

# 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 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (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.

## ***5 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 250 to 300 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.



**Seek Justice | Ensure Victims' Rights | Inspire Hope**

## Sample Letter to the Editor

### *Unsure How To Help Crime Victims? Start by Learning About Their Rights*

Victimization and its aftermath may be one of the most difficult periods in a person's life—and victims' families, friends, and communities often face their own challenges as well. Loved ones may struggle to understand what kind of support victims need, or even how to talk to them about what happened. Service professionals may be uncertain how their roles intersect with victims' own sense of what justice looks like for them.

Each crime victim's healing process will be different, but one step everyone can take is to learn what rights crime victims have. These rights will be best protected when all participants in the criminal justice process—and not only victims—are appropriately educated about victims' rights.

A great place to start learning about crime victims' rights is *[website of your organization, or a local crime victims' rights organization]*. There you can find information about supporting victims in our community. Looking beyond local efforts here in *[city/county name]*, *[your state]* has resources at the state level too: *[state office or resource on victims' rights]* is a good place to learn more.

At the national level, the [National Crime Victim Law Institute](#) promotes victim-centered legal advocacy, education, and resource sharing. And [VictimLaw.org](#) is a centralized resource for legal provisions regarding victims' rights across the country.

Recovering from crime is a complex and deeply personal process for victims, but you can help ensure they have the support they need—and inspire them to hope for future progress and healing—by making education about victims' rights a priority for yourself and your community.

