



GEORGIANS *for*
ALTERNATIVES *to*
the DEATH PENALTY

EDITORIAL GUIDE

Below is a sample of editorial guidelines that reflect GfADP's values and mission to end the death penalty. If you have questions, please contact us at info@GfADP.org.

Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Use the full name of the organization on first reference, followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis: Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (GfADP). On subsequent references, GfADP is acceptable. Please note the "f" in GfADP is lowercase.

GfADP encourages the use of respectful, humanizing language when referring to people impacted by the criminal legal system. Please refer to our [Language Guide for Human Dignity](#) for specific terms and usage.

Academic Degrees

If mention of degrees is necessary to establish credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviations and use instead a phrase such as, *Elaine Kim, a sociologist with a doctoral degree...*

- Use abbreviations (with periods) when following the full name on first reference
Ex: John Doe, M.D.
- Lowercase when referring to the degree in general and use the possessive apostrophe
Ex: She earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry
- Lowercase when referencing degrees generally: *She earned a bachelor's degree in political science*. Capitalize when using the formal name of an academic degree
Ex: Master of Public Administration
- Never use both forms of the degree, as in Dr. John Doe, M.D. Use Dr. only for people with doctorate-level degrees relevant to the story. Otherwise, use a phrase like the *Elaine Kim* example above.

Legislative Titles

First-Reference Form: Use Rep., Reps., Sen. and Sens. as formal titles before one or more names. Spell out and lowercase representative and senator in other uses.

Spell out other legislative titles in all uses. Capitalize formal titles such as *chair*, *delegate*, etc., when they are used before a name. Lowercase in other uses.

Add *U.S.* or *state* before a title only if necessary to avoid confusion: *U.S. Sen. Jane Doe debated state Sen. Mark Hill*.

In stories with international datelines, include *U.S.* before legislative titles.

First-Reference Practice: A title such as *Rep.* or *Sen.* in first reference is needed.

Second Reference: Omit titles unless in a direct quote.

Congressman, Congresswoman: *Rep.* and *U.S. Rep.* are the preferred first-reference forms when a formal title is used before the name of a U.S. House member.

Use *representative* or *member of Congress* rather than congressman/woman when possible. *Congressman* and *congresswoman* should appear as capitalized formal titles before a name only in direct quotation.

Organizational Titles: Capitalize when used before a name as a formal title:

- *House Speaker Paul Ryan*
- *Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley*

Lowercase if used generically or after a name:

- *Paul Ryan, the house speaker*

Nationalities and Races

- Capitalize nationalities and ethnic identifiers such as Black, Latino, Indigenous and Asian.
- Use Black rather than African American, unless referring to a specific cultural or ethnic background.
- White remains lowercase per AP Style. When discussing race or ethnicity, use accurate, specific terms appropriate to the context.
- Avoid umbrella terms, like *people of color*, which may group individuals too broadly and obscure meaningful distinctions.
- Hyphenate compound nationalities when used as an adjective (*a Latin-American idiom*), but not as a noun (*Latin American*).

Political Neutrality

GfADP is a nonpartisan organization that works with people across the political and ideological spectrum.

Avoid using generalized or alienating political labels like *far-right/far-left*, *right-wing/left-wing*, *radical*, *conservative*, *liberal* or *woke* unless part of a quote or official designation. These labels can be detrimental to coalition-building and can signal exclusion, making it harder to reach audiences who do not identify with the term used.

Focus instead on shared values such as fairness, justice, fiscal accountability and the prevention of irreversible errors in the justice system.

Titles, academic. (View *academic degrees and capitalization*)

- Preferred style for academic titles is *Dr. Jane Doe, professor of law at Emory University*
- If using a department name, write: *Dr. Jane Doe, professor in the Criminal Justice Department*
- In public-facing materials: *Dr. Jane Doe, a practicing attorney*, followed by full title on second reference if needed

Underserved

Write as one word.