

# Letters to the Editor (LTE) Guide

Contributed by Wendy Carter, September, 2009

## WHY WRITE AN LTE?

- Because many people read letters-to-the-editor (LTEs), they are a quick, effective and continuing means of communicating your campaign message to a wide audience.
- They can be used to correct and clarify facts in a news story, editorial or op-ed piece, oppose or support actions of an official agency, direct attention to a problem, spur news editors to cover an issue that is being overlooked, and urge readers to support your cause.

## LTE WRITING TIPS

- Keep it short - Keep it to about 150 words and never more than 200.
- Don't stray - Be concise, snappy and direct. Then move on. Re-read your text and ask yourself what words or sentences can be deleted without harm to your points.
- Include a phone number where you can be contacted during the day, so they can verify that you wrote it.
- Assume Nothing - Do not assume that your readers are informed on your topic. Give a concise but informative background before plunging into the main issue. Refer to any newspaper article or editorial by date and title.
- Include any relevant credentials that prove you are informed about your topic.
- Maintain Composure - It is okay to express outrage, but it should be kept under control. Avoid personal attacks and focus instead on criticizing specific policies or ideas.
- Localize Your Letter - Readers are more interested in an issue when they see how it affects their lives and communities. Find a way to show how budget cuts or environmental policies will affect this particular readership.
- Avoid Form Letters - Increase your chances of getting your LTE published by sending it to more than one publication. However do not send the EXACT same letter to two competing papers in the same circulation area.
- Make it personal – if you have a personal story to tell include it, but don't make it the main focus.

## OTHER LINKS TO LTE WRITING TIPS

<http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umd.edu/advocacy/editorials.htm>

<http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/guide/lettertotheeditor.html>

## LOCAL PUBLICATIONS FOR LTE

*The Washtenaw County Republican Committee would like to keep track of the LTE that you are sending. When sending a LTE or blog posting if you could cc or forward it to the Public Relations Committee [prcom@wash-gop.com](mailto:prcom@wash-gop.com) then we can keep track of your efforts. This is not to censor your efforts, strictly only to keep track of what is being sent and to look for trends,*

*find if certain topics are lacking, if certain publications are more conducive to printing our LTE, etc.*

**Heritage Newspapers** <http://www.heritagenews.com/lettertoeditor/>

Ann Arbor Journal

The Chelsea Standard

The Dexter Leader

The Manchester Enterprise

The Milan News-Leader

The Saline Reporter

The Ypsilanti Courier

**Ann Arbor.com** <http://www.annarbor.com/news/opinion/>

AnnArbor.com accepts letters to the editor both for our Web site and for our Sunday print edition. Because of limited space, we will only be able to publish a few letters in the newspaper each week. We encourage you to visit AnnArbor.com and express your opinion by emailing us a letter to the editor or by using our “Start a Conversation” box. You can also send letters to the editor by emailing [letters@annarbor.com](mailto:letters@annarbor.com). Emailed submissions will be verified before being posted on their Web site and some may appear in the printed newspaper.

**Mlive.com** <http://www.mlive.com/interact/ann-arbor/>

User-Generated Content, News Comments, Submitted Photos, Videos, Blogs, Forums & Polls

**Ann Arbor Chronicle** <http://annarborchronicle.com/contact>

An online daily news site that reflects and embraces the energy, oddities, and character of Ann Arbor. While they do not have a traditional Letters To The Editor section, if you have content you would like them to consider posting, you can submit user-generated content at the link above.

## **ADDITIONAL USES FOR YOUR LTE**

Writing an LTE is not difficult, but it does take some effort. So you'll want to get as much mileage out of your efforts as possible. Also not every LTE gets published so in light of that fact, you wouldn't want your efforts to go to waste.

LTE can be turned into blog postings or newsletter articles with very modification. Below are just a few websites/blogs where you might want to consider posting your modified LTE. However always be on the lookout for new ways to use your LTE in addition to the ideas contained here.

Washtenaw County Republican Committee <http://www.wash-gop.com/node/add>

Reporting Michigan <http://reportingmichigan.org/emails-to-the-editor>

Right Michigan <http://www.rightmichigan.com/>