

# Guide to Making Public Comments: HOW & WHEN

## Effective Letter to the Editor Guidelines

- Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are generally short—150-250 words. Each media outlet specifies the exact length, which usually can be found on its website's opinions page. If not, call the outlet for the maximum word count.
- LTEs are written in response to a specific article, event, or editorial.
  - Begin your LTE with one sentence on what you are responding to and why this issue is important to you and/or to the media outlet's audience.
  - Present facts or statistics to support your statement, but make them brief.
  - Make a clear argument within the first three sentences or risk losing the reader's attention.
  - End with a call-to-action.

*EXAMPLE from 2017:*

*Dear Editor,*

*How can it be that Congress is poised to take health care access away from millions of Americans?*

*The Senate version of the American Health Care Act (AHCA) would cause 22 million more Americans to lose their health insurance and 15 million fewer will be enrolled in Medicare by 2026, than under the current Affordable Care Act.*

*This bill would block people from accessing essential care. It removes critical safeguards for people with pre-existing conditions for everything from cancer to diabetes to having suffered domestic abuse. It even dramatically slashes the Medicaid program.*

*It is no surprise that leading public health and medical institutions oppose the AHCA. But given today's divided political climate I find it even more telling that polling shows a mere 17% of Americans support it. Perhaps that's why the Senate hid its version of this terrible bill from a rightly skeptical public as long as possible. Let your Senators know you oppose this bill!*

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- LTEs must be submitted ideally within one week of event or article publication of the article to be considered timely/catch the attention of editors
- Most media outlets will have an online submission form for LTEs on their websites and/or an email address for submission (see directly links below).
  - **Bradenton Times** - You can email your editorial to [news@thebradentontimes.com](mailto:news@thebradentontimes.com) or post a comment by clicking the link to 'post a comment'
  - **Bradenton Herald** - Submit a letter to the editor [access online form here](#)
  - **Herald Tribune** - email directly to [letters.editor@herald.com](mailto:letters.editor@herald.com)
  - **Observer** - email directly to [EastCountyLetters@YourObserver.com](mailto:EastCountyLetters@YourObserver.com)