



Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are a great (and quick) way to respond to articles. Make sure that you specifically identify the article you are responding to in your LTE and that you make your argument succinctly. Check word limits, since they're rarely over 200 words. LTEs are usually in direct response to a piece that has already appeared, rather than introducing a new argument in an op-ed. They also are generally reserved for responding to pieces that appeared in print, as they in turn will be featured in the print edition.

Structuring Your Op-Ed

Idea or Lede: Where you draw your audience in and make clear what your op-ed is about. You can be witty or personal – just try to have a compelling entry into your piece. Find a way to use current news here to ensure that op-ed editors and readers will understand why you're writing this now. Just try to avoid making it too dry by repeating something people already know, or by being too cliché (“Imagine you're...” is a major trope to avoid in advocacy writing).

Argument: Your overall thesis should go here. Have a strong few sentences or paragraph here that will let the reader know what your point of view is. Use the following graphs, or “evidence,” to explain why you're right.

Evidence: Try to give up to three real-life stories and/or data that will feed into your overall argument.

Wind back to original assertion: Having laid out the evidence, make the case for why this supports your idea or call to action.

Conclusion: Circle back to your lede.

Some more tips:

- If you're making a call to action, make sure to do it in a way that doesn't sound too much like an email appeal, which can be a bit more specific. Above all, editors are interested in telling a story for their readers, not providing a platform for an organization to advertise itself. Take care when walking that line.
- Look online for the publication's specific rules for Letters to the Editor submission guidelines. LTEs are generally between 100 - 250 words long. Make sure you check the outlet's submission guidelines and adhere to them closely.
- When thinking of where you might submit your piece, consider the audience of the outlet. Are there outlets that might not be among the more obvious choices that might speak to an audience we want to reach? Are there niche publications that might be more open to a specific angle than others?
- Let us know at campaigns@aiusa.org if you are interested in or have taken this action to write and submit an LTE to your local paper.

Talking Points for LTEs:

- Contrary to the Taliban's repeated claims that they will respect the rights of Afghans, [Amnesty International documented](#) a wide range of human rights violations carried out by the group, including [decimation of the rights of women and girls](#), targeted killings of civilians, crackdowns on protests, the media and civil society, and attacks on human rights defenders.



- After escaping a deadly situation, Afghans were brought to the United States via humanitarian parole, granting them the ability to stay for one to two years. Yet, once Afghans' parole expires, they will face a new set of hurdles as they attempt to find alternative pathways to remain legally in the U.S. Without Congressional action, Afghans will either find themselves stuck in a backlogged asylum process for years on end, or they will be forced to go back to a dangerous situation where their lives are at grave risk.
- It is unlikely that Afghans brought to the United States on temporary status will be able to return to their homes in the near, mid, or even long-term future
- Afghans that the U.S. government relocated face uncertainty and insecurity, including the threat of family separation.
- Afghans are already thriving in their new communities, but the continued uncertainty of their status has posed challenges for some prospective employers and made it more difficult for all evacuees to find stable, long-term employment.
- The chaotic evacuation out of Afghanistan compounded by an inadequate and ill-prepared immigration system underscores the need for Congress to provide a roadmap to citizenship for all Afghans seeking safety.
- Rather than punishing Afghan arrivals for being evacuated, Congress has an urgent obligation to ensure they have a chance to become lawful permanent residents so they can start putting down roots in their new community and regain a sense of home.
- To ensure that Afghans find real, lasting safety in the U.S., Congress must pass the Afghan Adjustment Act ([Senate 4787](#), [House 8685](#)) by the end of 2022, which would establish a roadmap to citizenship for Afghans in the U.S. and expand humanitarian pathways for those left behind.
- The U.S. government must welcome, protect, and support our new Afghan neighbors and ensure they have a roadmap to stay permanently and develop real roots in their new communities.
- The U.S. must take every necessary measure to ensure their safety and welcome them as new neighbors with dignity and respect for their human rights.
- Our Senators have an opportunity to reverse course and show leadership.
- Without Congressional action, there is no clear path for Afghans with humanitarian parole to stay in the U.S. long-term.
- The U.S. Government must pass an Afghan Adjustment Act to expand humanitarian pathways out of Afghanistan and establish a roadmap to citizenship for Afghans seeking safety in the United States.
- Our commitment to offering refuge from violence and persecution requires our elected leaders to demonstrate moral leadership.
 - As evidenced by the broad support for this bipartisan, bicameral legislation, it is clear Congress agrees that every Afghan family should have a peaceful and dignified process and a pathway to permanent protection.
 - Passing this bill would be a step towards the longer-term goal of ensuring the human rights of Afghans seeking safety, whether in the country or in the U.S. and fearful of being deported, given the dire human rights crisis in the country, particularly for women and WHRDs.
 - Afghans arriving or already arrived in the U.S. need a pathway to real and lasting safety. Safety must not have expiration date.