

Letter to Students

Dear Students,

Did you know that letters to the editor are one of the most powerful ways that you can make a difference on issues that are important to you?

Here's why. Letters to the editor reach a wide audience, going far beyond your immediate circle of friends. Because only a few letters are published in the paper each day, your opinion can make a strong impression and sway many other people to take action with you.

I should know. Since I began writing letters to the editor a few years ago, I've been amazed by how often friends and neighbors stop me to say that they read my letter and appreciated my ideas.

In particular, letters to the editor can affect your elected officials, who regularly search for their names in your local paper in order to hear what constituents are saying about them. What better way to convince your government to take action, than by calling on it publicly in a letter to the editor?

Even in this modern age of social media, many people still care about letters to the editor – particularly thoughtful people who vote regularly. Want more voters on your side? Write a letter to the editor today!

– *A fellow American*

Letter: “How do you fix the opioid epidemic with so little cash?”
The Washington Post, October 8, 2018.

Regarding the Oct. 4 news article “Senate passes sweeping bill to combat opioid epidemic”:

In 2017, 72,000 people, including my sister Jenny, died from overdoses. Jenny was a 45-year-old, college-educated, suburban mom.

The White House Council of Economic Advisers estimated the cost of the opioid crisis in 2015 was \$504 billion in health-care bills, criminal-justice costs and lost productivity. This year, Congress allocated just \$6 billion to fight the opioid crisis for the next two years.

So how do you fix a \$504 billion problem with just \$6 billion? You do what companies such as Amazon, Google and Apple do: Deploy a broad spectrum of minimum viable products — the smallest things you can build that provide value to a user — across the country quickly, measure results and report outcomes transparently. Replicate what works, and fail fast on things that don’t, enabling all 50 states to learn from each success and failure.

Medical experts generally agree on what’s needed for a long-term solution. Hundreds of recommendations have been documented in numerous reports, but disparate recommendations are not a plan.

We know how to fix this. We just need the political will to do it.

– *Kelly O'Connor, Washington*

Letter: “A Dire Warning on Climate Change”
The New York Times, October 9, 2018

To the Editor:

Re “Why Half a Degree of Warming Is a Big Deal” (news article, Oct. 9):

Our planet is at risk. Yet we are still producing and consuming energy in wasteful ways that do lasting damage to our environment and our health.

In honor of Energy Efficiency Day on Oct. 5, let’s focus on what each of us can do to reduce our energy waste. The cleanest, most affordable energy is the energy we don’t use in the first place, so start by using less. From there, focus on energy efficiency.

From small changes, such as switching all the lights in your home to LEDs, to large changes, such as buying an electric vehicle, we can all find a way to play our part.

I want a healthier planet now and for generations to come, which means a major effort by all of us to conserve energy and eliminate waste. I’ll be encouraging my neighbors, family, friends and government officials to reduce energy waste — and I urge everyone to do the same.

– *Allie Astor, Boston*

The writer is a clean energy advocate for Environment America.

**Letter: “Generation Z voter blasts New York Senate’s IDC, Carlucci”
The Journal News, March 6, 2018**

As a 17-year-old Democrat in Rockland County, I will be voting for my first time this September. I am proud to be part of a new generation of voters that are committed to fighting for social justice, gun control, public education spending, universal health care, women’s rights, LGBTQ protections, and criminal justice reform. Voting is both a right and a privilege, one which my peers and I take very seriously.

Those of us in Generation Z want leaders who not only share our values, but who are willing to stand up and do the right thing whether or not it is politically expedient. When John Della Volpe, the director of polling at Harvard’s Institute of Politics, recently asked young voters what they valued most in a candidate, half of them answered “integrity.” I agree 100 percent. And this is why I will not be voting for incumbent David Carlucci for the 38th District of the State Senate in the upcoming Democratic Primary.

David Carlucci and Sen. Jeff Klein, who represents a neighboring district in Westchester and the Bronx are part of a group of Democrats called the Independent Democratic Conference. Being “independent” sounds great in theory, but in reality, this arrangement is just a power-sharing agreement between these IDC Democrats and the Republicans. In exchange for “lulus” (which are stipends for leadership duties), these IDC Democrats have given over Senate Committee Chairmanships to Republicans who get to decide which bills come to the floor for a vote.

David Carlucci pretends to be a progressive Democrat. He says he supports and even co-sponsors bills that protect the environment, women’s health care, LGBTQ protections, and Dreamers. But the truth of the matter is that most of these bills he “supports and co-sponsors” never actually make it to the floor for a vote because of his alliance with the Republicans. Unfortunately, Sen. Carlucci cares more about pleasing his corporate campaign donors than he does about fighting for the social justice issues that he tells his voters he supports.

Well, Mr. Carlucci, I have news for you. As the students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas have so clearly demonstrated, my generation has arrived on the political scene, and we are paying attention. Sen. Carlucci might have been able to fool past generations, but he cannot fool Generation Z.

*– Jake Laddis, Piermont
The writer is a senior at Tappan Zee High School.*