



How to improve the odds your letter is published in your local newspaper

The letter to the editor (LTE) section is one of the most widely read parts of a newspaper. These letters can help win issue campaigns by:

- **Raising Awareness:** an LTE is a great way to raise the profile of redistricting reform in your local community.
- **Responding Rapidly:** many publications print LTEs within a day or two of receiving them, making them one of the most effective actions when trying to respond quickly to new developments or announcements.
- **Sending a Message:** LTEs show folks who are unsupportive that their constituents care passionately about an issue.
- **Persuading:** an LTE can show how redistricting reform affects local people in a way that those on the fence can sympathize with.

Because most newspapers do not publish form letters, we're not providing one letter for all volunteers to copy and paste into emails to editors. It would be a waste of your time. Instead, we offer the following suggestions, which should help get your letter in print:

- **Follow the Rules** – most newspapers have rules about what they will and will not publish. If you check your local newspaper's website, you should find guidance on the maximum length and any other restrictions.
- **Keep it Short** – if your newspaper places a maximum word limit on letters, don't feel like you need to reach the limit. Good short letters are better than long rambling letters. They are also more effective and quickly get to the point.
- **Be Informative** – in a short letter, you probably aren't going to be able to say everything you want to say about redistricting, but you can inform readers to go to Independent Map's website (www.mapamendment.org) for more information.
 - **Don't Delve into Policy** – avoid using a long string of dull facts, there's generally not enough room in an LTE to make a nuanced policy argument, and your passion is more powerful.
- **Make it Easy on the Editor** – your local newspaper's website will have an email address and a street address for letters to the editor. Many editors prefer to receive letters in the text of an email.
- **Identify Yourself** – be sure to include your name, address, and phone number. Before publishing your letter, an editor may have a question or want to make sure the author is identified correctly. We ask volunteers not to represent themselves as writing on behalf of Independent Maps, but we do encourage volunteers to send informative letters over their own names.
- **Tell Your Story** – describe how the issue has personally affected you, your family, neighbors, etc. and tie it into why you support Independent Maps.
- **Make a Call to Action** – end your letter with a specific call to action (i.e. donate, volunteer, etc.)