Letters to the Editor
$100 Million in Bonds for Housing

Sample points to include in your letter

- MN lawmakers should include $100 million for housing in the state’s bonding bill
- Housing is the foundation to achieve the rest of Minnesota’s priorities in education, health, and economic development
- Vulnerable Minnesotans are hit hardest by the lack of affordable homes including seniors, people with disabilities, and children who comprise 50 percent of Minnesota’s homeless population
- Investments in housing serve residents in rural, urban, and suburban areas. Bonds for housing has strong statewide, bipartisan support.

Pick paper

You should pick one paper to send your letter. See List of Local Papers.

Recent news stories

- Legislative report on vets housing makes startling bold suggestions, Star Tribune, March 26, 2014
- Hennepin County expands help for sexually exploited youth, Star Tribune, March 25, 2014
- Brooklyn Park plans to open shelter for homeless kids, Star Tribune, March 20, 2014
- Report: Minn. has serious affordable housing problem, MPR, March 24

Tips for writing effective letters to the editor

Writing a letter to the editor for newspapers is an effective way to raise awareness among the general public, as well as legislators and public officials. Your letter can be a response to something that was already in the news, make a point that was omitted in an article, or disagree with or correct misinformation from a news story, editorial, or another letter.
Sending a letter to the editor raises the issue’s profile in the news outlet and increases the changes that a letter on the topic will be published.

**Do:**

- Respond directly to a recent article or commentary published within two days of a daily paper
- Focus on one important point or topic.
- Be brief.
- Be sure to follow the guidelines and word count limit of the target publication
- Remove non-essential word. For example, don’t say, “I think…” It’s obvious.
- Use verified facts and local data when possible.
- Create immediacy by indicating how readers will be affected by the issue you address when possible; try to balance criticism with a positive — ask readers for action when practical. This includes elected officials.
- Point people to a source for more information or to engage in action whenever practical.
- When writing to your local newspaper (not recommended for larger city or national publications), follow up with a polite phone inquiry about its status if it doesn’t appear within 4-5 days to ensure it was received and considered.
- If the publication publishes an online version, hyperlink the relevant websites or emails.
- Pay attention to letters and comments by others. Note effective and ineffective approaches (especially letters that effectively argue a position you oppose), style, length, etc.
- Speak in the language and to the literacy level of that publication’s readers.

**Things to Avoid:**

- Don’t overstate/exaggerate your points. One overstatement makes every following point suspect.
- Don’t insult your opponents.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Never use all capital letters or bold text to emphasize a word. It will rarely be printed that way and may prevent your from being considered. You may italicize one or two words, but most papers will print it in plain text regardless.