

## Small Donor Elections Letter to the Editor Guide

Tips before you get started:

- Be respectful
- Be personal - talk about why money in politics matters to you personally. Do you feel like corporations and developers have too much influence in your community? Do you feel like your representatives listen to their donors more than their constituents like you? Do you feel like good candidates don't have the resources to run for office?
- Be direct - keep your letter brief and to the point, and where appropriate, mention your legislator by name
- Be timely - when possible, submit a letter that directly responds to or builds on another recent article or current event.
- Know where you are submitting - different news outlets have different word count guidelines.

How to write a Letter to the Editor (LTE):

1. Always start off by telling a short "story of self" (one to two sentences) that connects you to a specific issue or value, so that folks know who you are and why you're writing.
  - a. Example: I grew up in Oregon and I've noticed that over the past decade, our elected officials have become out of touch and listen more to their wealthy donors than they do to their constituents like me.
2. Explain the problem in more detail, or talk about the consequences of the problem.
  - a. Example: While wealthy donors, like landlords and real estate developers, have been using their campaign contributions and influence to block rent stabilization policies in Salem, people in my community are being evicted from their homes.
3. Explain your solution and/or opinion about the solution.
  - a. Example: Obviously in the short term, these politicians need to be held accountable. But in the long term, I think Oregon would do so much better if we could help reduce the power of wealthy special interests by passing a Small Donor Elections program.
4. Explain what you think would happen if your solution were implemented and/or what action you would like to see.
  - a. Example: If Oregon had a Small Donor Elections program, regular people without deep pockets or wealthy donors could run for office and be more accountable to solving the problems their communities face. Then we'd see real change that affects everyday people, not just wealthy landlords.

## Small Donor Elections Letter to the Editor Guide

### Basic Talking Points:

- We don't need to wait for Congress to act – Oregon has a real opportunity to start fighting the big money dominating our elections.
- Our democracy is strongest when everyone has an equal voice in our elections, not just wealthy donors who can spend big.
- Raising money is a real barrier to running for office, but Small Donor Elections is a way for candidates without access to wealthy donors to run for office with the support of their community.
- Oregonians should know their elected officials are accountable only to them, not wealthy campaign donors.
- Oregon has taken important steps to improve access to the ballot, and now we have another chance to further strengthen our democracy.
- Small-donor programs around the country have led to increased participation by small donors, especially among communities of color and low-income households.

## Small Donor Elections Letter to the Editor Guide

How to submit an LTE:

As a staff person supporting a supporter/volunteer/member:

1. Confirm they are comfortable with what the LTE says, and with submitting it to the newspaper (their name will be printed - this is not a big deal at all but it matters to some people).
2. If the newspaper it is targeted for has an online submission form, let them know that you can walk through the form on the phone with them, and submit it for them.
3. If the newspaper it is targeted for requires you to send an email submission, instruct them to copy and paste the text of a letter into an email and include their full name, address, and daytime phone number (for verification purposes). TWO THINGS: You cannot send it in for them; they need to BCC (not CC) you. If they are not confident they can do this - it's fine, they just need to confirm when it's submitted.
4. Make a plan for follow up. We need to know when the letter has been submitted, and we want to know if they get a response from the paper. Call them 2-3 days after the letter has been submitted to see if they have been contacted.

Directly as the signer (supporter/volunteer/member):

1. Decide which paper to submit the letter to. It should be either a statewide paper or a paper based in your community. If you live in Ashland, don't submit to the Beaverton Valley Times - it won't get printed and that's not your audience!
2. Make sure you follow the rules for that paper. Some papers want you to email your letter, others want you to submit the form online. There's some info on some papers listed below/in the attached.
3. If you were recruited to submit a letter by an organization, tell them when it's submitted! We want to make sure all of the LTEs submitted around the state are tracked.
4. If you don't hear back within a few days, follow up!

## Small Donor Elections Letter to the Editor Guide

LTE submission guidelines for specific papers:

### **The Oregonian - 250 words**

Please email letters of no more than 250 words to [letters@oregonian.com](mailto:letters@oregonian.com). Please include your full address and daytime phone number, for verification only. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### **Willamette Week - 250 words**

Letters to the editor must include the author's street address and phone number for verification. Letters must be 250 or fewer words. Email: [mzusman@wweek.com](mailto:mzusman@wweek.com).

### **Pamplin Papers - 200 to 300 words**

(Portland Tribune, Beaverton Valley Times, The Times (Tigard), Lake Oswego Review, The Outlook (Gresham), Clackamas Review)

[Click here to submit an LTE to Pamplin Paper.](#)

We welcome letters on topics of general interest. Our length limit is 300 words; submissions may be edited for length, grammar, libel and appropriate taste. Writers are limited to one letter per calendar month. Letters must be signed with the writer's full name. An address and daytime telephone number are needed for verification purposes; this information will not be published or released.

*Political Letters:* We welcome political letters. Our length limit is 200 words.

### **Statesman Journal - 200 words**

[Click here to submit an LTE to the Statesman Journal](#)

Letters to the Editor are a popular feature of the Statesman Journal. Letters should be 200 words or fewer. All submissions are subject to editing, including for clarity, accuracy, grammar, length and libel concerns. The form below requires you to input your name, address, and day and evening telephone numbers. The addresses and telephone numbers are for verifying the letters; we will publish your name and town. You may submit one item for publication every 30 days.

### **Medford Mail Tribune / Ashland Daily Tidings - 200 words**

[Click here to submit an LTE to either the Mail Tribune or the Daily Tidings.](#)

All letters must be signed and a phone number included for confirmation. All letters are subject to editing. Letters must be 200 words or less and no more than 150 words for election and thank-you letters. Avoid generalizations, gratuitous insults and personal gripes.

### **Eugene Register-Guard - 250 words**

The Register-Guard welcomes letters on topics of general interest. Our length limit is 250 words; all letters are subject to condensation. Writers are limited to one letter per calendar month.

Letters must be signed with the writers full name. An address and daytime telephone number are needed for verification purposes; this information will not be published or released. E-mail:

[rgletters@registerguard.com](mailto:rgletters@registerguard.com)

## Small Donor Elections Letter to the Editor Guide

### **Springfield Times - 200 words**

There is no specific procedure listed. Email letters to [editor@springfieldtimes.net](mailto:editor@springfieldtimes.net), and keep them to 200 words or less. Include your full name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification purposes.

### **Eugene Weekly - 200 words**

Letters to the editor should be less than 200 words and sent to [letters@eugeneweekly.com](mailto:letters@eugeneweekly.com) along with your address and phone number for our files.

### **The World (Coos Bay) - 400 words**

[Click here to send an LTE to the Coos Bay World.](#)

Please fill out all of the fields. The World Newspaper limits the number of words in letters to the editor to 400 words. If your letter to the editor is larger than 400 words it will be subject to shortening or refusal. No defamation, vulgarity, business complaints, poetry or religious testimony will be accepted.\* Required

### **The Daily Astorian / Cannon Beach Gazette - 350 words**

[Click here to submit an LTE to the Daily Astorian](#) or the Cannon Beach Gazette.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Daily Astorian welcomes short "in gratitude" notes for publication, but there is a 300-word maximum, and the letter should not contain a long list of those being thanked. Submissions to this page become property of their respective publication. The publications reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to [editor@dailyastorian.com](mailto:editor@dailyastorian.com).

### **The News Guard (Lincoln City) - 250 words**

[Click here to submit an LTE to the News Guard.](#)