



Rhode Island Tobacco Control Network

Media Advocacy

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor (LTE)

Letters to the editor are a powerful and FREE way to communicate with decision-makers and your community. In Rhode Island, lawmakers are very interested in what voters are saying in the local press, so don't be shy about submitting a letter to the editor to praise their actions, challenge their actions, or simply to draw attention to the crisis of tobacco use in your local community.

- Check the paper's guidelines for writing letters, which should be stated on the editorial page.
- Include your name, address and daytime telephone number—include title if pertinent.
- Letter should generally be 200 words or less, but check specific newspaper's policy. (Letters are usually subject to condensation by newspaper.)
- Some newspapers have online submission features, i.e. you can copy and paste your letter directly into a text box and click "submit". In other cases, you will need to email your letter to the newspaper.
- If you are emailing a letter to the editor to a newspaper, paste the letter directly into the body of your email. Many reporters will not open attachments.
- Write letters about current issues, and respond promptly to stories and editorials.
- Include all relevant information about the issue—most importantly, why it's important to you personally. Papers may print letters to the editor each day or once weekly. Letters to the editor may be published right away, can take weeks or may never appear in print.
- If you receive a phone call from the newspaper, return the call! Newspapers often phone letter writers to confirm the submission.
- Please send us a copy of your final LTE for our records!