

WHAT IS A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the Editor can be very effective advocacy tools. Having a strong letter published helps you reach both a wide public audience and your elected officials with the same effort! In a letter to the editor, you can get the word out about Pregnant Workers' Rights and can spark support for the legislation.

HOW SHOULD YOU SEND YOUR LETTER?

Follow the newspaper's directions: Instructions on how to submit a letter to the editor to some of the local newspapers around the Commonwealth is provided in the examples document. If your local newspaper is not listed, information on how and to whom to submit your letter to the editor can usually be found on the letters page in your paper, which often includes guidelines on what the paper is looking for. If you can't find the information you need, simply call the paper and ask how to go about submitting a letter to the editor.

Typically, emailing your letter to the editor is the easiest form of submission. Be email savvy. If you submit by email, paste your letter into the text of the email and put "Letter re: [your topic or article name]" in the subject line. Do not send attachments. Many papers will not even open an email with an attachment. OR some newspapers offer an online submission form – this would be the most preferred method of submission. Simply go to your newspapers website to see if they have an online submission form.

HOW DO YOU WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Open the letter with a simple salutation:

Don't worry if you don't know the editor's name. A simple "To the Editor of the Courier Journal," or just "To the Editor:" is sufficient. If you have the editor's name, however, you should use it to increase the possibilities of your letter being read.

Grab the reader's attention:

Your opening sentence is very important. It should tell readers what you're writing about, and make them want to read more.

Explain what the letter is about at the start:

Throughout your letter, remember the rule:

Be quick,
Be concise, and then
Be quiet.

Explain why Pregnant Workers' Rights are important:

Give Evidence!

Be clear in showing why the passage of PWRA is important. No woman in Kentucky should have to choose between the health of her pregnancy and her job. Please feel free to use information provided in the Fact Sheet!

State your opinion!

State your support for PWRA and explain how its passage will contribute to our families, communities, and economy in the Commonwealth. Be specific. And the more good reasons and/or personal experiences you can share to back up your suggestions, the better.

Refer to the legislator or corporation you are trying to influence by name. If your letter includes a legislator's name, in almost all cases staff will give him or her the letter to read personally.

Keep it brief!

Keep your letter short, focused, and interesting. In general, letters should be under 200 words, 150 or less is best; stay focused on one (or, at the most, two) main point(s); and get to the main point in the first two sentences. If possible include interesting facts, relevant personal experience, and any local connections to the issue.

Sign the Letter!

Be sure to write your full name (and title, if relevant) and to include your address, phone number, and e-mail address. **Newspapers won't print anonymous letters**, though in some cases they may withhold your name on request. They may also call you to confirm that you wrote the letter before they publish it.

Check your letter to make sure it is clear and to the point!

A newspaper may not print every letter it receives, but clear, well-written letters are likely to be given more serious consideration.

Here are a few helpful tips for getting your letters accepted by the editor:

- Keep your letter under 300 words. Editors have limited space for printing letters, and some papers have stated policies regarding length (check the editorial page for this).

- Make sure your most important points are stated in the first paragraph. Editors may need to cut parts of your letter and they usually do so from the bottom up.
- Use local statistics and personal stories to better illustrate your point.
- Editors may want to contact you, so include your phone number and e-mail address.

Things to Avoid:

- Don't overstate/exaggerate your points. One overstatement makes every following point suspect.
- Don't insult your opponents.
- Avoid jargon or acronyms
- Never use all capital letters or bold text to emphasize a word. It will rarely be printed that way and may prevent your from being considered. You may italicize one or two words, but most papers will print it in plain text regardless — the words must speak for themselves.