

Points to Ponder as we write a Letter to the Editor (or Legislator, Congressperson, Local Official)

- If you're trying to make other people look bad or feel bad, forget it.
- Don't attack anybody. That puts people on the defensive, invites retaliation, and accomplishes nothing.
- Don't lump people together--Christians, Conservatives, Republicans, Tea Partiers, etc. Every group is more diverse than we think.
- Don't refer to the Constitution, the Founding Fathers, or the Bible--all can be used to support many points of view.
- Do inform, educate, include, support, find common ground.
- Before you start writing, put the point you want to make in one sentence for your own use and then make sure that everything in your letter supports that point.

If your point is that we need more separation of church and state, give two or three examples of how religious influence on public policy has led to bad outcomes. Put your documentation in footnotes that an editor can check.

If your point is that we need more tolerance, give examples of how it has worked to our benefit.

- View this video before you start writing:

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=Hzgzim5m7oU&vq=medium

- Practice using the best words with everyone you speak to, write to, think about. It gets easier.

~Thanks for the tips from Shirley Frederick, a veteran activist now working with Occupy Rapid City