

# LOBBY DAY 2019

*Our Liberties We Prize*



**ACLU**  
Iowa

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# ABOUT



## WHAT?

The ACLU of Iowa is proud to share this advocacy toolkit with you. Keep this toolkit handy throughout the year as you engage in the legislative process and organize your community. You CAN impact civil liberties in Iowa by learning the best way to communicate and share your story with elected officials.

## WHY?

It's our job to elect our representatives and senators, which means it's also our job to hold them accountable to the issues that matter the most to us, like protecting immigrant and refugee neighbors, defending the rights of women to make their own healthcare decisions, protecting voting rights – plus so many more other critical civil liberty issues.

## GET STARTED!

This toolkit includes the resources you need to start taking action today. Inside you'll find a review of the legislative process, ACLU's legislative priorities, the best way to communicate with elected officials, and how to start organizing your own community around issues that are important to you. Together we can ensure our lawmakers protect our freedoms and defend our constitutional rights

# 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## PASSING THE PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT (PWFA)

- Three identical bills have been introduced and ACLU supports them: [HF 384](#), [HF 109](#) and [SF 117](#)
- The PWFA would provide modest legal protections for pregnant workers. It would require employers to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant employees- things as basic as being able to carry a water bottle or have a chair to sit on periodically- as long as it is not a hardship on the employer.
- Responsible Iowa businesses are already doing this. Let's make sure all businesses do this.
- It's good for business, and it's good for Iowa families.

## RESTORING VOTING RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS

- Iowa remains one of a few states that ban people with a felony conviction from voting for life. This is no way to run a democracy. It hurts individuals, families, and communities.
- Governor Reynolds proposed a constitutional amendment to restore these voting rights and the ACLU supports the amendment: [HSB68](#) and [SSB1046](#)
- A state constitutional amendment is needed to end felony disenfranchisement once and for all so that the more than 60,000 Iowans who have completed their sentences-who are disproportionately African-Americans-may once again be full members of society and exercise their right to vote.

## BANNING RACIAL PROFILING

- ACLU of Iowa continues to support passage of a meaningful anti-racial profiling bill that:
  - bans racial profiling statewide
  - bans pretextual stops statewide
  - requires annual data collection and analysis and data collection release to the public
  - creates an advisory board to review statewide data and recommend best practices
  - requires annual training on racial profiling, data collection, and data reporting
- [SSB 1038](#) has been introduced. While the ACLU is “undecided” on this version of the bill, we continue to work with legislators and partners, including the NAACP, to get a meaningful bill passed.



# HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW

A BILL IS A PROPOSAL FOR THE ENACTMENT, AMENDMENT, OR REPEAL OF AN EXISTING LAW, OR FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC MONEY. A BILL MAY ORIGINATE IN EITHER THE HOUSE OR SENATE.

1. A legislator decides or legislators decide to sponsor a bill. Ideas come from many sources: constituents, interest groups, and government agencies.

2. The legislator requests or legislators request the idea be drafted into a bill by the Legislative Services Agency, Legal Services Division.

3. The bill draft is sent to the Senate or the House where it is assigned a number and is then sent to the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House

4. The President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House refers the bill to a standing committee. A subcommittee, assigned by the standing committee, then studies the bill and reports its conclusions to the full committee.

5. The committee may pass the bill or pass an amended version of the bill. The committee may also send the bill to the floor without recommendation.

6. The bill is placed on the calendar, a listing of all bills officially eligible for debate. Now legislators may file amendments to the bill.

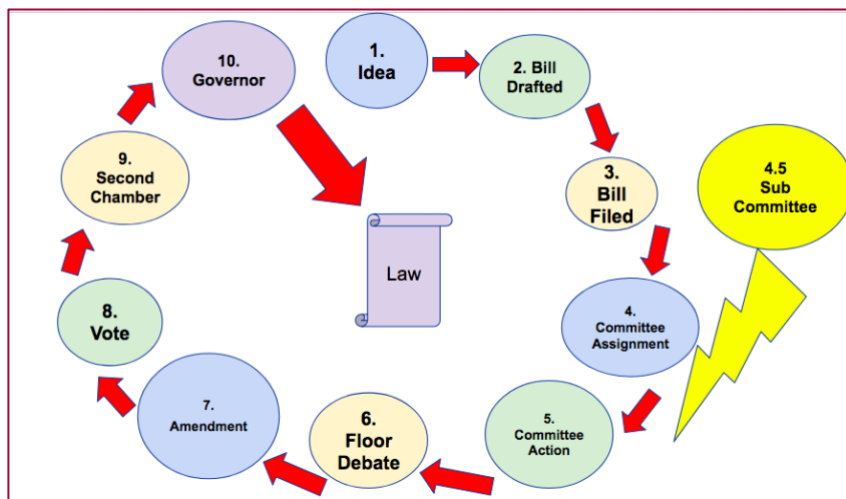
7. The bill and any amendments filed are debated by the whole chamber. Amendments must be approved by a simple majority of those legislators voting.

8. A constitutional majority, at least 26 senators or 51 representatives, must vote “yes” for the bill to proceed to the second chamber.

9. The bill goes through the same process in the second chamber. If the bill passes the second chamber without amendment, it is sent to the Governor. If the second chamber amends the bill it must be sent back to the chamber of origin for approval of those amendments. If the chambers cannot come to an agreement on the version of the bill, a conference committee is appointed.

10. After the bill passes both chambers in identical form, it is sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign the bill, veto the bill, or take no action on the bill.

11. The bill becomes law upon the Governor’s signature or after three days during the session if the Governor takes no action. Bills received by the Governor during the last three days of the session must be signed or vetoed within 30 days. If the Governor takes no action on the bill after the 30-day time period, the bill is considered vetoed.



# HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR LAWMAKER

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

1. CONTACT THEM. YOU CAN DO THIS THROUGH EMAIL, LETTERS, PHONE CALLS, OR IN-PERSON MEETINGS
2. MEET WITH THEM IN THEIR DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR OR AT THE CAPITOL DURING LEGISLATIVE SESSION
3. SPEAK AT A SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING
4. WRITE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OR OP-EDS IN YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS
5. SHARE YOUR STORY ON SOCIAL MEDIA
6. ATTEND OR COORDINATE TOWNS HALLS AND OTHER PUBLIC FORUMS
7. START A PETITION

# MEETING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL IN PERSON AND LOBBYING

## ESSENTIAL PREPARATION

### STEP 1: KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS

Be sure that you know them. What committees do they serve on? What is their professional background? Do you have any shared common interests?

All this information can be helpful in building a relationship with your lawmaker and talking to them about issues that matter most to you.

- Go to <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators> to access their contact information and bios.
- Focus on the legislators that represent your district or who are on committees that pertain to issues you care about
- Find them on social media or visit their campaign websites. These are great tools to learn more about their priorities
- Check out the 2018 ACLU of Iowa Legislative Scorecard to see how your lawmaker voted on civil liberties during the last legislative session:  
[https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/final\\_9-25-18\\_voter\\_scorecard\\_.pdf](https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/final_9-25-18_voter_scorecard_.pdf)

### STEP 2: KNOW WHAT TO SAY

Before you reach out to your legislator about an issue — whether by phone, in-person meeting, or email— make sure you do your homework and know your content.

- Visit our website throughout the session as we identify the bills we are working on.
- Prepare a script before contacting your elected official. The more you know, the more your legislator can learn too!
- Share your personal story on how a particular issue may impact (or has impacted) you or a loved one.

### STEP 4: THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Be persistent! Lawmakers are very busy during session and can't always respond right away. Follow up with a phone call if you sent an email. You can always go to the Capitol and ask to meet with them, too.
- Remember: Legislators work for YOU!
- Always try to be professional, use a positive tone, and thank them for their time and listening to you. Also, be sure to send them a thank you email or letter.

# SPEAKING AT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS OR PUBLIC HEARING

## BEFORE THE MEETING

- Find out when and where the bill(s) you care about will be heard. You may do so by checking the Iowa Legislature website for the daily schedules and agendas:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/meetings>

- Plan your talking points and story. You will be more effective getting your message across if you have prepared remarks in writing. You can then orally summarize your remarks to conserve time.

## AT THE MEETING

- Be on time.
- Sign-in (if available).
- Wait your turn. The chair or subcommittee members will announce if there is a specific speaking order and if there is a time limit.
- Begin your remarks by addressing the chair and committee members. State your name, where you live, and why you are there.
- Be courteous and brief in your language and address.
- Be confident. There is no right or wrong way to voice your opinion and concerns!

## AFTER THE MEETING

- Thank the legislator and other speakers.
- Connect with other individuals or groups that share the same views as you!



# USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENGAGE LAWMAKERS

**SOCIAL MEDIA IS A GREAT WAY TO MAGNIFY SUPPORT FOR THE ACLU’S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS.**

**THANK LAWMAKERS FOR PROTECTING YOUR CIVIL LIBERTIES, TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT YOUR LOBBY VISITS, AND SHARE YOUR PHOTOS.**

## GENERAL TIPS FOR CRAFTING YOUR BEST ONLINE MESSAGE:

### BE VISUAL

Share a photo or infographic to increase the likelihood of having your post seen.

### BE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTOR

You may get less attention if you are extremely negative. 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.

### SAMPLE POSTS

“I’m at the Capitol in Des Moines to support immigrant rights, fix our criminal justice system, and protect LGBTQ Iowans! #ialegis #iagov”

“Thank you [@legislator] for meeting with me about Voter Restoration in Iowa! #ialegis”

“.@legislator -- Please vote YES on SF117 and support pregnant Iowa workers. #ialegis #iagov”

# ATTENDING A TOWN HALL

Town halls will be different depending on who is hosting the event. Elected officials can hold town hall meetings to hear from members of their community about the issues that matter most to them. They are also hosted by candidates running for office, to speak more about their issues. Attending events like these gives you an opportunity to ask questions to decision makers about the issues and campaigns you care about.

## WHY IS ATTENDING A TOWN HALL AN EFFECTIVE TACTIC?

- **It's an opportunity to speak directly to elected officials** about your issues, campaign. You can share your personal story, the brief background of your campaign, and most importantly -- ask a question of your elected official in front of a large crowd.
- **You can generate more pressure on your targets by getting press coverage on your issues.** If your event is hosted by an elected official, there will likely be local press and even national media covering the event. If you share your compelling story, show up with a large group, or otherwise make a lasting impact, you could get press coverage.
- **You can recruit others to join your campaign.** At the town hall, there will be others from your community who care enough to take a few hours to hear from elected officials, and therefore will likely be open to meeting you, signing a petition and learning more about your campaign.

## BEFORE THE TOWN HALL

### **Find an upcoming town hall event to attend**

- For all elected officials: Call their district office to ask when their next town hall is. If there is none planned, encourage them to schedule one and ask how to stay informed about upcoming events.

### **Recruit others to join you**

- If you're attending as an individual, that's great, too. Wear a t-shirt, button or carry a sign that indicates your point of view and it will make it easier to connect with other likeminded people at the event.

### **Prepare your questions**

- Consider scheduling an organizing meeting in advance of the town hall to agree on a clear request you want to make of your elected official, outline questions your group will ask, and set up a plan to arrive together.
- Prepare several questions for members of your group to ask. Focus on your elected official's record or statements they've made on the topic. If you have a personal connection to the issue, be sure to share your personal story briefly.
- Many town halls have a limit of three minutes for each comment. If this is the case, practice your comment to ensure you can stay within this time limit.
- Write down your questions so you are prepared the day of.

## DURING THE TOWN HALL

- **Have your question(s) ready.** When it's your turn to ask a question, remember to introduce yourself, let your elected official know you're volunteering with People Power, and keep it clear and concise.

- **Stay afterward to meet new people.** You may feel the need to leave after you ask a question but try to stay for the entire town hall--even if it runs over time. You should listen to what others have to say the same way they listened to you. Town halls are the ideal place for you to meet others in your community who share the same opinions as you. Take this opportunity to introduce yourself, tell them how you got involved, and ask if there are other ways to become more involved on the issue or campaign.

#### **AFTER THE TOWN HALL**

**Share pictures and video on social media.** Continue to amplify the issues you raised by sharing on social media.

**Plan your next tactic and event!** At this town hall, you may have brought this issue to your elected official for the first time, gained press coverage, and found new activists to work with.

# ENGAGING AND EDUCATING YOUR COMMUNITY

## Why is it important to engage and educate your community?

- Issues like voting rights or immigration can be complicated and confusing. By educating your community, you can close the knowledge gap and ensure people are informed.
- You can build connections and helpful partnerships by getting involved in local events, speaking to community groups, or holding your own education events.
- You can recruit new activists to join your group.

## How to engage and educate your community?

### **Do research on opportunities**

- Community groups often meet at a certain time each month. Look for meeting calendars to see what dates are coming up. Make a list of meeting information and contacts.
- Events can be excellent venues for education. Are there upcoming events related to voting? Are there farmer's markets that happen weekly? Are there festivals where you can have a booth?

### **Make a decision**

- Think through your next actions: Are you in the middle of a big petitioning push? Are you working to pass a bill and have an champion in the legislature who loves speaking on this issue?
- Think through capacity. Speaking to a community group at their monthly meeting is a great way to collect petitions and educate people on your issue - it also doesn't take much time or effort to accomplish! Planning a community forum is an excellent way to educate many people at once and develop relationships by asking other groups to sit on a panel or having a local councilperson speak about their passion for voting rights — it can be totally worth it but it does take time (~1 month) to plan a big educational event like this.

### **Get out there!**

- Regardless of what venue you are in, you can use a simple structure to speak about your campaign.
    - Introduce yourself
    - Give the basic background/description of the problem (Why are you here to speak today?)
    - State your call to action goal (What can we do about this problem?)
    - Tell them how they fit in (What can they do to help?)
    - Make a strong and clear ask to take action (Sign-up to volunteer! Sign a petition!)
    - Make sure you always have a way to collect names and contact information.
- Education is only the first step, action is the next, and you need information to get people involved.

# What's Next?

## HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY DEFENDING CIVIL LIBERTIES IN IOWA

1. Sign up to receive the ACLU of Iowa's email alerts to get updates on issues and legal cases.
2. Join our Rapid Response Team and take quick actions on legislative priorities: <https://www.aclu-ia.org/en/act-0>
3. Volunteer with our advocacy team:  
<https://www.aclu-ia.org/en/act-0>
4. Follow us on social media
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acluofiowa/>
  - Twitter: @ACLUiowa
  - Instagram: @acluofiowa
5. Report back— If you do connect with your lawmaker, let us know how your conversation went to help us continue to protect and advance civil liberties.

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