

Introduce yourself to federal lawmakers with a Letter to the Editor

When advocating for heart-healthy policies to your federal representative, publishing a letter to the editor (LTE) in your local paper is a great way to demonstrate the importance of our priorities. Take this opportunity to use the “Life is Why” theme as a platform for sharing your story.

Writing an effective LTE:

- **Keep your LTEs short (no more than 100 words).** Some papers may have limits, so check before writing and submitting.
- **Share from personal experience.** Your story will give your LTE more impact by making a personal connection to the issues you care about. It will go a lot further than facts alone in persuading readers to support AHA. Sharing your “why” is the perfect place to start.
- **Don't wait until the end of your LTE to state its purpose.** Lay it out in the beginning and then back it up with your story and corresponding facts.
- **Use the great resources on yourethecure.org** to substantiate your LTE with facts.
- **Call out specific lawmakers.** If you want to get an elected official's attention, be sure to mention their name. Their staff monitors local news, ensuring your LTE is picked up.
- **Call on the help of your community,** in addition to lawmakers. Our success of will depend on collective action, so make sure you address your fellow residents who may be reading your LTE and encourage them to join the cause.
- **Consider what you want your readers to do after they finish reading your LTE.** Then include that call to action at the bottom. For starters, it's always a good idea to direct them to yourethecure.org to learn more. More specifically, you can ask them to share their “why” with lawmakers through direct contact and/or social media.

Things to keep in mind when submitting:

- **Check in with your local newspaper.** Each paper has different guidelines for sending in a LTE. These are often available on their website, but you can also call for instructions.
- **Provide your contact information.** When you submit your LTE, leave your name and contact information so the publication can verify the validity of your submission.

Conclusion

When drafting your LTE, consult state advocacy staff to get the latest talking points on issues that have been in the news. This will help give you direction and write a LTE that is both topical and likely to draw the attention of federal lawmakers.