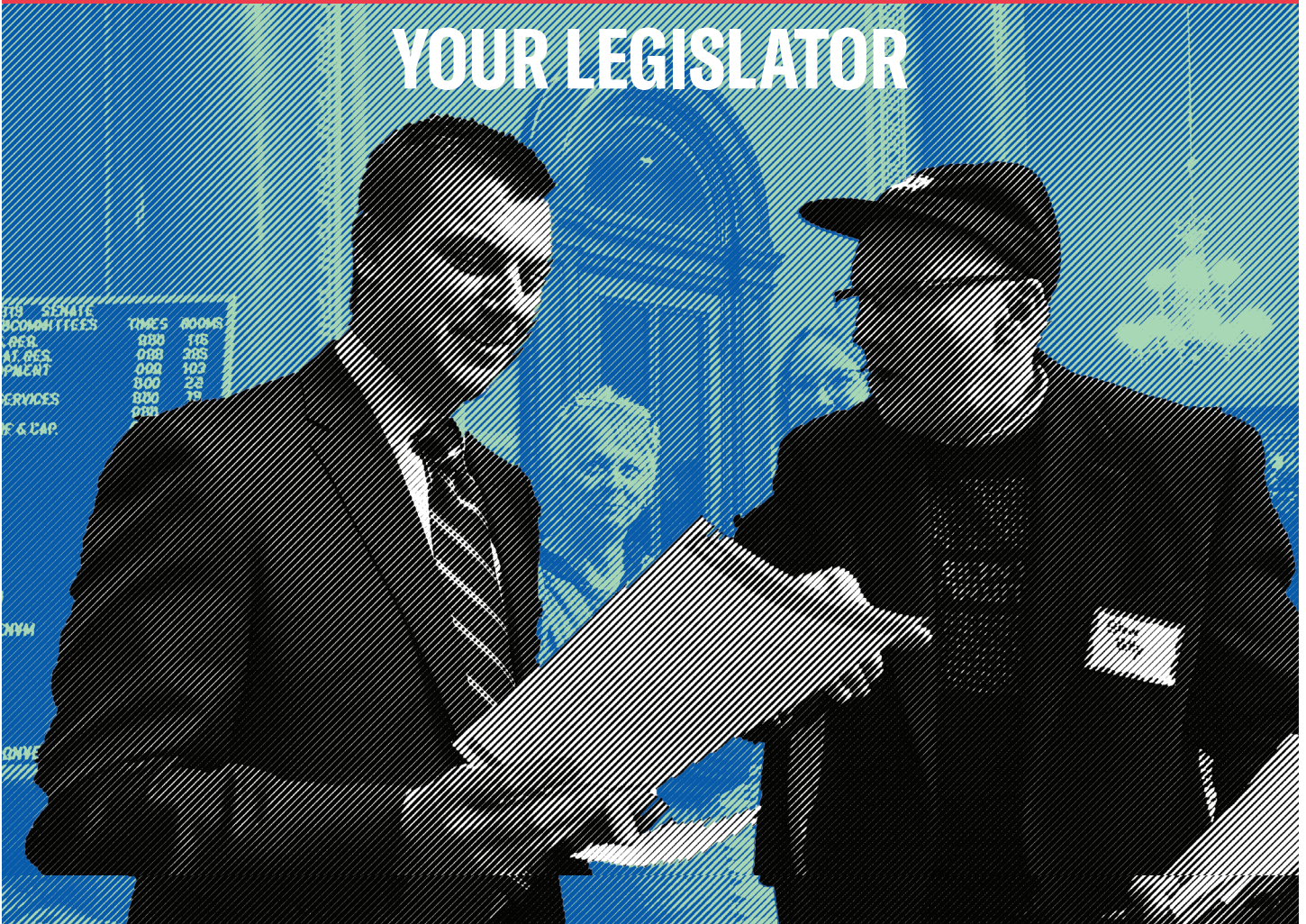


HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR



There are several ways to connect with your elected officials throughout the year, not just during legislative session.

Contact them regularly. You can do this via email, letters, or phone calls. Your legislator's contact information is on the Iowa Legislature's website at legis.iowa.gov.

- Don't get discouraged if your legislator does not respond all the time. If they don't hear from their constituents on an issue, it can be interpreted as support for what they are doing.
- Sometimes thanking a legislator is just as important! This helps build a relationship.

PRO TIP: If the phone number is listed on your legislator's contact web page it's fair game. Try to call during business hours and be ready to speak to the actual legislator.

Sign up for their newsletter. Many legislators put out their own newsletter where you can find more information on their policy positions and events.

You can typically find the link to subscribe on the legislator's contact page (legis.iowa.gov/legislators).

Meet with them in their districts throughout the year or at the Capitol during legislative session. Check out our "How to Meet with Your Legislator" resource for more information.

Write letters to the editor or op-eds in your local newspaper. Be sure to mention your legislator by name to include them in the public conversation. Check out our "How to Write a Letter to the Editor" resource for more information.

Interact with them on social media. If your legislator utilizes social media, respond to their content and share content with them about issues you care about. Legislators often have one or two social media platforms they prefer.

- Be visual.
 - Share a photo or infographic to increase the likelihood of having your post seen.
- Be a positive contributor.
 - Be firm but polite and say thank you. Show your personality so you are more relatable. Also, make clear in your message that you are a constituent. Lawmakers are more likely to respond or take action if that is the case.
- Use hashtags.
 - Make sure to tweet into existing conversations or campaigns. Popular legislative hashtags are #ialegis and #iagov. Don't forget to tag us (@ACLUiowa) too!
- Retweet and comment.
 - Don't just send out your own posts. Retweet posts from your legislator's office and comment thoughtfully.

Attend their town hall meetings and other public events. Legislators often set up their own events or appear at public events in their district year-round. Each individual legislator's schedule varies, so look to their official channels for more information. If you can't find their schedule, feel free to ask them directly.

Invite them to your organization or community event. Legislators are often on the lookout for events to attend in their districts. Events are a great way to both deepen your relationship with your legislator and help them gain a deeper perspective on the issues you care about.

Make yourself indispensable! You are the local expert about the issues you care about as an ACLU supporter. As a member of a non-partisan organization, your willingness to be the eyes and ears on civil liberties is very important for legislators. On matters of civil liberties, a 'win' for us is only possible if we persuade elected officials on the issues, and show them we are trustworthy.

CONTACT US!

HAVE A QUESTION?

Email us at outreach@aclu-ia.org.

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Iowa