

## How to Write an Effective Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are among the most widely read section of any newspaper. Taking the time to write a letter to the Editor of local and major newspapers is VERY important for the continued protection of the mourning dove in Michigan! Letters are our most effective method of reaching other concerned citizens quickly and calling them to action. In addition, the media uses public opinion and concerns to gauge and determine ideas for future news articles.

### Suggestions on getting your opinion letter printed:

- 1) Letters may be hand delivered, mailed, or email is accepted for most newspapers.
- 2) Address **only** the mourning dove (No on Proposal 3) issue in your letter (Please DO NOT associate any other opinions about other issues – “It’s ALL about the doves!”) to make the maximum impact for the issue, especially since opinion letters can be edited and are often word-limited to 200 words or less.
- 3) Editors want to know what YOU think and how YOU feel in YOUR own words.
- 4) You may wish to gratefully thank a newspaper for editorializing against the target shooting of Michigan’s doves (the No on Proposal 3 position). You may wish to sharply criticize (not insult or attack) a column or opinion letter for using misconceptions or their unpopular position on this issue.
- 5) Get your point across quickly, briefly, and clearly state your opinion and/or reasons for opposing the shooting of mourning doves in Michigan and voting No on Proposal 3 (visit [www.StopShootingDoves.org](http://www.StopShootingDoves.org) for Facts and News for ideas).

Structure for a general opinion letter to the editor:

- Write a brief paragraph clearly stating the purpose of your letter.
- Write a brief paragraph offering background points on the issue, WITHOUT including an opinion at this point. *Example: “The mourning dove is Michigan’s official bird of peace and doves been protected as songbirds for 100 years.”*
- Clearly and declaratively state your opinion(s) in one pivotal paragraph. *Example: “I’m against the unnecessary target shooting of traditional backyard songbirds that we enjoy feeding at our birdfeeders. There’s just no reason...”*
- Quickly state a solution and provide a “call to action” to the reader – what they can do: **Vote No on Proposal 3**. When appropriate, it’s important to include, “For more information or to get involved please visit [www.StopShootingDoves.org](http://www.StopShootingDoves.org)”

Structure for responding to misconception columns or other letters to the editor:

- Begin with a brief paragraph that mentions – not dwells – on the misconception. If countering a specific column or letter to the editor, state the column title and/or name of author and date published.
  - Write a brief paragraph giving solid evidence countering the misconception, discrediting the column or letter by citing impartial third-party sources whenever possible (if you need assistance or would like someone to review your letter for accuracy of facts, please do not hesitate to contact the committee for help: [contact@stopshootingdoves.org](mailto:contact@stopshootingdoves.org))
  - Write a brief paragraph summarizing the evidence and state your call to action “**Vote No on Proposal 3**. When appropriate, it’s important to include, “For more information or to get involved in the campaign please visit [www.StopShootingDoves.org](http://www.StopShootingDoves.org).”
- 6) “Thank you for your consideration” or “Respectfully submitted” is always a nice closing to the Editor.
  - 7) Include your name, address, and phone numbers for verification purposes - Required!
  - 8) Include a title to your name if you have one (i.e. RN, PhD, MD, DVM, PC). Additionally, kids can write letters too!
  - 9) You’ve just taken the time to write your opinion letter, now send it to at least three Michigan newspapers.
  - 10) Select which newspapers you would like your letter to be published, address and send it to each paper separately. Your area community newspapers are as important as the major newspapers. Remember, many newspapers will print your opinion letter even if you do not live in their area.