

## Draft Letter to the Editor Template

### Usage: When the State/Federal Legislature is Addressing Domestic Safety Net Programs

Date

Dear Editor:

**October 17** is the *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty* or as it is more popularly known, World Poverty Day. I am writing you to bring much needed attention to the problem of poverty not just globally, but in our local community (Add your local community needs here)

Living in poverty has a wide range of detrimental effects on mental, social, and physical wellbeing. Research has shown that the impact of poverty is significant and long lasting, limiting chances of upward mobility, substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate mental and primary health care, unsafe neighborhoods, and under-resourced schools. The Census Bureau's [latest statistics](#) are particularly sobering. Fifteen percent of Americans (i.e., 46.5 million people including 16.1 million children) are living at or below the poverty line. Children remain the [poorest age group](#) in the country with a poverty rate 21 percent higher than before the Great Recession began in 2007. Real household income has declined 8.3 percent since the start of the Great Recession and the typical American family [makes less](#) today than it did in 1989. [Income inequality](#) remains at record levels with the top 20 percent of households getting 51 percent of all income, with wealth disparities concentrated among ethnic minorities, women, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

The problem of poverty may seem so monumental that many feel powerless to do anything about it. We are not powerless. We each can make a difference, no matter how small. We can advocate for change and show solidarity with those living in poverty in our communities.

1. **Food security** - Donate to your local food bank or soup kitchen. Too many families have children that go to bed hungry at night. Advocate to your Congressional representatives about the impact of federal programs, like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
2. **Healthcare** – Advocate for adequate funding of Medicaid. Health coverage should not be a luxury, particularly for children.
3. **Housing** – Advocate for affordable housing for those who are homeless or in temporary housing. Safe and stable housing is fundamental to lifting people out of poverty.
4. **Education** – Call for adequate funding of our local public schools and colleges. Education offers a path for many to free themselves from poverty.
5. **Employment** – Advocate your Congressional representatives for a federally funded, Workforce Investment Act, to build the capacity of unskilled or low skilled workers, to enter, or advance within the US labor market.

On a final note, the recent economic downturn has shown that none of us are immune from falling on hard times. Showing some compassion and respect for those struggling financially strengthens our community as a whole.

**[INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION]**