

Opinion-Editorial



Newspaper editorial pages — both in print and online — are highly popular among readers. Opinion-editorials (op-eds) are longer than letters to the editor and afford the opportunity to delve more deeply into issues. An op-ed is your chance to influence opinions, affect policy, and highlight the work you or your organization is doing to support crime victims' rights.

One way to develop an op-ed is to research local crime coverage and important issues in your community. For example, does your community offer services for victims of human trafficking? How would a partnership between law enforcement and victim service agencies benefit your community? Use or adapt the sample op-ed on the following page or craft your own to highlight an issue local to your community.

Five Elements of an Attention-Grabbing Op-Ed

- Be persuasive. Include the latest research and structure a logical argument or rationale.
- Be confident. You are the expert in this field.
- Stay up to date on related events and the cultural conversations about them.
- Use plain language that a wide audience can understand.
- Keep your submission to 800 words or less.



Survivor Voices

Elevate. Engage. Effect Change.

Sample Op-Ed (570 words)

Hate crimes loom forebodingly over American discourse — grim blemishes on our national identity that remind us all of how far we have left to go. Each year, there are new stories of mass shootings carried out by adherents of hate-fueled ideologies and of smaller acts of bias-based intimidation and violence.

Such acts harm entire communities and instill fear on a massive scale, but it's imperative to remember that the people most harmed by hate crimes are victims, survivors and their families. Their voices, their stories and their desires for justice cannot be excluded from any conversation about the impact of hate crimes.

The FBI's most recent annual [report](#) on hate crimes, which covers 2021, shows that over 7,200 hate crimes involving more than 9,000 victims were reported by U.S. law enforcement agencies that year alone. Those victims, survivors and their family members aren't statistics. They're real people with voices that need to be heard.

It's important to note that the numbers listed above are not exhaustive; not every law enforcement agency provides data on bias-motivated incidents to the FBI. Furthermore, not every victim of a hate crime reports it, and not every state classifies hate crimes the same way. In fact, some states don't even have hate crimes laws on the books at all.

About 65% of reported victims of hate crime in 2021 were targeted because of race, ethnicity or ancestry. In nearly 20% of single-bias incidents, victims were targeted because of their sexual orientation or gender. In about 14% of the crimes, people were targeted because of their religious beliefs, and nearly 2% of people victimized by hate crimes were targeted because of disabilities.

[Insert any local statistics here.]

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we join with many other advocates, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, health care professionals and others dedicated to being catalysts for change in our commitment to listen survivors and honor them by working toward meaningful change.

"For too long, the victims of crime have been the forgotten persons of our criminal justice system," President Ronald Reagan said when he signed the proclamation establishing the inaugural Crime Victims' Rights Week in 1981. "Rarely do we give victims the help they need or the attention they deserve."

While the victims' rights movement has made great strides since then, there is still much work to be done. *[Include a sentence about what your organization/agency does in this field or is planning for the next year.]*

This year, for National Crime Victims' Rights week, we commit to engaging with survivors and amplifying their voices as we push for change. *[Briefly list any local observance of NCVRW people can attend and/or how they can get resources or volunteer to help with your organization.]*

Let's work together to create an environment where survivors are confident they'll be heard, believed and supported — and a nation where no one will live in fear of being targeted because of who they are or how they worship.

Survivor Voices

Elevate. Engage. Effect Change.

