Letters to the Editor (LTEs)

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are a powerful advocacy tool. They are among the most widely read sections of newspapers and magazines and are closely monitored by campaigns to find out what voters are thinking. When LTEs are strategically coordinated and published, they can strengthen the impression of widespread support or opposition to an issue or candidate. Often times, they can influence editorial writers to take a stance or influence other members of the media to probe an issue more deeply. While they start out as one voice, LTEs can build a movement!

Tips for LTE Submission

- Outlets prefer to publish LTEs from folks who live in their circulation zone. You should target your local outlet.
- To find the correct LTE submission instructions for your local outlet, Google the name of your local outlet and “Letter to the Editor”.
- Follow guidelines of the publication to ensure you have the correct length, style, and format. Most publications prefer letters to be 200 words or less.
- Timeliness is key. Many outlets only publish letters responding to articles, editorials, or other letters the day or two after they appear.

Tips for Powerful LTEs

- Frame your letter in relation to a recent news item or topic. Editors are more likely to publish a letter when written in response to a story printed in that publication.
- Use local, specific information whenever possible.
- Be aware of your audience: use talking points that will appeal to the readers, avoid jargon and abbreviations, and don’t engage in personal attacks.
- Include your credentials.
- If you’re using a sample letter from an organization, don’t copy talking points verbatim. Papers can search for canned content after it is published one time.
Dear Editor,

President Trump claims immigrant families in our state are part of an "invasion" (Trump Calls for Deportations in Texas, August 21, *Houston Chronicle*). In reality, our immigrant neighbors are essential members of our community who have contributed to life in Houston for generations.

Through my ministry work at Justice Center, I speak daily with undocumented immigrants. They tell me of their fears of a U.S. deportation system that fails to respect basic human rights.

Our current detention and deportation policies are inhumane. Among other problems, they allow agencies within the Department of Homeland Security to indefinitely detain immigrant families and separate children from their parents.

President Trump’s policies and rhetoric are dangerous. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, almost 70,000 children were locked away in government cages in 2019. Last August, a white nationalist mass shooter obsessed with anti-immigrant rhetoric killed 22 people and injured more. As a person of faith, I cannot allow this to continue. Our nation needs a leader who will act against hate, not embrace it. This Election, I pray that we all evaluate the candidates on these two questions: “Do you love your neighbor? Do you welcome the stranger?”

*Sr. Margaret Mary Sample, Director of Justice Center, Houston*

For additional assistance writing or submitting a letter to the editor, email NETWORK at info@networklobby.org.