

## Letter to the Editor

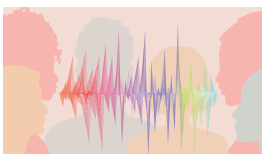
Readers' letters and comments are often the most-read sections of newspapers and news websites. They are great tools for building awareness about NCVRW. By writing a letter to the editor, you can link NCVRW or one of your organization's programs to a current local, state, or national issue by showing why readers should care about the rights and concerns of crime victims. Ideally, you would cite a reliable recent study, quote statistics about the crime or issue, or stress the need for more research about crimes that are often hidden or underreported.

Consider asking local law enforcement agencies or other organizations to partner with you, or encourage them to write their own letters to highlight the needs of crime victims and how the public can help. Letters that are endorsed by multiple community groups will receive more attention. When you submit your letter to the editor, include your contact information so the newspaper can reach you if it decides to print your letter. If the newspaper does not publish your letter, consider submitting it to a local organization that publishes a newsletter, post it on your website, or share it on social media.

In fact, consider doing all of those outlets from the start. Tweak the language to make it the most relevant possible for each outlet where you seek publication.

### ***Five Elements of an Attention-Grabbing Letter***

- Respond to an article or commentary recently published. Begin your letter by citing this article.
- Keep it brief—no more than 200 to 250 words.
- Include a call to action.
- Use verified facts and reference the original sources.
- Include information on where people can learn more about the issue.



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## Sample Letter to the Editor (223 words)

To the editor:

News coverage of crime is commonplace. Almost daily, stories about crime are front and center in newspapers, online media and television. While it's true that crime affects us all on a societal level, what's often lost in such coverage is the severe impact crime has on victims and their loved ones.

It's important that we not only hear the voices of survivors but that survivors are listened to and engaged with at every level of the criminal justice process.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, which runs April 23-29, is the perfect time to learn more about why the voices and needs of victims should be centered in every step of the criminal justice process and how we can all work together to create a world in which survivors are believed and supported.

It's also crucial that victims are connected with appropriate resources and support. We would ask that your outlet make it standard to report information about how survivors can access resources. Locally, *[insert at least two local support organizations/services]* are available to help.

We encourage community leaders to reach out to us for resources about how to effectively and meaningfully engage with survivors and to learn more about why learning from their lived experiences is vital. To get involved, *[insert call to action: connect with organization by phone, email, website or reach out to local law enforcement agency/other organization]*.

Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change.

With regards,

(Signature)

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