



TENNESSEANS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO THE DEATH PENALTY

HONORING LIFE BY ABOLISHING THE DEATH PENALTY

Writing Effective Letters to the Editor

(based on Writing Wrongs by Nancy Oliveira)

Letters to the editor take minimal work but have a big impact. I strongly encourage you to add your voice to the growing movement as a way to expose the truth about capital punishment in America. Help dynamite the myth that the death penalty is necessary and effective.—Nancy Oliveira

WHY YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR (LTE) IS IMPORTANT

- Support for the death penalty is a mile wide and an inch deep. Once people learn even a few facts about the death penalty system, they often begin to question its effectiveness or appropriateness.
- Thousands of people read the newspaper daily and LTEs are the most widely read section of the paper.
- LTEs demonstrate to a newspaper that there is interest in a particular subject. Papers are inclined to run more stories on subjects that receive more attention from readers.
- Newspapers print letters according to the volume received. Even if your letter isn't published, your letter often helps someone else's letter get published.
- Your letter provides useful talking points to people who share your perspective.

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER WITH A GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING PUBLISHED

- Use email if possible.
- Respond to a specific article or editorial in the paper. Be timely. Write within a day or two of the article's publication.
- Include the title of the article and date of publication in the subject-line of the email.
- Include your name, address, and phone number. Newspapers may call you to confirm your identity; but, they will not print your contact info.
- Only send your letter to one paper at a time. Most newspapers insist on exclusivity.
- Focus on making one point. Be brief and succinct.
- Be wise and thoughtful. Anger can turn off readers.
- Make sure your facts are accurate. Please email or call the state office if you need to fact check.

Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (TADP)

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