



*Democracy Takes US All:*

## TOOLKIT FOR PENNSYLVANIANS TO MOVE FROM THOUGHT TO ACTION

This toolkit provides you with the essential information, tools, and resources you need to understand your rights, stay safe, and take meaningful action in your community. Whether you're organizing, speaking out, or supporting others, this guide helps you do it with confidence and clarity.

*Esta guía te ofrece la información esencial, herramientas y recursos que necesitas para conocer tus derechos, mantenerte seguro(a) y tomar acción en tu comunidad. Ya sea que organices, alces tu voz o apoyes a otros, esta guía te ayuda a hacerlo con confianza y claridad.*

**When we use our collective power, our rights and dignity are something they can't deny**

*Conoce tus derechos. Usa tu poder.  
Porque tu dignidad es algo que nadie puede negar.*

**ACLU**  
Pennsylvania

A toolkit for Pennsylvanians to move from thought to action.

# A Toolkit for *Activists*

**We've seen** our First Amendment rights attacked and diminished. These are attempts to silence our voices, protest, and necessary dissent against injustice.

**We've seen** due process—the constitutional promise that our government **MUST** follow certain procedures before it deprives a person of life, liberty, or property—blatantly ignored.

**We've read and witnessed** horrific acts against our neighbors: innocent children being captured; Black and brown people being racially profiled, abducted, and abused; and people being harassed, intimidated, and killed by immigration agents (ICE).

**We've seen** access to life-saving gender-affirming care denied as medical providers, fearful of government retaliation, abandon their trans and nonbinary patients.

**We've witnessed** federal troops deployed onto the very streets they've sworn to protect—and we know Pennsylvania could be the next target.

**DON'T CLOSE YOUR EYES AT THIS MOMENT. DON'T TUNE OUT THE SOUND OF INJUSTICE. DON'T DISMISS THE HEARTBREAKING STORIES OF PEOPLE, MOTHERS, FATHERS, CHILDREN, AND LOVED ONES, WHOSE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY HAVE BEEN VIOLATED.**

**OUR NEIGHBORS, OUR COMMUNITY,  
OUR DEMOCRACY DEPEND ON US ALL.**



Even if you don't consider yourself an activist, you can still take action. Every effort, no matter how small, works to defend our democracy, the promises in our Constitution, and the people who make this country beautiful.

**But before you move from thought to action, we want to acknowledge something important:** Everyone's risk tolerance and capacity to take action are different. As you decide how to take action, prioritize your safety and well-being—as well as that of your loved ones—and choose the course of action that aligns best with your comfort level.

One person can't do everything, but each of us can do something. And every action—whether it is sharing a video, planning a fundraiser, or calling your legislator—is needed as we dare to create a more perfect union.

## *What's Inside:*

### **Know Your Rights Information**



Before taking action or participating in any public activity, it's important to understand your rights.

### **Take Action**



- **Taking Digital Action**
  - Templates to Get Started
- **Taking In-Person Action**
  - Get involved with the ACLU-PA



### **Downloadable Safety & Emergency Resources**

We all know that having rights doesn't mean they can't or won't be violated or disregarded; this is not new! Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested approximately 30 times for his participation in civil rights activities. There are always various levels of risk to advocacy and protest. Being prepared with emergency contact information and safety tips will ensure that if your rights are violated, you know the steps you can take to protect yourself and your community. For those who are caregivers or face extreme risks of scenarios like deportation back to life-threatening circumstances, we encourage being informed so that you can use your best judgment and make decisions for yourself and your family.



# Know Your Rights

Before taking action, whether online, at a rally, or in your community, it's essential to understand the rights that protect you. Knowing your rights helps you act confidently, reduces risk, and strengthens our collective power.

1

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH AND THE RIGHT TO PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY.



2

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS.



3

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECORD LAW ENFORCEMENT.



4

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT AS A STUDENT TO PROTEST ON CAMPUS.



5

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN YOUR PRIVACY ON SOCIAL MEDIA.



6

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEEK INFORMATION FROM OUR GOVERNMENT (RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAW).





# FROM KNOWING TO DOING: *Take Action*

**Understanding your rights is the first step. Now it's time to put them into action.** This is a critical moment, and it calls for all of us to get involved and take a stand.

Real change starts with you, and with all of us, together. With immigrants' rights, trans and gender-diverse equality, reproductive freedom, our First Amendment rights, and so much more under threat, communities across the country are stepping up to protect one another. **Across the nation, people are standing up for dignity, equity, and justice. We need you with us as we take action in Pennsylvania.**

In the following two sections, “Taking a Digital Action” and “Taking In-Person Action,” you’ll find practical guidance to help you participate effectively, protect yourself and others, and make your voice heard.

Let's show up with intention, respect, and care for our communities and each other as we fight against government overreach to create lasting change beyond this moment.

*Ready to take the next step?*

Explore these links to find digital and in-person actions and join others working for justice and dignity in our communities.



[Attend an event](#)



[Volunteer](#)



# *Taking Digital Action*

Taking digital action is a powerful way to amplify your message, educate others, and inspire change. Sharing your values online can spark collective action, but with the advancement of AI and widespread misinformation, it's crucial to rely on credible sources and organizations. By following and sharing content from trusted advocacy groups and nonprofits, you help ensure dependable information reaches more people.

Whether you sign a petition, start a conversation, or repost a story, your action matters. Use the sample content to create your own posts or share directly from our channels to expand its reach. Every digital action adds momentum to the movement for justice.

## Sample Social Media Posts

### *Know Your Rights*

**Sharing** Know Your Rights information **empowers us all.**

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT SCHOOL** (VIDEO)



**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT SCHOOL** (CAROUSEL)



**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PROTESTING** (VIDEO)



**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IF ICE SHOWS UP AT YOUR HOME** (VIDEO) (SPANISH)



### *Change the Narrative*

**BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP IS A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT**



**DISSENT INJUSTICE**



[Download content from our library here.](#)

Another powerful way to support this work is by joining or donating to organizations like the ACLU-PA, which defends our civil rights and liberties every day. Your contribution helps protect our communities.

**Donate here:** [aclupa.org/join-donate-or-both](https://aclupa.org/join-donate-or-both)

**Join here:** [action.aclu.org/give/pennsylvania-join-renew-today](https://action.aclu.org/give/pennsylvania-join-renew-today)



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# Taking In-Person Action

In-person actions create visibility, build connection, and strengthen community bonds, but they also can require some preparation and extra time commitment, whether that be three hours one time or a few hours each week. Before participating, it's important to **know your rights**, understand the event's goals, and take steps to protect your safety and the safety of others, especially our immigrant and Black and brown community members who often face higher risks.

Taking action in person is one of the most meaningful ways to show solidarity. Below are a few ways you can get involved, each with different levels of visibility and commitment. Choose what aligns with your comfort, capacity, and safety.

## 1. ATTEND A PROTEST OR RALLY

Rallies and marches bring collective power into the streets. They show lawmakers, the media, and the public that people are paying attention and demanding action.

If you choose to participate, review our Protest Safety Tips infographic to understand your rights, plan ahead, and keep yourself and others safe. [[Check these safety Tips](#)]

## 2. JOIN AN ACLU-PA COUNTY ACTION TEAM

County Action Teams are local groups of volunteers organizing in their own communities. Members help mobilize neighbors, connect with local officials, plan events, and support issue-based advocacy campaigns.

It's a great option if you want to stay active year-round and build long-term community power.

## 3. PARTICIPATE IN A LOBBY DAY

Lobby Days give you the chance to meet legislators or their staff face-to-face, and use your personal story as an advocacy tool to push for policies that protect civil rights and civil liberties.

Many community groups, advocacy organizations, and coalitions offer guidance, talking points, or training sessions to help you feel prepared and confident before meeting with a legislator.



# *Taking In-Person Action*

## **4. ATTEND TOWN HALLS OR PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Local school boards, city councils, county commissioners, and state representatives hold public meetings for community members to voice concerns or ask questions. Community groups also organize town halls where residents can engage directly with elected officials for education, awareness, and action.

Showing up, whether to observe or speak, helps hold public officials accountable and ensures your community's experiences aren't ignored.

## **5. BRING A FRIEND TO AN EDUCATIONAL EVENT**

Workshops, Know-Your-Rights trainings, panel discussions, documentary screenings with post-screening Q&As, and community forums are accessible first steps for people who want to get involved but aren't sure where to start.

Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is invite one more person into the conversation to gain a deeper understanding.

## **6. VOLUNTEER WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

Nonprofits, legal service providers, grassroots groups, and mutual aid networks rely on volunteers to sustain their work.

Whether you're helping with event check-in, assembling resource kits, making calls, or supporting immigrant families, your time directly strengthens the safety and dignity of your community.

**Whatever action you choose, show up with care, respect, and intention. In-person engagement builds trust, expands networks, and fuels collective power. When we act together, we create the conditions for real, lasting change.**

# ↓ Safety Tips, Emergency Plan, and Who to Call

Preparation and communication are key to staying safe and confident during a demonstration. Here are a few practical steps to keep in mind:



**1 PLAN AHEAD**  
Know the route, meeting point, and exit routes. Attend trainings if the organizers offer them.



**2 SHARE YOUR PLAN**  
Tell a trusted person where you're going, who you're with, and when you expect to return.



**3 DRESS SMART**  
Wear comfortable clothes, closed-toe shoes, and avoid items that can be mistaken for weapons or used against you.



**4 PACK ESSENTIALS**  
Bring water, snacks, ID, a mask, hand sanitizer, and any medications you might need.



**5 KEEP YOUR PHONE PROTECTED**  
Fully charge your device, disable face/fingerprint ID, and consider turning off location tracking.



**6 STAY CALM IF CONFRONTED**  
If confronted by law enforcement, ask calmly if you're being detained or free to go. If detained, state that you wish to remain silent and want to speak with an attorney.



**7 DOCUMENT SAFELY**  
If you witness something and want to record law enforcement, do so from a safe distance. If possible, back up footage to the cloud in real time.



## IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE IS DETAINED:

- 1 Contact** a trusted friend or legal observer immediately.
- 2 Avoid signing any documents** or providing additional information until you've spoken with a lawyer.
- 3** If you don't know who to call, contact the United Way Helpline at 2-1-1 or visit their website [pa211.org](http://pa211.org). They offer a **24-hour hotline** that will connect you to appropriate referrals in your area.

### See a recap of the No Kings protests:

- [Protest the Trump administration's abuse of power.](#)
- [No king's peaceful protest](#)

Follow organizers' guidance, stay calm and respectful, and remember that you're part of something larger than yourself. Every person has a role to play. You can march, document, volunteer, provide supplies, or simply show up to listen and learn. What matters most is that you do it with intention, respect, and care, because collective action, rooted in safety and solidarity, is what drives lasting change.



Download your [Family Preparedness Plan](#)

## ↓ *Connecting with the ACLU of Pennsylvania*

No one takes action alone. Whether you're attending a protest, volunteering in your community, or simply learning your rights, the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania (ACLU-PA) is here to support you. Our mission is to realize the promises of the Constitution and expand the reach of its guarantees to **US ALL**.

### YOU CAN CONNECT WITH ACLU-PA IN SEVERAL WAYS:

By staying connected, you're joining a statewide network of advocates and allies who work to defend and expand freedom and justice for us all.

**STAY INFORMED** Sign up for emails on our [homepage](#).

**GET INVOLVED** Sign up for volunteer opportunities, advocacy campaigns, and training sessions designed to help you become a more effective advocate. [Here](#).

**REPORT AN INCIDENT** If you believe your rights were violated during a protest or other public activity, you can contact the ACLU-PA's [Legal Intake Team](#) for assistance and next steps.

**LEARN AND SHARE** Explore ACLU-PA [Know Your Rights](#) and National ACLU [materials](#) and share them widely to help others act safely and confidently.

#### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 [Instagram](#)  [TikTok](#)  [YouTube](#)  [Facebook](#)  [BlueSky](#)  [Threads](#)

### ↓ DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES

- **Cards wallet-sized**
  - PDFs in different languages
- **Know Your Rights (K-12 School)**
- **Family preparedness plan**

***i* RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATING FOR IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS:**

**[More Know Your Rights Immigration Resources](#)**

**[Understanding your rights under and eligibility for DACA.](#)**

**[Encountering Law Enforcement and Military Troops.](#)**

**[Immigration Enforcement Guidance for Health Centers](#)**

**[Immigration Enforcement Guidance for Places of Worship](#)**

**Know Your Rights. Use Your Power.  
Because your dignity is something they can't deny.**

*Conoce tus derechos. Usa tu poder.  
Porque tu dignidad es algo que nadie puede negar.*

