

LET MY PEOPLE VOTE®

2022

BLACK
WOMEN'S
GUIDE

LEGISLATIVE SESSION





why we engage in the legislative session

Too often, decisions are made about Black communities without our input and expertise. Black Women must have a seat at the table and, usually, that means we have to push our way into the spaces where these decisions are made. 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 protest to draw attention to the issues that matter to us, and by continuing to make noise at our state capitol, we can turn that attention into real action that looks like progressive laws that will benefit our communities. And when we're able to illustrate to legislators how our personal experiences would be impacted by policies, we make it harder for decision makers to ignore our demands.

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 Women are demanding during the present HERstory-in-the-making Movement for Black Lives. **We know that Black Women's political power is a force to be reckoned with and this is why we engage in all levels of the political process.**

how to use this guide

This guide is designed to give you quick, important information about what's happening at the Colorado capitol and how to take action. It contains a list of important terms with definitions, descriptions of how a bill becomes a law, how to take action on different bills, and where to find out more information. This guide centers the policy priorities of Black Women by explicitly focusing on the issues and policies that shape our lives and communities.



About Us

Soul 2 Soul Sisters

Soul 2 Soul Sisters is a grassroots, fiercely faith-filled, racial justice organization based in Denver, CO. We transform Colorado and beyond through Black Women-led programs focused on Black Women's healing and health, reparations, Black voter engagement and ending anti-Black racism.

Soul 2 Soul Sisters' Let My People Vote (LMPV) program is a Black Women-led, non-partisan, and collaborative 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.



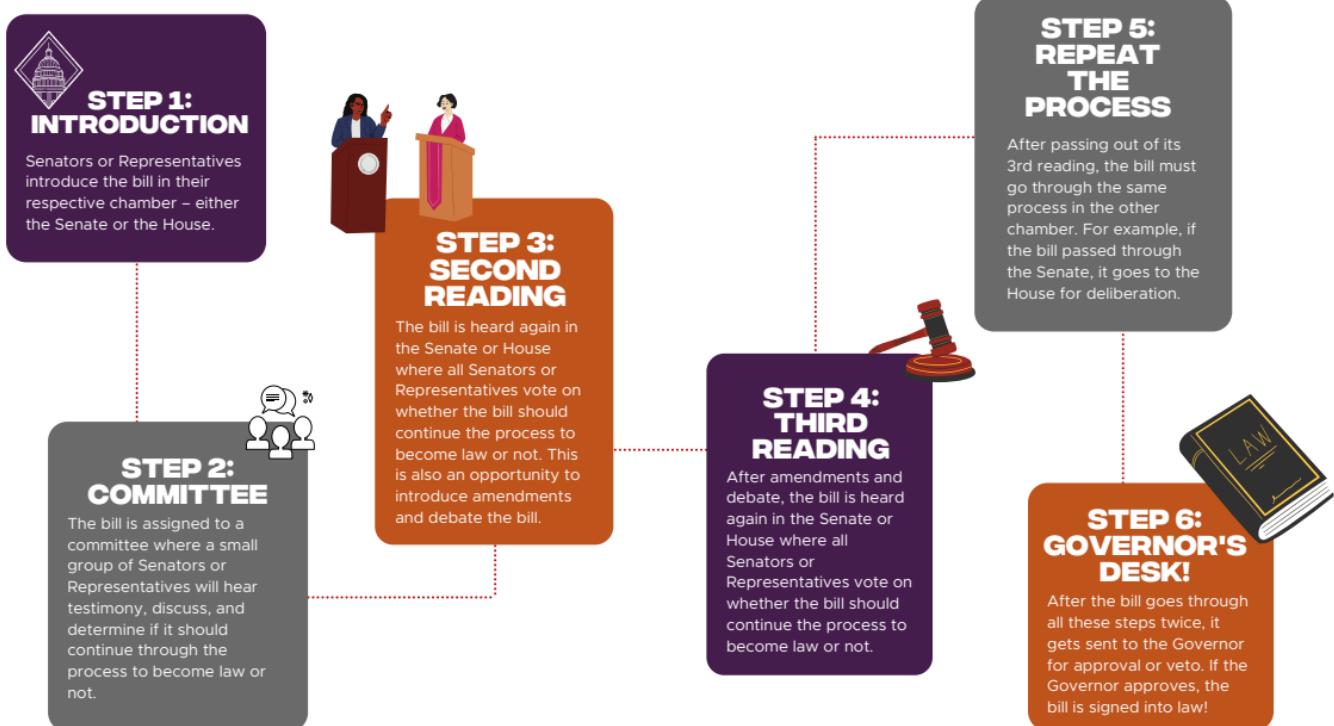
Glossary

- **Bills:** another term for proposed legislation/laws. [Click here to keep track of bills.](#)
- **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.
- **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.](#)
- **General assembly:** the term for Colorado's House of Representatives and Senate.
- **Kill a bill:** when a bill does not proceed through the rest of the steps, it does not pass, and it does not become law.
- **Legislation:** a fancy word for laws.

Glossary

- **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.
- **Legislators:** members of a legislative body. Legislators are either in the House or Senate.
- **Lobbying:** the act of attempting to influence a legislator's decisions, policies or opinion on an issue through informed persuasion.
- **Nonpartisan:** a lack of affiliation with, endorsement of, or opposition to any political party or candidate
- **Representatives:** legislators who were elected to the House of Representatives.
- **Senators:** legislators who were elected to the Senate.
- **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.

How a Bill Becomes a LAW (Colorado)



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 Colorado and at the federal level, we are paying attention to issues related to student debt, medical debt cancellation, and financial assistance for women impacted by COVID.

Colorado Bills LMPV Supports

- [HB22-1049 Prohibiting Transcript & Diploma Withholding](#) | Removes transcript withholding as a method that schools use to collect debts, addresses the fact that transcript withholding does more harm than good and impacts current and former students ability to move forward, transfer, and obtain gainful employment
- [Collective Bargaining for Public Sector Employees](#) | recognizes the right of Colorado public sector workers to be recognized as a union and negotiate working conditions with their employers.

Reparations

Federal Bills LMPV Supports

- H.R.40 Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act | 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, LMPV is 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.

Colorado Bills LMPV Supports

- Reproductive Health Equity Act | Establishes reproductive rights as a fundamental right in Colorado by asserting that every person has the right to choose or refuse contraception, every pregnant person has the right to give birth or have an abortion, and a fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus does not have independent rights under state law.
- HB22-1055 Sales Tax Exemption Essential Hygiene Products | Exempts menstrual products, diapers for babies, and diapers for adults from the state sales tax.

Reproductive Justice

Federal Bills LMPV Supports

- H.R.959 Black Maternal Momnibus Act | A collection of 12 bills that are aimed at addressing the maternal health crisis in America, especially for Black Women.
- H.R.259 End Diaper Need Act | Expands access to diapers for low-income families.
- H.R.1670 Abortion is Healthcare Everywhere Act | Repeals the Helms Amendment and allows for funds to be used to provide comprehensive reproductive health care services in developing countries, including abortion services, training, and equipment.
- S.1975 Women's Health Protection Act | Prohibits states from enacting restrictions on access to abortion

Electoral Justice

For electoral justice, LMPV is 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.

Federal Bills LMPV Supports

- [H.R.4 John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) | Restores the Voting Rights Act and strengthens protections for voters of color
- [S.2747 Freedom to Vote Act](#) | A bold pro-democracy reform package that expands access to elections through actions like national automatic voter registration
- [HR.576 Next Generation Votes Act](#) | Expands access to voter registration by allowing 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register to vote



Ways To Take Action

We encourage our communities to take action because it's important for legislators to hear from the communities they are serving. Oftentimes Black folks aren't centered when bills are created, and this is an opportunity to hold decision makers accountable to the impact of policy making on the day to day lives of our people.

- Sign up to give testimony in Colorado: bit.ly/LMPV2022
- Sign petitions!
 - [Click here to sign a petition to support the Reproductive Health Equity Act.](#)
 - [Click here to sign a petition to support the Collective Bargaining bill.](#)
- Send a quick email to your legislators!
 - [This resource will direct you to send an email in support of the Collective Bargaining bill.](#)
 - [This resource will help you send an email in support of the Transcript Withholding bill.](#)

Ways To Take Action

- 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 find out 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.
- Use [this 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.

