

Changing The Narrative

Write a letter to the editor – educate the public and policy-makers on ageism

Letters to the editor are a great way to educate a large audience about ageism – and urge people to take action. Whether your goal is to shift the language from “senior citizens” to “older adults” or promote the value of older workers, well-written LTEs can help change the narrative.

Getting published can be competitive, so here are suggestions to make your letter stand out:

FORMAT. Write in a Word or Google document so you can spell-check and count your words. You can then cut-and-paste into an email message or into the newspaper’s website form.

START. Open the letter with a simple “To the Editor” – or the editor's name if you know it.

MAKE IT PERSONAL. What is your perspective or interest in the issue? “As an older adult working in tech....” or “I’m concerned about bias against older employees....”

EXPLAIN. Assume readers know little about ageism so write plainly, without jargon.

ADD INTEREST. Tell a personal story, discuss a recent event or refer to a recent article.

USE FACTS. If you have them, use statistics from [Changing the Narrative](http://www.changingthenarrativeco.org/ageism-activism-center) (www.changingthenarrativeco.org/ageism-activism-center) or talking points on the bill (when they are sent out).

RECOMMEND. Suggest ways to improve the situation. Ask businesses to hire older workers or politicians to vote in support of a bill.

KEEP IT BRIEF. Limit your argument to one or two key points. Newspapers list their word limits on their websites but are typically between 150 and 300 words.

SUBMIT. Send it in with your name and your organizational title if it lends credibility plus your address and phone number (for verification, not publication).

Colorado Springs Gazette	300 words, email to opinion@gazette.com
Denver Post	250 words, email to openforum@denverpost.com
Fort Collins Coloradoan	500 words, email to opinion@coloradoan.com
Broomfield Enterprise	500 words to BEeditor@broomfieldenterprise.com

Aurora Sentinel 250 words but may be flexible, letters@sentinelcolorado.com or via website form: <https://amgcolorado.wufoo.com/forms/x1v9j5yl11ztave/>

Arvada Press, Jeffco Transcript for Wheatridge, Lakewood: 250 words to Editor Glenn Wallace - gwallace@coloradocommunitymedia.com and letters@coloradocommunitymedia.com

Life on Capitol Hill, (80220) 250 words Editor Christy Steadman csteadman@coloradocommunitymedia.com and letters@coloradocommunitymedia.com

Englewood Herald, Littleton Independent (as well as Centennial Citizen, Elbert County News, Highlands Ranch Herald, Lone Tree Voice, Parker Chronicle, and The News-Press) 250 words to letters@coloradocommunitymedia.com and Editor Mark Harden mharden@coloradocommunitymedia.com

Windsor to **FC Coloradoan** (see above) or **Greeley Tribune**, 300 words to letters@greeleytribune.com, or www.greeleytribune.com/contribute

Sample letter, about 250 words:

Dear Editor:

As a retiree, I love being an active volunteer here in Castle Rock but sometimes I feel that the work and efforts of older adults are discounted simply because of age. This is ageism: the kind of prejudice, negative stereotypes, and discrimination usually directed against older adults.

The negative impacts of ageism diminish us all and limit our potential to use the insights and ingenuity that older adults can offer. We need to look at and value people based on who they are as individuals, not as a monolithic group or generation.

Despite some of the obsolete and negative stereotypes of the past, the fact is that older adults are healthier, more able to work, better educated and more tech-savvy than they once were.

My friend, an accomplished office manager with 30 years of experience, has applied for 10 jobs with no offers. Is this ageism in the workforce? I don't know for sure but nationally, 61% of older workers have experienced or witnessed age discrimination in the workplace and 56% have been pushed out or laid off.

Businesses benefit from multigenerational workplaces – and report that younger workers receive invaluable mentoring from older workers, who gain new inspiration from their younger counterparts.

When hiring employees, I hope our local businesses seek out older adults who bring ingenuity and experience to work with them. And when legislators have a chance to do so, I hope they will pass bills to reduce ageism in the workplace.

Name
Address
Phone
Email