



How to Write and Submit a Letter to the Editor (LTE)

What is a Letter to the Editor?

A Letter to the Editor (LTE) is approximately 200–250 words written by you about a current issue or in response to an article in your local paper. It is your chance to shape the public narrative around an issue and address community concerns.

Letter to the Editor campaigns can help create powerful movements because they are some of the most widely read content, both by people who read the local paper *and* by Members of Congress.

Letters to the Editor give everyone a chance to read about how a local issue or policy is affecting their local community. Specifically, Letters to the Editor are a great way to educate your community about NETWORK's **See. Love. Vote.** education and voter engagement campaign.

See a sample LTE at the end of this guide!

Why write a Letter to the Editor?

- LTEs are among the most widely read sections of newspapers and magazines.
- They are closely monitored by legislators to find out what voters are thinking and hearing.
- They can strengthen the impression of widespread support or opposition to an issue.
- They can influence editorial writers to notice an issue or take a position.
- They can influence other members of the media to probe an issue more deeply.

Additional Resources

- **[Video: How to Write and Submit an LTE with Sr. Eilis McCulloh, HM](#)**
- **[See. Love. Vote. Key Messages resource](#)** for guidance and sample messages
- **[Video: See. Love. Vote. Messaging Training](#)**

Steps to Writing a Letter to the Editor

1. Check your local paper for rules.

- o What is the word count?
- o Does the paper expect exclusivity? (In other words, does the paper only accept material that hasn't been submitted or published elsewhere?)
- o What does the paper ask you to include in your signature in your Letter to the Editor? *See step #8 below for more guidance.*

2. Has your paper already covered this issue?

Is there an article that you can cite in your letter? Referencing the paper's previous coverage of the topic makes it more likely that your letter will be published. Are you supporting previous coverage, or perhaps adding another dimension to the coverage?

3. Start with a strong "hook."

Think about how you want to start your letter. Try to use words or a phrase that will grab the editors' and readers' attention! This could be an evocative image, a powerful story, or a jarring statistic.

4. Share your credentials.

What makes you qualified to speak on behalf of your community on this topic? This could be your profession or vocation (*"I'm a social worker/teacher/nurse;" "I'm a Catholic Sister"*), a community role you may have (*"I'm a volunteer at the St. Francis food bank"*), or simply that you are a committed community member (*"I have lived in the River North neighborhood of Chicago for fourteen years"*).

5. Tell the readers what you think.

Though most issues are broad and include many different aspects and policies, try to choose a narrow focus in your letter. For example, "climate change" is broad; the construction of AI data centers that pollute air and water in your state is narrower. You don't have enough words to cover everything, so limit what you're saying to make sure that your Letter to the Editor is clear, concise, and powerful.

In your letter, we encourage you to include your morals or faith, and name values that are shared across race, class, and age. We want to convey that when we all come together and vote, we can deliver the things that we all want and need to thrive – such as affordable health care and housing, food on our tables, welcoming neighborhoods, and clean air and water. Visit the [See. Love. Vote. Key Messages resource](https://networkadvocates.org/vote) for guidance and sample messages.



6. Keep it nonpartisan.

See. Love. Vote. is a nonpartisan education and voter engagement campaign that does not take positions in support or opposition of individual candidates for office. If your LTE invokes the See. Love. Vote. campaign, please do not name any specific party or candidate and their views.

7. Bring it together with a call to action!

This election season, we're trying to motivate people to get out and vote, and to consider the issues that matter to their communities when they go to the polls. You want your letter to inspire people to take action.

8. Sign your letter. Check your newspaper's guidelines. Otherwise, you can include:

- o Your name (title, first and last name, suffix).
- o Your congregational or organizational affiliation, if applicable.
- o Name of your NETWORK Advocates Team, if applicable.
- o Your city/town.

9. Submit your letter!

- o Double-check your submission guidelines.
- o If you would like a NETWORK staff member to review your letter, please email info@networklobby.org and one of our team members will respond.

Sample Letter to the Editor

At my local parish, we offer a food bank every week. Recently, the number of families seeking food has more than tripled. Many tell us that their SNAP benefits have been taken away, and with the increasing cost of groceries, they are not able to purchase enough nutritious food to feed their families.

As a Christian, I take seriously Jesus' words, "I was hungry and you fed me." I want every person in our community to have enough to eat, and to be free to go to work or school with energy and a clear mind. I vote to ensure that there is adequate funding for federal programs like SNAP and WIC that help families put food on the table. Together, we will vote so that none of us have to choose between rent, utilities, or healthy food.