

# Take Action



## How to Write & Submit a Letter to the Editor (LTE)

A Letter to the Editor, or LTE, is a brief statement meant to convey information or share an opinion. The goal is usually to effect change or activate readers to take action. LTEs are also an easy way to reach a local audience. This brief guide is intended to help you write strong LTEs in support of our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## Helpful Hints

- Be sure you **know the word count** allowed by the newspaper to which you're submitting (see pages 3-5 of this document). You don't want your letter to be rejected or to have the last sentences cut off. Most newspapers allow 200-250 words. This is usually around 2 paragraphs.
- If you're replying to an article printed in the same newspaper, your first sentence should refer to that story. **Example:** I don't agree with John Doe in his article, "Why I Hate Letters to the Editor," because...
- If you're *not* replying to another article in the same newspaper, the first sentence should either clearly state the topic you're writing on, or you can start by stating who you are and then state your topic. **Examples:**
  1. It's time to protect our families' healthcare records from government snooping. As someone who grew up in Montana, I know that privacy is a right that we all hold dear... **or**
  2. As a lifelong Montanan, a husband, and a father, I'm tired of extremist politicians interfering with my family's private medical decisions.
- **Use values-based messaging.** Readers will be more compelled if you're clear about your values and how they inform your position. Start with values, then follow with facts and data. **Example:** I think all Montanans should get to decide when and if they start a family. Our freedom of choice is part of what it means to live and thrive in the Big Sky state. That's why I support accessible abortion care.
- Be concise. Keep sentences short. Eliminate jargon and most big words. **Examples:**
  1. **Too wordy and academic:** Reflecting upon the discourse with regard to judicial independence, I've determined that I stand opposed to political interference in family healthcare decisions.

# Take Action



2. **Better:** Montanans want our judges to be fair and unbiased. That's why we need to keep extremist politicians out of our families' private medical choices.
- Close with a **clear statement about the action** you want readers to take. **Example:** I hope voters join me in learning the facts and voting for judges who will defend the Montana Constitution.
  - **Check spelling and grammar** before you submit. Most newspapers do not edit LTEs.
  - Email your LTE to the newspaper or submit via their online portal. **Copy and paste your LTE into the body of an email. Do not send it as an attachment.** Most newspapers won't open attachments from unknown senders.
  - Wait 24 hours. Then call or email the newspaper and ask if your letter will be printed. If it won't, ask if there are changes you can make to get it printed. Listen to their feedback and determine if there are ways you can edit your LTE to be a better fit for the style or tone they typically accept.

# Take Action



## Montana Newspaper LTE Guidelines and Contacts

### **Daily Newspapers**

#### **Billings Gazette**

Letters to the editor must contain the writer's name, street address, and work or home phone number. Maximum length is 250 words.

Online form: [https://billingsgazette.com/forms/contact/letter\\_to\\_the\\_editor/](https://billingsgazette.com/forms/contact/letter_to_the_editor/)

Address: P.O. Box 36300, Billings, MT, 59107-6300

#### **Bozeman Daily Chronicle**

Letters should be no more than 300 words and must include the writer's first and last name (no initials), home address, and daytime phone number. Addresses and phone numbers may be used for verification but will not be published.

Online form: [https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/submissions/online\\_services/letter/](https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/submissions/online_services/letter/)

Email: [citydesk@dailychronicle.com](mailto:citydesk@dailychronicle.com)

Address: 2820 W. College St. Bozeman, MT 59715

#### **Great Falls Tribune**

Letters should be 250 words or less.

Online form: <http://static.greatfalls Tribune.com/lettertoeditor/>

Address: 205 River Drive South, Great Falls, MT 59405

Email: [tribletters@greatfalls Tribune.com](mailto:tribletters@greatfalls Tribune.com)

#### **Havre Daily News**

Online contact form: <https://www.havredailynews.com/contact>

Email: [news@havredailynews.com](mailto:news@havredailynews.com)

Address: P.O. Box 431, Havre, MT 59501

#### **Helena Independent Record**

Please limit letters to 250 words. Letters may be edited for clarity or length. Writers must include their address and daytime phone for verification.

Online form: [https://helenair.com/forms/online\\_services/letter/](https://helenair.com/forms/online_services/letter/)

Address: Readers' Alley P.O. Box 4249, Helena, MT 59604

# Take Action



## **Kalispell Daily Inter Lake**

300-word limit

Online form: <https://form.jotform.com/63216449575160>

## **Lewistown News-Argus**

Email: [editor@lewistownnews.com](mailto:editor@lewistownnews.com)

Online form: <http://lewistown.server282.com/content/send-letter-editor>

Address: 521 Main Street, Lewistown, MT 59457

## **Livingston Enterprise**

Include your real name, address, and phone number. Letters may be edited for length, taste, and libel considerations.

Email: [enterprise@livent.net](mailto:enterprise@livent.net)

Online form:

[https://www.livingstonenterprise.com/site/forms/online\\_services/letter\\_editor\\_imported-1307115691/](https://www.livingstonenterprise.com/site/forms/online_services/letter_editor_imported-1307115691/)

Address: PO Box 2000, Livingston, MT 59047

## **Missoulian**

Letters should be 200 words or less. Letters must include your real name, address, and phone number.

Online form: [https://missoulian.com/forms/contact/letter\\_to\\_the\\_editor/](https://missoulian.com/forms/contact/letter_to_the_editor/)

Email: [oped@missoulian.com](mailto:oped@missoulian.com)

Address: 500 S. Higgins Ave, Missoula, MT 59801

## **Miles City Star**

Include the writer's name and an address and daytime phone number. Less than 500 words in length.

Online form: [https://www.milescitystar.com/site/forms/online\\_services/letter\\_editor\\_imported-1307115691/](https://www.milescitystar.com/site/forms/online_services/letter_editor_imported-1307115691/)

## **Montana Standard (Butte)**

Please limit letters to 400 words. The Montana Standard prints street addresses or box numbers with all letters, and requires a phone number for verification, not publication.

Online form: [https://mtstandard.com/forms/online\\_services/letter/](https://mtstandard.com/forms/online_services/letter/)

Email: [editor@mtstandard.com](mailto:editor@mtstandard.com)

Address: Our Readers Speak, PO Box 672, Butte, MT 59703

# Take Action



## **Ravalli Republic**

300 words or less

Online form: [https://ravallirepublic.com/forms/contact/letter\\_to\\_the\\_editor/](https://ravallirepublic.com/forms/contact/letter_to_the_editor/)

## **Weekly Newspapers:**

### **Belgrade News**

250-word limit

Email: [editor@belgrade-news.com](mailto:editor@belgrade-news.com)

W. Main Street Belgrade, MT

### **Boulder Monitor**

300-word limit. Signed letter, contact information including city, state.

Email: [janderson@jeffersoncountycourier.com](mailto:janderson@jeffersoncountycourier.com)

### **Flathead Beacon**

Letters should be 300 words or less. Letters may be edited for length, clarity, taste, and to prevent libel. Include the writer's first and last name, phone number, and address for verification purposes.

Email: [editor@flatheadbeacon.com](mailto:editor@flatheadbeacon.com)

Address: 217 Main St, Kalispell, MT 59901