



# AIUSA LETTER TO THE EDITOR GUIDE

## ACCESS TO ABORTION IS A HUMAN RIGHT PROTECT ACCESS TO ABORTION IN YOUR STATE BY VOTING YES ON BALLOT INITIATIVE

**Thank you** for your interest in submitting a letter to the editor (LTE) to your local newspaper calling on others in your state to vote YES on the ballot initiative to protect access to abortion in the upcoming elections.

### **BEFORE YOU START: KEY THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING AN LTE:**

**BE TIMELY.** The likelihood that your letter will be published increases significantly if you submit your letter to refute, contribute to, or correct a recently published piece from the outlet. Submit your letter as soon as possible, ideally the same day the article ran, and don't forget to reference that article in your letter.

**KNOW OUTLET POLICIES.** Different newspapers have different rules that are important to consider when writing a letter to the editor. Make sure you check the outlet's submission guidelines and follow them closely. Read recently published letters by the newspaper and mirror their format. Common length restrictions are 200 to 300 words, but some are as short as 150.

**BE CONCISE AND TO THE POINT.** Make sure the letter speaks to the audience, so don't use jargon.

**KNOW YOUR FACTS.** Keep your letter brief and to the point – focus on making one key point in two or three paragraphs, and use just a couple key facts or statistics, or a very brief story, to support your argument.

**TAKE TIME AND THOUGHT.** Organize your letter logically. Address the issue, make your statement, present solid evidence, and include your call to action.

**STAND OUT.** Keep in mind that newspapers receive hundreds of letters every day; yours has to stand out in order to get published. So don't forget to present your experience, add a personal touch, and work the local angle – as long as you keep it to 200 words or under!

### **GET STARTED! WRITE YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR:**

#### ***Start with the article you are responding to:***

- Today's article on the state of abortion in STATE missed a key point...
- Your article (title, date) rightly pointed out that ....

#### ***Set the context and highlight the urgency:***

- Abortion is a human right and too many people in STATE continue to be denied this right.



- Unless we protect this right, anti-abortion politicians will do everything they can to make access to abortion as difficult as possible.
- This ballot initiative seeks protections to abortion care in our state's constitution and ensure that every person in STATE can make personal decisions about their bodies and their lives.

***Underscore the messages of empathy, freedom, safety, or trust***

- **Freedom:** Every person in STATE should have the freedom to make our own healthcare decisions, not politicians. Without this Constitutional amendment, anti-abortion politicians and other abortion opponents will never stop pushing for a total ban. That's why we're working to amend the state constitution and protect our right to make private and personal decisions, free from government interference.
- **Safety:** This ballot initiative ensures abortion is regulated like any other health care procedure, while also giving us the freedom to access abortion care without government interference. It doesn't remove any medical safeguards or safety precautions for abortion care or change the requirement that abortion be provided by licensed, qualified medical professionals. Abortion care is safe and patient centered. With this ballot initiative it will stay that way.
- **Trust/personal:** There are deeply personal reasons why someone may decide to have an abortion. We all should have the right to make those decisions free from government interference.
- **Empathy:** No matter how you personally feel about abortion, these deeply personal decisions should be left to patients – not politicians. We know from patient stories here in STATE and across the country, that abortion bans harm pregnant patients and prevent healthcare providers from giving them the medical care they need. This measure ensures that a patient's needs, not politics, will drive medical decisions.

***Add a local or personal angle using one of these, or similar:***

- People in my community are getting involved by .....
- This is important to me because.....

***End with a call to action, pick one/some of these:***

- This election season, please vote yes on this ballot initiative. Make sure you get to the polls to show your support for the human right to abortion
- We have the chance to enshrine the right to abortion in the state constitution through this ballot initiative. Make sure you vote yes.
- We have an opportunity to make history in our state. Educate your friends, family and colleagues about why they should care about this issue and vote yes on this ballot initiative.

***Re-read, look at word count, and submit!***

Remember that keeping it short (200 words) will increase the chances your letter will run. Many outlets now have an online form that makes submission easy, so look for that. And don't forget to submit your letter as soon as possible-*ideally the same day the article ran*-and reference the article you are commenting on.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [AIUSA Messaging guidance on Abortion](#)