

Dear Allies--



We thank you for all of your work and support to end the inhumane drug war.

One tool we use at the Drug Policy Alliance to educate and mobilize the public is the letter to the newspaper editor. Every month we are able to place a dozen or so letters in national and regional newspapers. Will you join us?

One letter may take 15 minutes of your time. These 15 minutes may lead to 50,000 people reading your letter in the paper.

Every week there are stories in your paper about drugs, addiction and the war on drugs. Many stories provide us an opportunity to point out problems and offer solutions. Our experience is a 1/3 to a half of the letters you submit will get published.

Good Luck!

Tips for Letters to the Editor:

- Be Timely: Try to write a letter within day or two of article you are responding to
- Be Concise: 100- 200 words
- Address Specific Article: Respond to an article. You can praise or critique an article. Identify a problem/ issue and offer a solution.
- Promote Your Organization: When you sign the letter, mention the group you work with. It will get your organization's name out to the tens of thousands reading your letter.
- Market your published letter: Once published, you can post on FACEBOOK, twitter and email to friends, allies, elected officials etc.

Tips for Op-eds:

- Length: 550 to 650 words
- Timely Issue: It helps if you are writing about what is in the news.
- Local Angle: Papers love to run op-ed from local folks about local issues.
- Highlight your expertise/ insight: Your personal experience, knowledge can be shared.
- Personalize/ anecdotes: People care about issues through stories. Humanize the issue.

➤ SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Hook – The Problem – The Facts – The Solution – What’s at Stake

Dear Editor:

When the governors meet this weekend to make recommendations for improving our nation's high schools (“Title of press article,” Feb. 25), I hope they will not forget the “forgotten 32”—the 32 out of every 100 students who drop out before completing high school. A new study by the Educational Testing Service finds that more and more students are dropping out of school earlier—in ninth and tenth grades. These children will be left behind in the shadows if we fail to pay attention to the programs that work to keep them engaged in school and to the second-chance programs like YouthBuild and quality alternative schools that work to reconnect struggling students with learning and job skills.

If our workforce is to stay competitive, we have to ensure that every student has the support he or she needs to stay in school and graduate.

Jane Jackson
Youth United for Student Voice
Oakland

Source: Connect for Kids

The New York Times

February 7, 2010 Sunday

Protecting Youth in Prisons From Violence and Abuse

SECTION: LETTERS

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/opinion/lweb07juvenile.html>

To the Editor:

Kudos to Nicholas D. Kristof for shining the light on torture and abuse of people behind bars right here in the United States. Many Americans were appropriately outraged by torture at Guantanamo Bay and the infamous Abu Ghraib abuse, but where is the anger and compassion for the prisoners here in the United States who are also victims of violence and sexual abuse?

The one point missing from Mr. Kristof's insightful column was the reason why so many people are behind bars in the United States: America's drug war. The United States makes up about 5 percent of the world's population, but has almost 25 percent of the world's prisoners, and the driving force is the war on drugs.

In addition to dealing with violence and torture behind bars, we need to admit that locking up someone who has a substance abuse problem in a cage is torture in and of itself.

Tony Newman
Director, Media Relations
Drug Policy Alliance New York,
Jan. 28, 2010

