



## GUIDELINES & TIPS FOR HOW TO WRITE AN OP-ED

### WHAT IS AN OP-ED?

An op-ed (opinion-editorial) is an opinion article written for a newspaper by a third-party contributor. Op-eds are an excellent opportunity to promote your perspective and congregation as well as to inspire action.

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN WRITING

Track the news and independently identify strategic opportunities for which your input would be helpful. Op-eds are much more likely to be published if they are linked to a timely news hook that is of either local or national importance.

Once you have found a topic on which you would like to write, choose a submission target. It can be a local or national newspaper, but be sure to review op-eds that the outlet has already published before you begin writing. If you do not think your op-ed will be of the same general quality or style, find a new submission target. If you cannot locate previous op-eds, it may be because the outlet does not accept them.

Finally, be sure to confirm an outlet's submission guidelines, including word count, signer contact information, and submission method. If you cannot find this information online, call the outlet directly.

### PUTTING PEN TO PAPER

Develop a clear, one-sentence thesis statement to be included in the first quarter of your op-ed. Unlike in an essay, the thesis statement of an op-ed precedes supporting arguments.

Where at all possible, your thesis should be a call to action and reflect the message and spirit of Standing on the Side of Love. For further information, please see the Standing on the Side of Love talking points.

### SUBMISSION

Be sure to review submission guidelines again once you have developed a final draft. Because there is an expectation of exclusivity, only submit your op-ed to one newspaper at a time. If you still have not heard back a total of five days after submission, proceed with another outlet.

When submitting your op-ed, be sure to follow the outlet's guidelines exactly. Include the requested contact information and a sentence or two at the conclusion of your draft identifying your name, title, and relevant experience. Never attach an op-ed submission to an email—always include the text in the body of your message.

### TIPS

- ➔ Look beyond daily newspapers—many weekly and specialty publications (GLBT, African-American, and others) also accept op-eds and are less competitive targets for placement.
- ➔ Make one point, and make it well.
- ➔ Write with emotion! Use rhetorical tools which will express conviction and effectively sway your readers.
- ➔ Be timely—once you have identified an op-ed topic, prepare and submit the final draft as soon as possible.
- ➔ Don't get discouraged—you will likely submit several op-eds before one is chosen for publishing.