



## LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR (“LTE”) GUIDELINES

### WHY LTEs MATTER

- LTEs or Letters to the Editor are one of the most widely read sections in the newspaper; political staffers pay close attention to this page. It’s also a great way to share your views within your wider community.

### HOW TO SUBMIT AN LTE

- Choose which local paper you’d like to submit your LTE to. Then go online and look up the Opinion Section of that paper. There will be guidelines on how to submit a letter to the editor.

### WORD LIMIT & OTHER TO-DOs

- LTEs are shorter than Op-Eds and average 200 words. Do not exceed 250 words. If you cannot make your point in that limited space, switch to an Op-Ed which is typically 750 words or less.
- If you prefer to work within a precise word limit, check news outlet’s online guidelines and/or call the newspaper for clarification. If unable to get clarity, keep it to 200 words.
- Include your full name, hometown where you reside, and best contact information including email and phone.
- Note that news outlets reserve the right to edit for clarity and length. Also, it is customary to submit your LTE to only one paper at a time.

### CONTENT AND TONE OF VOICE

- **Make it as locally relevant as possible.** Why does this matter to this specific community?
- **Get to the point!** This is not a suspenseful piece of writing but a very limited space to express clearly why you think something is of great importance to your community.
- **Make it personal: Tell your story!** LTEs are powerful as human interest stories and the more people can identify with you/your story the more you engage your reader.
- **Be precise!** Aim for precision and clarity, but also try to be personable, even witty, as appropriate.
- Stick to one point and one point only—and don’t write more than 3 paragraphs: one or two short sentences each.
- Tie it in with a recent coverage (event/article/op-ed) to set the stage for context. If you are responding to recent coverage, refer to it by date, headline and include the link to show relevance.
- Figures and facts are helpful when supporting your point, however do not overcrowd your limited space with them. The LTE should be about YOUR story and how the issue impacts you.
- Avoid too much emotion. This may side-track the reader from the issue at hand. No ranting or opposition bashing, for example.

### FOLLOW-UP

- Follow up after a couple of days with the news outlet’s editorial department.
- If you had a letter published recently, that paper is less likely to publish another one soon. Better to try another news outlet instead.

## **SAMPLE LTE:**

Dear editor,

The science is overwhelming. We can no longer ignore the impacts of climate disruption or the carbon and methane pollution from power plants fueling it.

Unfortunately, some in Washington are more worried about the health of polluters' profits than the health of my children's lungs, children who are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of greenhouse gas pollution. Climate deniers in Congress are actively working to block any lifesaving efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect the health and safety of our communities. This has to end.

I hope my children will see a future free the public health dangers of carbon pollution and climate impacts like more frequent and severe extreme weather. For their sake, I ask our leaders in Washington to fully fund and defend the Environmental Protection Agency's lifesaving work to reduce carbon pollution from power plants, the largest source of carbon emissions in the country, and keep our air and our drinking water clean.

NAME, CITY, STATE