

## **Showing Up for Racial Justice – Letter to the Editor Guide**

prepared by Joseph Phelan April 9, 2010

### *Tips for writing letters to the editor*

1. Read/listen to the letter to the editor page of the newspaper/blog/radio show that you are going to submit to. See what the style of the letters are, see if there is a unifying theme, voice, tone. Emulate and innovate it.
2. Read and follow the submission guidelines for letters to the editor (usually found on websites, or in the staff listing of the newspaper).
3. Tie your letter to an already existing news piece (i.e. In his April 7 Other Views column, *Don't blame Pope Benedict*, Michael Gerson...)
4. Make one point, state it early, keep it brief.
5. Make it relevant to the news organization you are sending it to (for local reference local, for national reference national).

### *Writing tips*

1. Set aside a half an hour.
2. Take the first ten minutes and just write. Do not put the pen down (or stop typing), do not pause to edit, do not censure yourself, do not judge. JUST WRITE!
3. After ten minutes go back through and underline two to three salient points.
4. Take the point that unifies your allies, wins the middle, and divides your enemies and write your letter around it.
5. Let it breathe over night.
6. Go back and edit it the next day, have someone else proof read it.

*Adopted and modified from Talking the Walk: A communications Guide for Racial Justice by Makani Themba-Nixon and Hunter Cutting*