



Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor about Medical Cannabis in South Carolina

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 LTEs appear in their publications, it is helpful to think of your audience as much larger, addressing all members of the community, including elected officials. LTEs give the writer a platform to share his or her thoughts on an issue of importance. The more personal an LTE, the more persuasive the voice will carry across the page, and the more likely it is to be selected for publication.

Where: Submit letters to a nearby local or a statewide newspaper. Some of these papers' websites have a submission form link under "submission forms" at the bottom of the home page; others can be found via "contact us." Some possibilities for where to submit letters include:

- *The Post and Courier* — 250-word limit, letters can be submitted [here](#)
- *The State* — letters can be submitted [here](#)
- Your local paper

When: Although some local newspapers may publish LTEs about medical cannabis at any time, an LTE may be more likely to be printed if it references a recent story written on the topic.

Possible talking points: Consider including one or more of the following points in your letter, ideally after reworking it to be in your own voice. Do not try to include too many different points in a single letter.

If you or a loved one is a patient who could benefit from medical cannabis, we recommend focusing on your personal story and need for this law. If other medicines haven't worked or have resulted in devastating side effects, you may want to explain that.

- The South Carolina legislature and governor should show compassion for suffering patients by enacting a medical cannabis law this year.
- Patients and their doctors should be trusted to decide if medical cannabis is an appropriate treatment, just as they are allowed to do for far more dangerous drugs, such as opiates.
- Thirty-seven states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi, have enacted compassionate medical cannabis programs.
- Studies show that many patients suffering from cancer, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, HIV/AIDS, Crohn's disease, and intractable pain find relief from cannabis.
- Research shows intractable pain patients enrolled in medical cannabis programs can reduce or eliminate their need for opiate-based medications, which are far more dangerous. Pain patients should be allowed to make the safer choice.
- More than seventy percent of Americans live in one of the 37 states that allow the doctor-advised, medical use of cannabis. South Carolina patients and doctors deserve the same medical freedom.
- Several health, medical, and religious organizations support allowing medical cannabis, such as

the American Nurses Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, the Epilepsy Foundation, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Methodist Church.

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