

Letters-to-the-Editor Toolkit



Welcome!

Welcome to the Women Forward Letters team! Writing letters to the editor (LTEs) is a powerful way to sway public opinion, particularly if we join together to generate large numbers of letters. As we watch efforts to tear down our democracy, we are anxious, angry, and frustrated but we can channel these emotions into positive action that can make a difference.

Our goal is to help you write LTEs and create writing groups in your community. If you feel as though you have a lot to say but don't know where to start, this toolkit will help you express your opinions and stories in a succinct, personal, and appealing way so that editors will want to share your views with their readers.

Why Write?

As President Obama said in his farewell address, “it falls to each of us to be those anxious, jealous guardians of our democracy.” We will have to fight to keep our freedoms. One way to do this is by writing letters which increase public awareness, encourage informed discussion, and influence voters and policymakers.

We need your help to fight against the Trump Administration that is tearing apart America. LTEs can share your expertise and personal stories about how our elected representatives can and should do better. They can also share facts to fight disinformation which is rampant and unchecked on social media and with right-wing “news” outlets. And your letters can be a call to action for readers and lawmakers.



What Should You Write About?

You should write about issues you feel passionate about and in response to timely news articles and reports that you are connected to personally and professionally.

Women Forward will focus on topics reflecting our vision, mission, and values:

- Democracy
- Unconstitutional actions of DOGE
- Reproductive Freedom
- Economy
- Voting Rights
- Health Care/Social Security & Medicare
- Climate Justice
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Writing Process

Be informed.

Subscribe to our newsletter to ensure you have access to the latest messaging. Explore the Women Forward website for training resources & webinars. Inform your like-minded friends by sharing this toolkit.

Know your local media outlets.

Follow your local daily, weekly, online, and print newspapers and understand their requirements for submission. Each will vary. Some editors may reject partisan letters or welcome mentioning candidates to praise or call-out their actions. Your letter can achieve its goal by focusing on issues that are consistent with the Democrats' policy positions, goals, and accomplishments.

Amplify your messages.

Once your letter is published, share it on social media and reach out to colleagues, family, and friends. Ask that they share it on their social media sites. Keep copies of your letters and a record of your submissions. With your permission, Women Forward may want to feature your letter on its social media platforms or website.

Stay connected to other writers.

Regular calls or zooms can help you brainstorm, identify, and develop topics, check your work, share successes, and motivate others.

Grow your network.

Start your own letter-writing group by recruiting friends, family, and dedicated volunteers to collaborate on letters. Join a Women Forward state Facebook page to collaborate within your community.

Important Guidelines for LTEs

1 The Basics

- Check each publication's submission requirements and deadlines.
- Pace your submissions. Letters should be sent to one publication at a time. Letters not published can be resubmitted to another publication.
- Write between 200 - 250 words. Some publications allow opinion pieces up to 500 words.
- Include verified, truthful, and original content.
- Watch to see if the outlet publishes your piece.

2 Effective LTEs Start Strong and Stay Focused

Speak from personal experience or knowledge:

“As a small business owner, tariffs will increase costs and make it difficult to plan for the future. I don't want to raise prices on my customers but I may have to.”

“ My 10th grade daughter asked if our family would be okay. I was laid off from my federal government job. DOGE and unelected Elon Musk have upended our life. ”

Relate to current events:

“The mass shooting Monday was greeted once again by MAGA extremists offering prayers and platitudes but no solutions.”

“School starts this week and thanks to anti-vaxxers, my children's health is at risk.”

Refer to an article or op-ed in the paper:

“I would like to add a critical point omitted from your article, ‘Americans Grow Weary of Supporting Ukraine.’ We must remember democracy everywhere keeps America safe.

“I strongly disagree with reporter Jack Smith's contention that reproductive freedom is a women's issue, ‘Abortion Rights Impact Limited to Women Voters.’ It is everybody's issue.”

“I am deeply saddened to learn that young people at our local college are disillusioned with politics. ‘Students at Elmira Apathetic about Voting.’”

“Hats off to The Chronicle for its editorial, ‘The Courts Fight Back Against Trump.’ As a middle class household, it's good to know someone has our back.”

3

End with a Call to Action and Reflect on Your Opening

“Do not forget how important this issue is when you vote...”

“Call your representatives to keep our checks and balances intact and advocate for Congress to maintain the power of the purse.”

“I urge Senator X to vote for this bill to...”

LTE Format

DEAR EDITOR,

PARAGRAPH 1

1. Reference the newspaper's article and/or summarize your opinion about timely news.
2. Summarize in one sentence your response to a published article or a national news story and provide an alternative point of view or supportive agreement on the topic.

PARAGRAPH 2

In a few sentences, outline your suggested theory and rationale. Add some passion here and why the topic you are writing about is so important to you. Suggestions:

1. Provide more details about what you believe is missing crucial information in the article.
2. Mention your expertise and personal experience with a topic to rebut reporting or present data from another point of view.
3. Reference evidence to support your opinion.
4. Share a consequence, negative or positive, from the suggested point of view of the article.

PARAGRAPH 3

1. Wrap up with a closing sentence with a powerful and personal sentiment on the topic and why the issue is important.
2. End with a call to action related to the concern you are addressing, i.e. support voting rights.

SINCERELY,

[YOUR NAME]

[OPTIONAL - TITLE, PROFESSION]

[CITY, STATE]

LTE Example

Review published and submitted letters from Women Forward members to inspire and give you ideas for your letter writing. Do not copy examples word for word but use them for consistent messaging and style guidance.

Arizona Daily Star

DOGE Destruction

Will someone please explain how firing thousands of people will help the economy? Those fired may receive some severance pay, but what happens when that runs out? How are essential services going to continue when DOGE decimates entire agencies?

Experience in the corporate world taught me that re-organization and cost cutting is successful when the process is analyzed and implemented methodically. Jumping in with a chainsaw with no follow-up plan always fails. The organization loses intellectual capital, and the cuts impede operations and damage the reputation of the firm. My employer tried this approach. It resulted in a major production plant shut down because the only chemical engineer licensed to manage it was fired along with experienced crews. Weeks of production were lost. The engineer and many others were rehired. It took months to return to the previous levels of efficiency.

No one is against cutting waste and eliminating. But DOGE is going about this wrong; it is damaging and dangerous. Call your members of Congress.

Judy J Gillies, Downtown



Tips for Social Media

1. Promotion

If you are on social media, share your published LTEs and those published by other writers. In your posts, mention people and organizations and use hashtags to spread the word and amplify your letter.

Example Post

I am so excited my letter to the editor was published in @washingtonpost about why not cutting Medicaid and access to healthcare is so important. #Medicaid #FederalBudget [Add a link to the publication or copy and paste your letter in the post]

Possible Mentions: @POTUS @RobertKennedyJr @HHSGov

Possible Hashtags: #Medicare #Healthcare #seniorcare #longtermcare #disability

2. Networking

Connect, join, and share other advocacy groups' posts to support protests, Democrats, and efforts to stop the Trump Administration's damaging policies.

Important Links for Writers

[Indivisible](#)

[American Civil Liberties Union](#)

[Planned Parenthood](#)

[Democracy Docket](#)

[Democratic Party](#)

[National Letters to the Editor List](#)

[National Organization of Women](#)

Join us on our social media. Share these links with friends

Website: <https://www.womenforward.us/>

[Substack](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Tik Tok](#)

[Threads](#)

[X](#)



Democracy

Thank you.

We are interested to hear from you about your letter writing! Contact us via email at hello@womenforward.us.

Subscribe to the Women Forward newsletter at <https://www.womenforward.us/newsletters>.