

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Over the last two years I have had some 100 letters to the editor published with and without Libertarian affiliation – but all had a Libertarian perspective. They have appeared in the San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco Chronicle and two weekly alternative newspapers – the SF Bay Guardian and SF Weekly. The LTE's have covered a broad range of topical news events or happenings or in response to editorials.

How was this achieved?

First some simple guidelines must be followed. As a general rule LTE's must be under 150 words. They must be as the SF Chronicle states: current - correct - concise and pithy.

It goes without saying the LTE must have correct spelling, grammar and punctuation as no editor will waste more than a second on any LTE submitted with bad English. Use spell-check and grammar correction software to review what you wrote. Eyeball what you wrote word for word for words that sound the same but mean different things. Examples would be: mane vs. main or fore vs. four or two vs. to.

One extremely important factor in getting an LTE accepted is timeliness. If you read a newspaper in the morning and see an issue of import – get the LTE out that morning. Sending out an LTE a couple days after the fact is a waste of time and effort as it is a day late and dollar short.

Another method of getting an LTE printed is to be anniversary/date conscious. Most newspapers will publish appropriate news stories or articles on important dates or anniversaries. A recent example was the 4th anniversary of the Iraq invasion with editorials and LTE's about the Iraq fiasco.

To increase the chances of getting an LTE published stick to local issues or if it is a statewide or national issue - what's the local impact. The LTE page will usually be split between local, state and national issues depending on space and how hot the topic. Local issues always carry weight if topical and present an issue from a local angle.

LTE's presenting a radical viewpoint may be published if properly presented in response to an issue of import. Newspapers cater to a wide audience. If you present something the newspaper believes this audience should be aware of or at least consider they will publish the LTE. See some of those below where the editors as an example headlined the LTE with: **Taxes are thievery** and **Repeal all taxes** and **No free housing**.

For Libertarians who are the heads of a committee or members of a commission or have some position of authority add this to the signature line. The editor will decide whether or not to include the affiliation but titles or positions of authority give verisimilitude to the LTE and a higher likelihood of being published as being representative of a viewpoint.

For Libertarians who do not have a position you may still include the title Libertarian after your name as the editor very well may include it if they believe it presents a viewpoint of import. I have had several published without title or affiliation but the LTE presented a Libertarian viewpoint on a topic.

Another method of getting an LTE published is in response to editorials by the newspaper. A well written rebuttal or letter of support has an excellent opportunity of being published.

When local or state ballot propositions appear on the ballot this is another time which is ripe for a well written LTE. This is especially true if they involve bonds or government funding or just plain political chicanery for catering to a special interest group. The same also applies to legislation if it is coming up for a vote or if it has

been voted on but not signed. Arousing public commentary is always a good thing when it comes to legislation which goes against basic Libertarian principles and saying why it is wrong for the general public.

Another factor when appropriate is to add facts and figures which have been documented as this adds to the LTE and its veracity.

Another important note is to not send the exact same letter to several different newspapers. Newspapers when they publish have copyrights to what is published in their newspaper. Sending differently worded LTE's about the same topic is perfectly kosher – just not the exact same word for word LTE.

When sending LTE's do not inundate the newspaper by sending LTE's on a daily basis. This dramatically lessens the chances of ever getting an LTE published. Once or twice week is probably the most as the newspaper does have to publish viewpoints from other writers.