**Tips for Customizing and Placing Op-Eds**

* Identify the right person, or “author” for the op-ed. This could be your local or state association president, or perhaps a third-party industry expert or even an elected official. Often, op-eds authored by third parties can help lend credibility to your argument.
* Whenever possible and appropriate, include locally pertinent information in the op-ed. Support your argument with data and information that the target paper’s audience can relate to.
* Follow the news, and submit op-eds on timely subjects. Always ask yourself, “Why would this publication’s readers care?”
* Make sure you follow the submission policies outlined by your target publication. Many papers, for example, won't accept op-eds longer than a certain number of words or op-eds that have already been submitted to other outlets.
* **With that in mind, it’s very important that you personalize any “sample” op-eds before submitting.** If an op-ed isn’t original, most newspapers won’t want to run it (and they may decline future op-eds if they inadvertently print copied work).
* Paste the copy of your op-ed into an e-mail – don’t attach a file to the e-mail. Many media outlets will not open an e-mail with an attachment, to avoid potential viruses.
* Send your op-ed to the editorial page editor for the publication you’re targeting. It helps if you call this person in advance to see if they’d be interested, and pitch your idea to them.