

Why and How to Write an LTE

THE WHY

Letters to the Editor can be one of the most effective ways to communicate not only your message but also engaging more activists to your cause. Typically elected officials either employ a clipping service or have an 'in-house' clipping service. Clipping is a service that scrutinizing media mediums for any and all references to a legislator whether they be direct references (An elected official's name is in the body of the article) or indirectly referenced (An elected official's district or political race is referenced). Elected officials must maintain a certain public persona to be re-elected. If they are thanked or criticized in the public eye they must address it.

THE HOW

1. Identify yourself-E.g. Sally Smith life long resident and mother of 5
2. Identify your issue-E.g. I am writing in response to Atty Gen Madigan's position on parental notification
3. Identify your target-E.g. Jack Franks has not signed on to vote for Civil Unions
4. Stay on message and keep argument or substance fact based
5. Proof-read and send to a friend for a 'dummy' check
6. Send letter in timely manner-relevance counts when being run

Sample letters that have been printed