

LET MY PEOPLE VOTE®

**2021
BLACK
WOMEN'S
LEGISLATIVE
GUIDE**



why we **engage** in this work

Too often, decisions are made about Black communities without our input and expertise. Black Womxn have to push our way into spaces for our livelihood and well being to be considered at the minimum. The pandemic and the Movement for Black Lives have illustrated how important local policies are to our communities and how these policies have direct impacts on our lives. We have always taken to the streets in protests to draw attention to the issues that matter to us, and we will continue to make noise at our state capitol. Together we will make our stories heard and hold our leaders accountable to every demand in defense of Black life.

Let My People Vote has big plans to keep our communities politically engaged and hold our elected officials accountable – not to the promises that they made during their election campaigns, but to life-changing legislation that Black Womxn are demanding during the present HERstory-in-the-making Movement for Black Lives. We know that Black Womxn’s political power is a force to be reckoned with and this is why we engage in all levels of the political process.

the **guide** to the guide

During the present Black HERstory-in-the-making moment, this guide is designed to give you quick, important information about how to take action at the Colorado capitol.

- Important terms
- Intro to how a bill becomes a law
- How to take action on different bills
- Where to get more information on bills and their status

Our guide centers the policy priorities of Black Womxn by focusing on the issues that shape our lives and communities.



Soul 2 Soul Sisters

Soul 2 Soul Sisters is fiercely faith-based, Black Womxn-led, racial justice 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that focuses on Black healing and Black liberation. Soul 2 Soul Sisters' Let My People Vote (LMPV) program is a Black Womxn-led, bold, ongoing, collaborative electoral justice program with New Era Colorado that empowers Black folks to be politically engaged.

You can learn more or sign-up to volunteer at Soul2SoulSisters.org.



Glossary

- **Legislation:** a fancy word for laws.
- **Legislative session:** a yearly meeting of the general assembly for the purpose of creating new laws and updating existing laws. Colorado's legislative session typically runs from January-May.
- **General assembly:** the term for Colorado's House of Representatives and Senate.
- **Legislators:** members of a legislative body. Legislators are either in the House or Senate.
- **Senators:** legislators who were elected to the Senate.
- **Representatives:** legislators who were elected to the House of Representatives.
- **Constituents:** the group of people who are represented by legislators. This is typically determined by where a person lives. [Click here to look up who your legislator is.](#)
- **Bills:** another term for proposed legislation/laws. [Click here to keep track of bills.](#)
- **Postponed Indefinitely:** when a bill does not proceed through the rest of the steps, it does not pass, and it does not become law.
- **Committee:** a set group of legislators who meet during the legislative session to consider issue-specific legislation. For example, the Senate Education committee is made up of Senators who discuss bills related to education.
- **Testimony:** when a member of the public (like you!) provides a statement on a bill that is under consideration in a committee at the State Capitol.
- **Lobbying:** the act of attempting to influence a legislator's decisions, policies or opinion on an issue through informed persuasion.

How a Bill Becomes a **LAW** (Colorado)



STEP 1: INTRODUCTION

Senators or Representatives introduce the bill in their respective chamber – either the Senate or the House.



STEP 3: SECOND READING

The bill is heard again in the Senate or House where all Senators or Representatives vote on whether the bill should continue the process to become law or not. This is also an opportunity to introduce amendments and debate the bill.

STEP 2: COMMITTEE

The bill is assigned to a committee where a small group of Senators or Representatives will hear testimony, discuss, and determine if it should continue through the process to become law or not.



STEP 4: THIRD READING

After amendments and debate, the bill is heard again in the Senate or House where all Senators or Representatives vote on whether the bill should continue the process to become law or not.



STEP 5: REPEAT THE PROCESS

After passing out of its 3rd reading, the bill must go through the same process in the other chamber. For example, if the bill passed through the Senate, it goes to the House for deliberation.

STEP 6: GOVERNOR'S DESK!

After the bill goes through all these steps twice, it gets sent to the Governor for approval or veto. If the Governor approves, the bill is signed into law!



For an in-depth explanation of the legislative process, visit bit.ly/3CEBlga



**ISSUES WE'RE
WORKING ON**

Reparations

For reparations, Let My People Vote is tracking bills at the state and federal levels that make progress on redistributing wealth towards Black communities. In the Colorado legislature LMPV is watching [SB21-057](#) – this bill provides increased protections for private student loan borrowers and increased accountability for private student loan lenders. At the federal level, LMPV is watching issues related to medical debt cancellation, financial assistance for womxn impacted by COVID, and student debt Cancellation.

Federal Bills LMPV Supports

- [S.Res.46](#) | This resolution calls on the Biden Administration to cancel \$50,000 student debt
- [HR.40](#) | Establishes an expert federal commission to study the legacy of slavery in the United States and its ongoing harm and develop proposals for redress and repair, including reparations.
- [BREATHE Act](#) | This is a comprehensive bill developed by the Movement 4 Black Lives aimed at defunding the police and reinvesting in our communities.

Reproductive Justice

For reproductive justice, we are tracking bills at the state and federal levels that expand access to healthcare and increase safety for families, including but not limited to medicaid coverage of doula salaries and repealing the Hyde Amendment. At the federal level, we are supporting the [Black Maternal Momnibus Act](#) which is a collection of 12 bills that are aimed at addressing the maternal health crisis in America, especially for Black womxn.

Colorado Bills LMPV Supports

- [SB21-009](#) | Expands access to medicaid coverage for undocumented folks, including coverage for contraceptives.
- [SB21-101](#) | Provides better regulations for midwives and ensures communities have access to midwives for their reproductive healthcare needs.
- [SB21-193](#) | Establishes basic human rights standards for the treatment of all pregnant people, including incarcerated folks.
- [SB21-194](#) | Updates healthcare data systems and practices to be equitable and race-explicit in order to provide comprehensive data to groups seeking to address inequities in healthcare and health outcomes.
- [SB21-027](#) | Expands access to diapers for low-income families. We are also tracking the federal version of this bill – [End Diaper Need Act](#)

Electoral Justice

For electoral justice, we are tracking bills at the state and federal levels that expand access to democracy for all communities, including automatic voter registration, and abolishing the filibuster and electoral college. In Colorado, we are supporting [HB21-1011](#) which requires Colorado to provide access to ballots in languages other than English

Federal Bills LMPV Supports

- [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) | Restores the Voting Rights Act and strengthens protections for voters of color
- [HR.1](#) | A bold pro-democracy reform package that expands access to elections through actions like national automatic voter registration
- [HR.576](#) | Expands access to voter registration by allowing 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register to vote



Ways To Take Action

LMPV encourages our communities to take action because it's important for legislators to hear directly from the communities they serve. We must hold decision makers accountable to the impact of policy making on the day-to-day lives of Black people and Black communities.

- Sign up to give testimony in Colorado: bit.ly/LMPVTestimony
- Write an email or call/leave a voicemail to your legislator(s) to vote yes on the bills we listed. Legislators need to hear from their constituents in order to do their jobs well, so it's important that we make our voices heard in this way! [Click here to look up who your legislator is](#). You can use this sample script:
 - ***“Please vote yes on [BILL NUMBER]. This issue is important to me personally because [YOUR REASONS]. This bill is a step in the right direction and our community needs it.”***
- Write a Letter to the Editor about an issue you care about and why the public should be taking action too.
- [Click here to access LMPV's legislative session toolkit](#) for all the resources you need! It has fact sheets, scripts, talking points, testimony examples, and much more.

find out more

This guide is designed to give you the quickest, most important information on what's happening at the Colorado capitol and how to take action. But obviously there's a lot more information out there. If you're looking to read more about the legislature, we recommend checking out the Colorado General Assembly website: www.leg.colorado.gov/. If you have any questions about this guide and how to get involved, reach out to us at Impv@soul2soulsisters.org.

