a specific article, call on the editors to examine what federal budget cuts to groups like yours will mean for the local community.
4. Get right to the point. You won't be able to say everything you want in a few hundred words. Prioritize 1-2 of these key messages:
  - Cost effective – How you leverage public dollars into maximum positive outcomes for the community
  - Competitive bids for CNCS funds ensure the best use of public dollars
  - Community need for your services – global competitiveness, impact from the recession, reduces stress on government services
  - Proven results – Outcomes that benefit the community
  - Provides jobs – In today's jobs crisis, we can't afford to lose the jobs provided by national service organizations.
5. If possible, convey your key messages using an anecdote about watching someone become more independent, better educated or gain a new skill thanks to a service organization.
6. Track the letters to the editor to see if the paper publishes your submission. If so, send to [media@saveservice.org](mailto:media@saveservice.org) for inclusion on the SaveService.org web site.

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