HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to help state bankers associations support local community bank CEOs in placing thoughtful, locally grounded op-eds in newspapers. It is a sample and a guide—not a script. Please adapt the language so it reflects the voice, experiences, and community of the individual banker author.

Key reminders:

• Write for neighbors and community members, not policymakers.

• Use original language; do not copy from letters, talking points, or this sample verbatim.

• Aim for 600–750 words with a conversational, respectful tone.

• Including one local example strengthens credibility and placement.

If the draft sounds like a policy memo, it should be revised.

Do	Don’t
Explain the issue the way you would to a customer or neighbor	Reuse language from association letters or formal advocacy documents
Keep the focus on local lending, everyday consumers, and community impact	Use policy jargon or legislative terminology
Thank policymakers for their thoughtful, bipartisan engagement	Include explicit calls to action or demands

OP-ED GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY BANKERS

This guide is designed to help state bankers associations work with a local community bank CEO to publish a locally grounded op-ed on the payment of interest loophole for a general audience.

The objective is to explain why the stablecoin rewards loophole matters to local communities—without using policy jargon or advocacy language—and to thank policymakers for their thoughtful work.

1. **Start With a Neighbor-to-Neighbor Hook**
Open by acknowledging that most readers are not familiar with stablecoins. Explain what they are in one short paragraph using everyday language and familiar comparisons. Emphasize their potential to support certain payment use cases in order to distinguish them from deposits or investments.

2. **Explain Why Deposits Matter Locally**
Describe how deposits support lending in the community. Emphasize the cycle of local savings funding small businesses, first-time homebuyers, farmers, etc.

3. **Clarify the Issue Simply**
Explain that stablecoins were designed as payment tools. Note that current rules already prohibit paying interest just for holding them, and explain—in plain terms—why rewards offered through partners or third-party platforms create confusion for consumers.

4. **Emphasize Support for Innovation**
Make clear this is not about resisting new technology. Highlight that community banks already use modern tools and support responsible innovation to meet customers' needs and expectations.

5. **Draw an Honest Comparison**
Explain the difference between insured bank deposits and platform-based products in a calm, factual way. Avoid demonizing any industry or group.

6. **Thank Policymakers Explicitly**
Include a paragraph thanking Members of Congress for their bipartisan and thoughtful approach.

7. **End With a Common-Sense Closing**
Conclude by emphasizing that a small clarification can protect consumers and local lending while allowing payment innovation to continue.

Suggested Length: 600–750 words
Tone: Conversational, respectful, and local

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK OP-ED OUTLINE

Headline:
[Short, clear headline focused on innovation and community impact]

Byline:
By [CEO Name], CEO of [Bank Name], [City, State]

Opening Paragraph:
If you've heard the term 'stablecoin' and thought ____________. Here's the simple version: ____________.

Explain the Local Banking Connection:
At community banks like ours, deposits are not idle. They are used to ____________, which helps ____________.

Describe the Concern:
Stablecoins were created to ____________, not to ____________. Recent reward programs can make these products look like ____________, even though ____________.

Support Innovation:
This issue is not about opposing innovation. Community banks have embraced ____________ because ____________.

Consumer Protection Contrast:
Banks are required to ____________, while platforms offering rewards ____________. This difference matters because ____________.

Thank Policymakers:
I want to thank lawmakers for ____________. Their bipartisan approach has ____________.

Closing:
With a small clarification, stablecoins can continue to ____________ while ensuring ____________. This balance will help our community continue to ____________.

SAMPLE OP-ED

Keep Payments Innovative—and Community Lending Strong

By [Name], CEO, [Community Bank Name]

If you've heard the term "stablecoin" and thought, *that sounds like something for Wall Street or Silicon Valley, not Main Street,* you're not alone. Here's the simple version: a stablecoin is a kind of digital token designed to hold a steady value—usually equal to one U.S. dollar—so people can move money quickly online. Think of it as a digital dollar meant to make payments faster and easier.

Used the right way, stablecoins could be a helpful innovation. That's why Congress took action last year to bring this new form of payment into the light and put sensible rules around it. Lawmakers recognized both the promise of new technology and the need to protect everyday consumers.

One of those rules is especially important for communities like ours: stablecoin issuers are not allowed to pay interest just for holding their tokens. That wasn't an accident. It was meant to keep stablecoins focused on payments—not turn them into something that feels like a bank account, but isn't one.

Why does that distinction matter? Because the money people keep in community banks isn't idle. Deposits are what allow us to loans. When a local business is looking to hire or expand, those funds often come from deposits placed by neighbors down the street. That cycle—local savings fueling local growth—is how community banking works.

The concern now is that some companies are looking for ways around those rules by offering "rewards" or similar payouts through affiliated entities. Even if the stablecoin issuer itself isn't paying interest, a partner might do it on their behalf. To the average consumer, that can look an awful lot like earning interest—without the same protections people expect from a bank.

That's the loophole policymakers are wrestling with.

If dollars start flowing out of insured bank accounts and into these tokenbased products, local banks have fewer resources to lend. National estimates suggest that, at scale, this kind of shift could pull trillions of dollars away from traditional deposits. When that happens, credit becomes more costly and harder to find—not just somewhere else, but right here in (**insert state**), where it could mean a (**insert $X million or $X billion**) hit to local lending.

None of this is about resisting change. Community banks like ours have embraced new technology for years, from mobile banking to instant payments. We understand that customers want faster, cheaper, and more convenient ways to move money. Innovation is a good thing—when it's done responsibly.

The difference is that banks operate under strict supervision. We're examined regularly. We hold capital. We maintain liquidity. Deposits are insured. And when we pay interest, it's tied to lending that supports real economic activity. Platforms offering rewards on stablecoin balances aren't making small business loans or home mortgages in our community. Yet those rewards can easily be mistaken for the same thing customers get at a bank—without the same safeguards if something goes wrong.

That's why many community bankers across the country have asked Congress for a simple clarification: make sure the same rule applies no matter who's paying the reward—whether it's the stablecoin issuer itself or an affiliated platform. Clarifying that rule would protect everyday banking without slowing responsible innovation

I want to be clear that policymakers deserve a great deal of credit here. Members of Congress from both parties have approached this issue thoughtfully, working to strike the right balance between encouraging new technology and protecting consumers. That kind of careful, bipartisan engagement is exactly what this fast-moving area needs.

With a small adjustment, lawmakers can keep stablecoins focused on payments, instead of turning them into products that reward people for simply holding onto them. Clear rules will give innovators certainty, protect consumers from confusion, and ensure community banks can continue doing what they do best: lending locally.

Stablecoins may well become part of how people pay in the future. Let's make sure that progress doesn't come at the expense of the local lending that helps our towns grow and thrive. With clarity, fairness, and a continued focus on consumers, we can have both innovation and strong community banking.

STATE-SPECIFIC DATA

Potential Deposit Outflow from Community Banks by State					
State	**Community Banks Headquartered in State**	**Community Banks Operating in State**	**Total Deposits Held at Branches**	**Potential Deposit Outflows to Payment Stablecoins**	**Lost Lending to Households and Businesses**
Alabama	93	112	$47 billion	$2.5 billion to $4.9 billion	$1.6 billion to $3.2 billion
Alaska	5	5	$8 billion	$400 million to $800 million	$300 million to $600 million
Arizona	13	38	$10 billion	$500 million to $1 billion	$400 million to $900 million
Arkansas	75	97	$49 billion	$2.6 billion to $5.1 billion	$2.1 billion to $4.2 billion
California	113	135	$168 billion	$8.7 billion to $17.5 billion	$7.7 billion to $15.4 billion
Colorado	66	98	$44 billion	$2.3 billion to $4.6 billion	$1.9 billion to $3.7 billion
Connecticut	28	35	$33 billion	$1.7 billion to $3.5 billion	$1.6 billion to $3.3 billion
Delaware	13	21	$6 billion	$300 million to $700 million	$300 million to $600 million
Florida	83	133	$89 billion	$4.6 billion to $9.2 billion	$3.6 billion to $7.3 billion
Georgia	139	163	$67 billion	$3.5 billion to $6.9 billion	$2.5 billion to $5 billion
Hawaii	5	9	$19 billion	$1 billion to $2 billion	$700 million to $1.5 billion
Idaho	11	18	$9 billion	$500 million to $1 billion	$400 million to $800 million
Illinois	346	377	$200 billion	$10.4 billion to $20.8 billion	$7.9 billion to $15.7 billion
Indiana	90	117	$83 billion	$4.3 billion to $8.6 billion	$3.5 billion to $7 billion
Iowa	235	256	$103 billion	$5.3 billion to $10.7 billion	$4.4 billion to $8.8 billion

Kansas	199	229	$76 billion	$3.9 billion to $7.9 billion	$3 billion to $6 billion
Kentucky	121	145	$70 billion	$3.7 billion to $7.3 billion	$3 billion to $5.9 billion
Louisiana	108	116	$60 billion	$3.1 billion to $6.2 billion	$2.5 billion to $5 billion
Maine	23	23	$34 billion	$1.8 billion to $3.5 billion	$1.7 billion to $3.4 billion
Maryland	28	54	$32 billion	$1.7 billion to $3.4 billion	$1.5 billion to $2.9 billion
Massachusetts	97	102	$119 billion	$6.2 billion to $12.3 billion	$5.9 billion to $11.8 billion
Michigan	77	88	$58 billion	$3 billion to $6 billion	$2.3 billion to $4.7 billion
Minnesota	240	281	$87 billion	$4.5 billion to $9.1 billion	$3.6 billion to $7.1 billion
Mississippi	57	74	$38 billion	$2 billion to $3.9 billion	$1.4 billion to $2.8 billion
Missouri	201	236	$102 billion	$5.3 billion to $10.6 billion	$4.4 billion to $8.8 billion
Montana	35	45	$17 billion	$900 million to $1.7 billion	$600 million to $1.3 billion
Nebraska	145	157	$60 billion	$3.1 billion to $6.3 billion	$2.7 billion to $5.4 billion
Nevada	15	26	$12 billion	$600 million to $1.2 billion	$500 million to $1 billion
New Hampshire	19	35	$18 billion	$1 billion to $1.9 billion	$900 million to $1.8 billion
New Jersey	46	75	$68 billion	$3.5 billion to $7.1 billion	$3.3 billion to $6.6 billion
New Mexico	29	42	$16 billion	$800 million to $1.7 billion	$500 million to $1 billion
New York	115	139	$150 billion	$7.8 billion to $15.6 billion	$6.6 billion to $13.2 billion
North Carolina	35	55	$29 billion	$1.5 billion to $3 billion	$1.3 billion to $2.5 billion
North Dakota	61	66	$32 billion	$1.6 billion to $3.3 billion	$1.2 billion to $2.4 billion
Ohio	162	172	$89 billion	$4.6 billion to $9.2 billion	$3.8 billion to $7.6 billion
Oklahoma	172	185	$64 billion	$3.3 billion to $6.7 billion	$2.6 billion to $5.2 billion
Oregon	15	23	$10 billion	$500 million to $1 billion	$400 million to $800 million

Pennsylvania	115	131	$107 billion	$5.6 billion to $11.1 billion	$4.8 billion to $9.5 billion
Rhode Island	6	12	$13 billion	$700 million to $1.4 billion	$700 million to $1.4 billion
South Carolina	42	55	$27 billion	$1.4 billion to $2.8 billion	$1.1 billion to $2.2 billion
South Dakota	56	73	$45 billion	$2.3 billion to $4.7 billion	$1.7 billion to $3.4 billion
Tennessee	114	147	$75 billion	$3.9 billion to $7.8 billion	$3.2 billion to $6.4 billion
Texas	367	424	$283 billion	$14.7 billion to $29.3 billion	$10.7 billion to $21.4 billion
Utah	29	36	$40 billion	$2.1 billion to $4.2 billion	$1.8 billion to $3.7 billion
Vermont	12	17	$7 billion	$376 million to $751 million	$327 million to $654 million
Virginia	54	83	$54 billion	$2.8 billion to $5.6 billion	$2.4 billion to $4.9 billion
Washington	33	47	$37 billion	$1.9 billion to $3.8 billion	$1.7 billion to $3.4 billion
West Virginia	44	58	$24 billion	$1.2 billion to $2.5 billion	$1 billion to $2 billion
Wisconsin	159	177	$93 billion	$4.8 billion to $9.6 billion	$4.2 billion to $8.3 billion
Wyoming	26	38	$13 billion	$700 million to $1.3 billion	$400 million to $800 million