

# WRITING TO INFLUENCE



## Identity

- Who are you in relationship to this issue?



## Values

- What core value(s) define this issue for you?



## Stories, Statistics

- What stories and/or data help present the facts related to the issue?



## Solution

- What is your solution?
- What action to you want the reader to take?

### Examples

<b>Identity</b>	<b>I have experienced age discrimination in the workplace. At the age of 52 I was pushed out of my job in favor of a younger person. I am capable and need to work. I have not been able find a comparable job.</b>
<b>Values</b>	<b>As a Coloradan, I am proud of the states commitment to justice and equity. However, I have been treated inequitably in the workplace simply because of my age, and age discrimination laws are not as robust as those for other forms of discrimination.</b>
<b>Stories, Statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>An AARP study released in 2021 showed that 78% of older adults either experienced or witnessed workplace age discrimination.</b></li> <li>• <b>A study the Urban Institute released in 2018 showed that 56% of people in the U.S. entering their 50s with stable employment were pushed out or laid off, and only 10% ever recouped financially.</b></li> <li>• <b>An AARP study released in 2020 showed that bias against older workers cost the U.S. economy \$850 billion in gross domestic product in 2018.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Solution</b>	<b>Help strengthen age discrimination laws by voting to pass SB #-### so we can ensure age discrimination is treated the same as other forms of discrimination and high school graduation dates cannot be used as means to exclude older applicants from consideration.</b>

# CALLING (OR WRITING) YOUR LEGISLATOR

Information from Jim Riesberg

## Easiest call is to your District Representative

- Do some research
- Check their key issues
- Know their committee assignments
- Know their past history (years of service, leadership roles, websites)
- [Find your legislator](#)

## Know your groups mission, vision, or goals

- Words are important: Senior, Older Adult, Elder
- [Learn more about changing your language](#)

## Know the purpose of your call

- Ask them to vote a certain way
- Educate them on an issue
- Become a trusted source
- Invite them to a meeting or offer resources
- Get them to respond to your message
- test

## Make the contact

- Introduce yourself and who you are calling for
- Concisely state your issue or concern
- Explain why it is important to you
- TELL YOUR STORY
- Listen carefully to their response, questions, concerns

## Tell them what you want

- YES vote - Explain the problem that needs to be solved and why your proposal is the solution
- NO vote - Explain what it would do and why it will not solve any problems and potentially make things worse

### Other calls that could be made

- Committee members
- Any member before the Second Reading

### Ways to make contact

- Personal visit
- Phone call (capitol office, home, cell)
- Leave a message
- Text
- Mail
- E-mail
- Attend one of their meetings

**REMEMBER – Representatives and Senators are people just like you**

# WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Educate the public and policymakers on ageism – Information from Katie Reinisch

## Make it personal

- What is your personal interest in the issue?
- Examples - "As an older adult working in tech..." or "I'm concerned about bias against older employees..."

## Explain

- Assume the reader knows little about ageism, so write plainly and without jargon

## Add interest and facts

- Tell a personal story, discuss a recent event or refer to a recent article
- Use facts if you have them or talking points on the bill (when they are sent out)

## Recommend

- Suggest ways to improve the situation
- Examples - 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

### Format and introduction

- Write in a Word or Google document so you can spell-check and count your words
- You can cut-and-paste into an email message or the newspaper's website
- Open the letter with a simple "To the Editor" – or the editor's name if you know it

### Submit

- Send it in with your name and your organization title if it lends credibility
- Add your address and phone number (for verification, not publication)

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 citizen" to "older adults" or promote the value of older workers, well written letters to the editor can help change the narrative!