



Liberty and Justice for All

2017 KANSAS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The ACLU of Kansas is a non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting and strengthening the civil liberties and civil rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. A non-profit membership organization with over 20,000 supporters in Kansas and more than 2 million supporters nationwide, we advance a wide range of civil liberties and civil rights through litigation, advocacy, and education.

During the 2017 Kansas legislative session, we call on lawmakers to defend and strengthen the core American value of “liberty and justice for all” on five priority issues:



Voting Rights

The ACLU of Kansas strongly supports adoption of a same-day registration law. This would allow eligible citizens who meet statutory identification requirements to register to vote and cast a ballot on the same day, during the early voting period up to Election Day itself. Eleven other states have same-day registration laws, and have seen significant increases in voter turnout as a result.

We call for the Legislature to repeal the state’s wholly unnecessary and deeply harmful restrictions on voting rights. Kansas has the most onerous voter registration law in the country, one that especially harms senior citizens, veterans, people of color, and students. Many of these restrictions have already been successfully challenged in federal court, but keeping these restrictions on the books will create additional expense, frustration, litigation, confusion, and civic disengagement for Kansas citizens.



Smart Justice Reform

Kansans deserve a criminal justice system that creates safe and strong communities, reduces the number of incarcerated people, and uses taxpayer dollars wisely. The ACLU is part of Kansans for Smart Justice, a coalition calling for urgent reforms of the criminal justice system that include:

- **Providing guidance that will increase the use of diversion at the local level.**
- **Making drug offenses misdemeanors, rather than felonies.** Polling data shows a huge, bipartisan majority of Kansans support this change. Fourteen other states, including Utah and South Carolina, have defelonized most drug offenses.
- **Requiring a criminal conviction before a citizen is stripped of property rights through asset forfeiture proceedings.**



Rights of Immigrants

No one should be discriminated against based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, or alienage. Bills that would repeal in-state tuition for immigrant students or that ban refugee resettlement should be rejected because these policies are discriminatory, unconstitutional, and harmful to the state’s economic development. The state should not compel local police to become front-line enforcers of federal immigration law. We oppose bills that engage in fear-mongering about “sanctuary cities,” (there are none in Kansas) or that require local law enforcement to honor federal immigration detainers, a tool multiple federal courts have found unconstitutional.



Reproductive Freedom

The ACLU opposes any bill that infringes on a woman’s constitutional right to make decisions about her own healthcare.



Equal Protection Under the Law

All Americans should have the right to equal protection under the law. Bills that allow the use of religion to discriminate against LGBT Kansans, or any other group, or that would result in the denial of public accommodations or public services are contrary to that core value. Measures that deny transgender Kansans the right to access public accommodations that align with the gender they live every day should be rejected. We support amending the state anti-discrimination law to include sexual orientation and gender identity would result in stronger protections for equality under the law.