

## How to Write an Effective Letter to the Editor:

(provided to us by Steve Bocckino (ncbocck@mindspring.com)  
of the [Durham People's Alliance](#) )



*LTEs are one way to win hearts and minds.  
Here's how to get your letter published.*

1. Write a comment about a news piece, editorial or another letter. Free-floating statements of opinion don't often get published as letters.
2. Stick to one or two ideas in your 200-300 words (papers have differing policies on length). Make your opening and ending sentence compelling. Make every word say exactly what you want it to say.
3. Don't be afraid to put your own experiences in the letter. Use humor whenever you can. Empathy changes minds.
4. Check your facts.
5. Proofread! Proofread again! Read the letter out loud. Have someone else read your letter before you submit it.
6. Most papers don't publish multiple LTEs from the same writer within a month, but if you get into a battle with another letter writer, that policy goes out the window. If you refute the facts in a letter *without* naming the writer, usually yours is the last word.
7. Furious is fine, but fast and furious isn't. If you write a letter in the heat of anger, cool down before you submit it.
8. Never plagiarize, and never, never submit a sample letter from the internet.
9. When you submit your letter, send a copy to us at [durhamdemwomen@gmail.com](mailto:durhamdemwomen@gmail.com), so we can post it on our site.

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### local papers:

The Herald-Sun: [letters@heraldsun.com](mailto:letters@heraldsun.com)

The News and Observer:  
<http://www.newsobserver.com/about/newsroom/editor/>

Durham News  
Mark Schultz <[mschultz@newsobserver.com](mailto:mschultz@newsobserver.com)>

Independent Weekly  
[backtalk@indyweek.com](mailto:backtalk@indyweek.com)  
300 words max

Triangle Tribune  
Bonitta Best  
<[bonitta.best@triangletribune.com](mailto:bonitta.best@triangletribune.com)>

Duke Chronicle  
[letters@chronicle.duke.edu](mailto:letters@chronicle.duke.edu)

Carolina Times  
[thecarolinatimes@cs.com](mailto:thecarolinatimes@cs.com)

Letters to the Editor—This **example letter** was published on May 15, 2013:



## **State GOP decimates public education**

To the Editor:

North Carolina's once proud public education system is under siege by the radical Republican gang in control of state government. Thanks to the last round of budget cuts, North Carolina ranks 48th in per pupil spending and teacher salaries, below South Carolina.

The gang is now working on even more diabolical legislation to privatize education. Senate Bill 337 sets up a separate charter school board, removing these schools from regulation by the State Board of Education. It also takes funding and facility space from public schools, eliminates requirements for charter school teachers to be certified, and makes criminal background checks optional. This is another step on the road to privatize public education in N.C..

House Bill 944 is even more blatant. It diverts \$90 million from already underfunded public schools to private schools for vouchers. While this will be devastating to public schools, availability of vouchers has not been shown to improve student achievement. In Milwaukee, the oldest voucher program in the U.S., study after study has shown no improvement in performance of students receiving vouchers. Florida voters defeated an amendment to channel public funds to private schools. And this month, by a bipartisan vote of 103-43, the Texas legislature (not exactly a hot bed of liberalism) voted against using taxpayer money to fund private education. Numerous organizations have come out against HB 944, including the National Parent Teacher Association and the National Rural Education Association.

I would normally urge you to contact your GOP state legislators and beg them to support public education, but this is futile. They are in control now and will do as they please, answering only to the wealthy and corporations. They will continue to siphon taxpayer money to the wealthy and corporations who will fund their reelections. The only way to save North Carolina is to vote them out in 2014.

Carole Larivee

Waynesville