



Delaware Guide for Submitting Letters to the Editor

What: Letters to the editor (LTEs) are short, succinct pieces — typically 150-300 words — crafted by community members that appear in the opinion pages of newspapers and other publications. While the editorial staff selects which letters appear in their publications, it is helpful to think of your audience as much larger, addressing all members of the community including elected officials. Letters to the editor give the writer a platform to share his or her thoughts on an issue of importance. The more personal your letter, the more persuasive your voice will carry across the page, and the more likely it is to be selected for publication.

Where: Submit your letters to a nearby local or a statewide newspaper. Below you will find some recommended newspapers as well as links to online forms, email addresses, and specified word limits. Do not feel restricted to this list; submitting content to small, local, and neighborhood outlets can be a great way to educate and influence other voters and community leaders.

- *Delaware State News* — 200 word limit; submit online at <http://delawarestatenews.net/letters-to-the-editor/>
- *The News Journal* — 250 word limit; submit online at <http://static.delawareonline.com/submitletter/>
- *Cape Gazette*— 650 word limit; email letters to newsroom@capegazette.com, letters must be signed and include a phone number
- *The Dover Post* — no word limit; submit online at <http://www.doverpost.com/submit&subtype=news>
- *The Newark Post* — 250 word limit; submit online at https://newarkpostonline-dot-com.bloxcms.com/site/forms/online_services/letter/

When: Although some local newspapers may publish letters to the editor about ending cannabis prohibition at any time, your letter may be more likely to be printed if it references a recent event or a story published in the paper.

Possible talking points: You may want to consider including one or more of the following points in your letter, but still make sure that it also includes your unique perspective. Do not try to include too many different points in a single letter.

- During the 2019 legislative session, lawmakers should pass a bill that would end marijuana prohibition and embrace a responsible system of taxation and regulation.
- Without regulation, the state has no control over how, when, or where marijuana is sold. We should regulate this lucrative market. When marijuana is sold by drug dealers, they don't check ID.
- Marijuana sold via the illicit market can be laced or contaminated. Both communities and consumers will be safer if marijuana is taken out of the dangerous criminal market and regulated like alcohol.
- Marijuana laws are enforced unevenly. African Americans are more than three times as likely to be prosecuted for marijuana crimes as compared to whites. Yet, studies show that both black

people and white people consume marijuana at similar rates.

- Delaware would generate tens of millions of dollars in excise tax revenue each year if it taxed and regulated marijuana. Taxing cannabis could go a long way toward filling that hole, funding our schools and improving infrastructure.
- Marijuana is safer than alcohol. According to the CDC, six people die every day from alcohol poisoning. By contrast, in all of recorded history there is not one documented case of a fatal marijuana overdose. Adults should not be punished for making the safer choice.
- Arresting, citing, and prosecuting people for marijuana distracts law enforcement from targeting violent criminals. Let's free up officers to pursue crimes with actual victims instead.

You can also find more background materials on our [legalization issues page](#), including our [Top 10 Reasons to Tax and Regulate Marijuana](#).

Need help? If you have a personal connection to the issue and you need help crafting a LTE, let us know by emailing Karen O'Keefe at karen@mpp.org.

Example:

Let's replace our failed marijuana prohibition policy with responsible regulation

To the editorial board:

It is time that we end cannabis prohibition and embrace a system of responsible regulation. Marijuana hasn't always been against the law in our country. Prohibition was implemented as part of a racist program aimed at targeting African Americans, Mexican immigrants, and jazz musicians by the very first commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Harry Anslinger. Famously Anslinger once said, "marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes."

Not only were our marijuana laws born of racism, they continue to be enforced unequally. A 2013 report by the ACLU found that in Delaware, African Americans are over 25% more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession as compared to whites. And while our legislature did enact a decriminalization measure that went into effect in December 2015, there is no reason to think the unequal enforcement has ended.

That is one of the many reasons I urge my fellow Delawareans to contact their lawmakers and ask them to enact a bill that will remove marijuana from the criminal market and regulate its production and distribution.

A regulated system would strictly enforce legal age requirements for purchasing marijuana and require testing to ensure the safety of marijuana products. Further, regulating marijuana like alcohol could generate millions in revenue for the state and free up law enforcement time to deal with real crime. Let's once and for all end the racist and failed policy first imposed on Delawareans nearly 100 years ago.