TIPS ON WRITING OR EMAILING ELECTED OFFICIALS

• Keep the letter to 1 page.
• Begin with “Dear (Elected Official's Title and Name).”
• Opening Statement: Tell the elected official who you are, the reason you are writing this letter, and what you hope they will do. Mention that you are a constituent.
• Body: Use stories, stats, and research to support the points you are making. Then present information that is personalized and poignant. What effect do you think a particular bill, if it becomes law, will have on you, your family, or your community? Be concise, but specific.
• Closing: Make your ask. What do you want them to do? Be specific, but also be polite, even if you disagree strongly. Your communication will be more effective if you are reasonable in your approach.
• Signature: Make sure to include your full name, full address, and phone number.

FIND YOUR COUNCIL MEMBER

Go to www.nashville.gov/Metro-Council/Metro-Council-Members. Enter your address in the right hand box and then find your council member. You can also email councilmembers@nashville.gov to reach all council members at once.

FIND YOUR STATE LEGISLATOR


TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OR OP-ED

• Letters to the Editor are 250 words or less. Writers should include their full name, address, and phone numbers for verification. Only your name, city and ZIP code will be published. You can send letters to letters@tennessean.com or go here: www.static.tennessean.com/letter-editor/.
• Op-Eds are 550 words or less. The subject should be something the author or authors know well. You can email these to dplazas@tennessean.com. Please include a high-resolution headshot of the author(s).
• Make sure your topic is relevant to what is happening now.
• Be engaging and concise.
• Make the entire piece a single argument. Introduce the idea/argument and then include evidence all the way through that supports your idea/argument. By then end, the reader should feel like you’ve nailed it. Make the best case you can.
• Letters to the editor address the editor directly—not the reader or world at large. They are often in response to a story covered in the paper, but the letter should stand on its own. The reader should not need the original story to be understood.
• In Op-eds, don’t tell people something they already know or make arguments they’ve heard. Provide fresh insight to the topic. Demonstrate your credibility and win them over!