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Tips to Help You Get Your Letter Published

1. Be concise and focused. Keep your letter under 150 words — most newspapers won't publish letters longer than that. Use short sentences. And if you can use clever statements, all the better! But short and clever is not easy! You might have to write a few drafts of your letter to condense your message.
2. Limit your letter to two or three paragraphs. Try sticking to the following format:
 - In your first paragraph, introduce your problem (the stealthy TPP negotiations and no coverage of them) and sum up your objection (TPP will offshore more jobs, jack up medicine prices and flood us with unsafe imported food).
 - In the second paragraph, include a few sentences to support your view. (Whatever bugs you most about TPP or include here information about what past NAFTA-style deals have done to hurt your community.)
 - End with a great summary and a clever, punchy line. (There is a way to avoid this mess – more sunshine on TPP and following Sen. Brown's proposed legislation.)
3. Proofread your letter. Editors will ignore letters that contain bad grammar or typos.
4. Since your letter may be edited, you should get to the point early. Don't bury your point inside a lengthy argument.
5. Don't appear to be overly emotional. You can avoid this by limiting exclamation points, adjectives and insulting language — no matter how upset you are about TPP.
6. Remember that short, concise letters sound confident. Long, wordy letters give the impression that you're trying too hard to make a point.

Sample Letter to the Editor 1

U.S. negotiators have been working behind closed doors for three years on a massive agreement called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). It includes 11 countries, but would be open for China and Russia to join later. It's been branded as a "trade agreement." But it's really about new rights for corporations to offshore jobs, limiting regulation of banks, and even banning Buy American procurement preferences that invest our tax dollars to create jobs here.

The public and Congress know little about what U.S. negotiators are proposing in our names. Recent text leaks reveal that TPP would allow foreign corporations to attack U.S. land-use, health and safety laws in foreign tribunals to demand taxpayer compensation. I would appreciate coverage of TPP in our paper.

Thankfully, there is a proposal, the 21st Century Trade Agreement Act, to rein in the out-of-control negotiators. Our senators should co-sponsor this bill.

Sample Letter to the Editor 2

U.S. officials are currently negotiating a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. It's being sold as a "free trade" agreement, but actually TPP would provide new rights for pharmaceutical firms to raise medicine prices, require us to import food that does not meet U.S. safety standards and even ban Buy American procurement.

This is the biggest international economic pact in decades. A couple of months ago it was between 9 countries — now there are 11, and it's open for more to sign, even China. It has the same investor protections as NAFTA, which incentivize job offshoring. And it would expose the U.S. to corporate attacks before foreign tribunals demanding compensation in our tax dollars, simply because they don't like our laws. Will you please cover this story?

The good news? Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) has introduced the 21st Century Trade Agreements Act to stop "trade" agreements which put foreign corporations before American people. Our senators should co-sponsor that legislation.