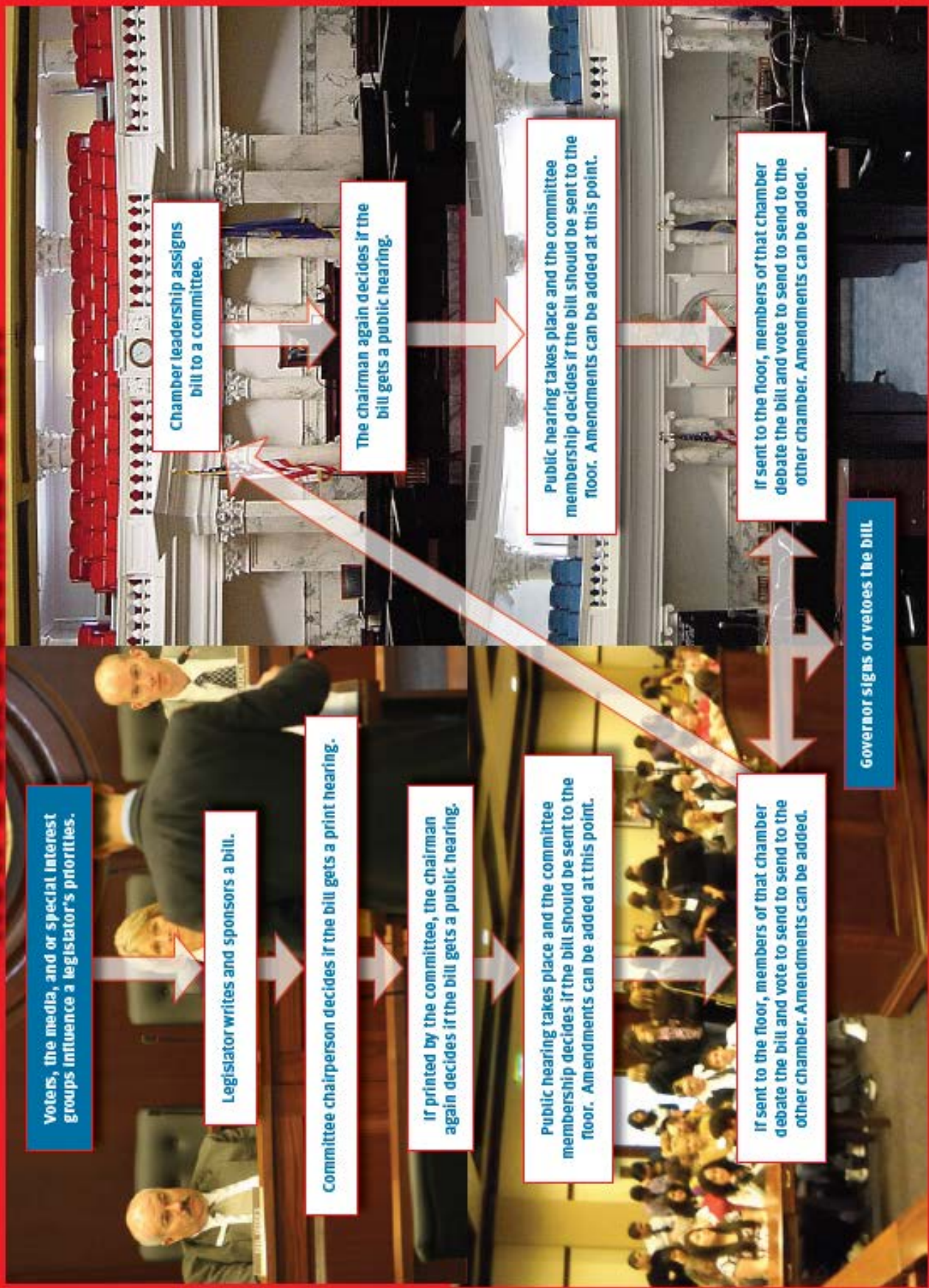


# Citizen Activist Toolkit 2017 Legislative Session



ACLU of Idaho | P.O. Box 1897, Boise, ID 83701  
(208) 344-9750 | [www.acluidaho.org](http://www.acluidaho.org)

# How a Bill Becomes a Law



# HOW A BILL 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, with the exception of revenue measures, which originate in the House of Representatives.

## Introduction

A bill may be introduced by a legislator, a group of legislators or a standing committee. After the 20th day of the session in the House and the 12th day in the Senate, bills may be introduced only by committee. After the 35th day bills may be introduced only by certain committees. In the House: State Affairs, Appropriations, Education, Revenue and Taxation, and Ways and Means Committee. In the Senate: State Affairs, Finance, and Judiciary and Rules.

The original bill is presented to the Chief Clerk who assigns the bill a number. Then it gets introduced in either the House or the Senate for "Introduction and First Reading of Bills."

## First Reading

If it starts in the House, the bill is read the first time and is then referred by the Speaker of the House to the Judiciary, Rules and Administration Committee for printing. After the bill is printed, it is reported back and referred to a standing committee by the Speaker.

## Reports of Standing Committees

Each committee to which a bill is referred conducts a study of all information that may help the committee determine the scope and effect of the proposed law. Studies may include research, hearings, expert testimony, and statements of interested parties. A bill may be reported out of committee with one of the following recommendations:

1. Do pass.
2. Without recommendation.
3. To be placed on General Orders for Amendment.
4. Do not pass. (Bills are seldom released from committee with this recommendation.)
5. Withdrawn with the privilege of introducing another bill.
6. Referred to another standing committee.

If a committee reports a bill out and does not recommend that the bill be amended or other action to keep it from going to the floor, the bill is then placed on second reading.

Many bills are not reported out by committees and "die in committee." Special rules of the House apply when the committee does not desire to report out a bill for consideration by the entire House.

## Second Reading

When a bill is reported out of committee, it is placed on the second reading calendar and is read again. The following legislative day, the bill is automatically on third reading unless other action has been taken.

# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW – PAGE 2

## Third Reading

The Clerk is required to read the entire bill section by section when it is on the Order of Business, "Third Reading of Bills." It is normal procedure, however, for the members to dispense with this reading at length.

It is at third reading that the bill is ready for debate and the final vote on passage of the bill is taken. Each bill is sponsored by a member who is known as the "floor sponsor" and who opens and closes debate in favor of passage of the bill. After debate has closed, House members vote on the electronic voting machine. Each member present can cast either an "aye" or "nay" vote. A bill is passed by a majority of those present.

If a bill fails to pass, it is filed by the Chief Clerk. If the bill is passed, it is transmitted to the Senate where it goes through a similar process.

## Senate Action on House Bills

After the final action by the Senate on a House bill, it is returned to the House with a message explaining the Senate's action. The message is read to the House. If the bill passed the Senate without amendment, it is enrolled by the House Judiciary, Rules and Administration Committee, signed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate and transmitted to the Governor for his action.

## Committee of the Whole

When a printed bill is to be amended, it is referred to the Committee of the Whole for amendment. At the proper Order of Business, the House resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole House and the entire membership sits as one committee to consider changes to both House and Senate bills.

When a House bill has been amended by the Committee of the Whole, and the amendment(s) accepted by the House, it is referred to the engrossing committee. Amendments are inserted into the bill and the engrossed bill is then placed back on the calendar to be considered as a new bill.

## Governor's Action

After receiving a bill passed by both the House and Senate, the Governor may:

1. Approve the bill by signing it within five days after its receipt (except Sundays), or within ten days after the Legislature adjourns at the end of the session ("sine die").
2. Allow the bill to become law without his approval by not signing it within the five days allowed.
3. Disapprove (veto) the bill within five days and return it to the house of origin giving his reason for disapproval, or within ten days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die."

A bill may become law over the Governor's veto if both houses vote to override the veto by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present in each house.

When a bill is approved by the Governor or becomes law without his approval or over his veto, it is transmitted to the Secretary of State for assignment of a chapter number in the Idaho Session Laws. Most bills become law on July 1, except in the case of a bill containing an emergency clause or other specific date of enactment. The final step is the addition of new laws to the Idaho Code, which contains all Idaho law.

Source: Idaho State Legislature Website, How A Bill Becomes A Law, 2015: <http://bit.ly/RTaQDg>

# HOW TO GIVE PUBLIC TESTIMONY

From your local city council to state legislators to your senators and representatives in Washington DC, speaking with your elected officials about civil liberties issues is a lot easier than most people think. Remember, they work for the people (that means you)!

## Prepare what you're going to say

- Call or email the ACLU of Idaho for materials. We might have information to help you decide on your talking points, as well as materials that you can leave with your elected official.
- Decide what you want achieve. What is it you want your elected official to do - vote for or against the bill? Make a commitment to introduce or co-sponsor legislation? Asking your legislator or his or her staff member to do something specific will help you know how successful your visit has been!

## During your testimony

- Keep it short and focused and stick to your talking points.
- Keeping it to 3 minutes is a good rule of thumb.
- Provide personal and local examples of the impact of the legislation. This is the most important thing you can do during your testimony.
- Saying "I don't know" can be a smart political move. You need not be an expert on the topic you are discussing. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is fine to tell your elected official that you will get that information for him or her. This gives you the chance to put your strongest arguments into their files, and allows you to contact them again about the issue. Never make up an answer to a question - giving wrong or inaccurate information can seriously damage your credibility.

## After you speak

- Send a personal thank you letter to the elected official.
- Follow up in a timely fashion with any requested materials and information.
- Let the ACLU of Idaho know what you learned during your speech by sending an e-mail to [admin@acluidaho.org](mailto:admin@acluidaho.org). Knowing what arguments your elected official used, what issues are important to him or her, and what positions he or she took will help us make our lobbying strategy more effective!

**Good luck and have fun!**

# LOBBYING 101

## What a Lobby Visit looks like:

- Start by **thanking the legislator** for her/his time.
- Introduce** each constituent by name and town.
- Tell the legislator **why** you are there to see them. Refer to specific legislation when possible.
- Illustrate the problem** and/or solution by using a bullet point from the fact sheet combined with a personal story.
- Make the ASK** for their support or opposition on specific legislation. Get a firm yes or no answer on whether they'll support the issues if you can.
- Take **accurate notes** on how the legislator will vote on a specific issue and any outstanding questions they have.
- Thank the legislator** again.

## ABCs of Lobbying:

**Be Accurate:** Before you go to your legislative appointment, take a few minutes to think about why you care about the issue you are asking the legislator to support and what you want to share with him/her about your position. Speak from your own experience. Your personal story and passion are your best political tools!

It's a good idea to use the number(s) of bill(s) you are asking your legislator to support when you are talking with them. If a legislator asks a question, answer to the best of your ability. If you don't know something, just say so. Tell them you will find out and get back to them.

**Be Brief:** Legislators appreciate it when you keep your messages and requests simple. Go into a meeting prepared with your main message and your request...and keep to the point. It's important to tell legislators your reasons for your position or a personal story but keep it brief.

**Be Courteous:** Be sure to thank the member for her/his time and attention. All legislators work hard for the people of Idaho on a wide variety of issues.

**Be Thankful:** Be sure to thank the member for her/his time and attention. All legislators work hard for the people of Idaho on a wide variety of issues.

***Most importantly, remember to be prompt, patient and flexible when you lobby.***

## Other Tips:

- Research your legislators.
- Speak honestly about what you believe – tell your own story.
- Make eye contact; don't read from notes.
- Speak clearly and be brief.
- Be a good listener – respond to questions and concerns.
- Return again, again and again to your message points!
- Leave thanks *and* materials!

# LOBBYING 101 – PAGE 2

## Staying on Message:

When we talk to someone we want to influence, especially a legislator, we know what we want to say, but we're often thrown off of our own message by a question, odd comment, or nerves. We don't have to be! Use this simple technique to stay on message: **Acknowledge, Redirect, and Return**

**Acknowledge:** It's always important to be polite, so the first step in returning to YOUR message is to *acknowledge* what has been said. For example, "It sounds really difficult that your 14 year old neighbor is having a baby."

**Redirect:** And while that may not be what you want to talk about, you want the other person to have a way to get the information they've asked about, so you can *redirect* them. For example, "I would encourage her to call her nearest Planned Parenthood clinic, because they can provide her with all kinds of pregnancy and birth resources." Or, "I'd be glad to have Planned Parenthood's Legislative Director get back to you with information about access to reproductive health care in your area."

**Return:** Now you've easily tucked away the other topic, and can *return* to what is important enough to YOU that you planned this time to talk about it. For example, "But the reason I traveled all the way to the Capitol to talk to you today was because I'm really worried about access to reproductive health care."

## Your lobby visit can help move a legislator up the ladder of support for our issues!

**Champion** (votes yes, sponsors bill and promotes legislation)

↑

**Supporter** (votes for the bill)

↑

**Unsure**

↑

**Unsupportive**(votes no)

↑

**Foe** (actively works against us)

# A Handy Guide to Crafting Your Message

You can use your hand to help structure your Lobby Day meeting and make sure you say all you need to say.

**The first finger—the thumb—is “Introduce yourself.”**

Tell your legislator your name, where you live, and that you are one of his/her constituents.

**The second finger—the index finger—is “What is my issue.”**

You want to say, “I’m here to talk with you about Family Planning Funding” or any other issue you’re here for. Outline the basic topic and describe the bill.

**The third finger—the middle finger—is “Why I care.”**

This is where you share your personal story, and you can begin in many different ways. For example, “I care about this issue because . . .” or “This issue is important to me because . . .”

**The fourth finger—the ring finger—is “Why the Legislator should care.”**

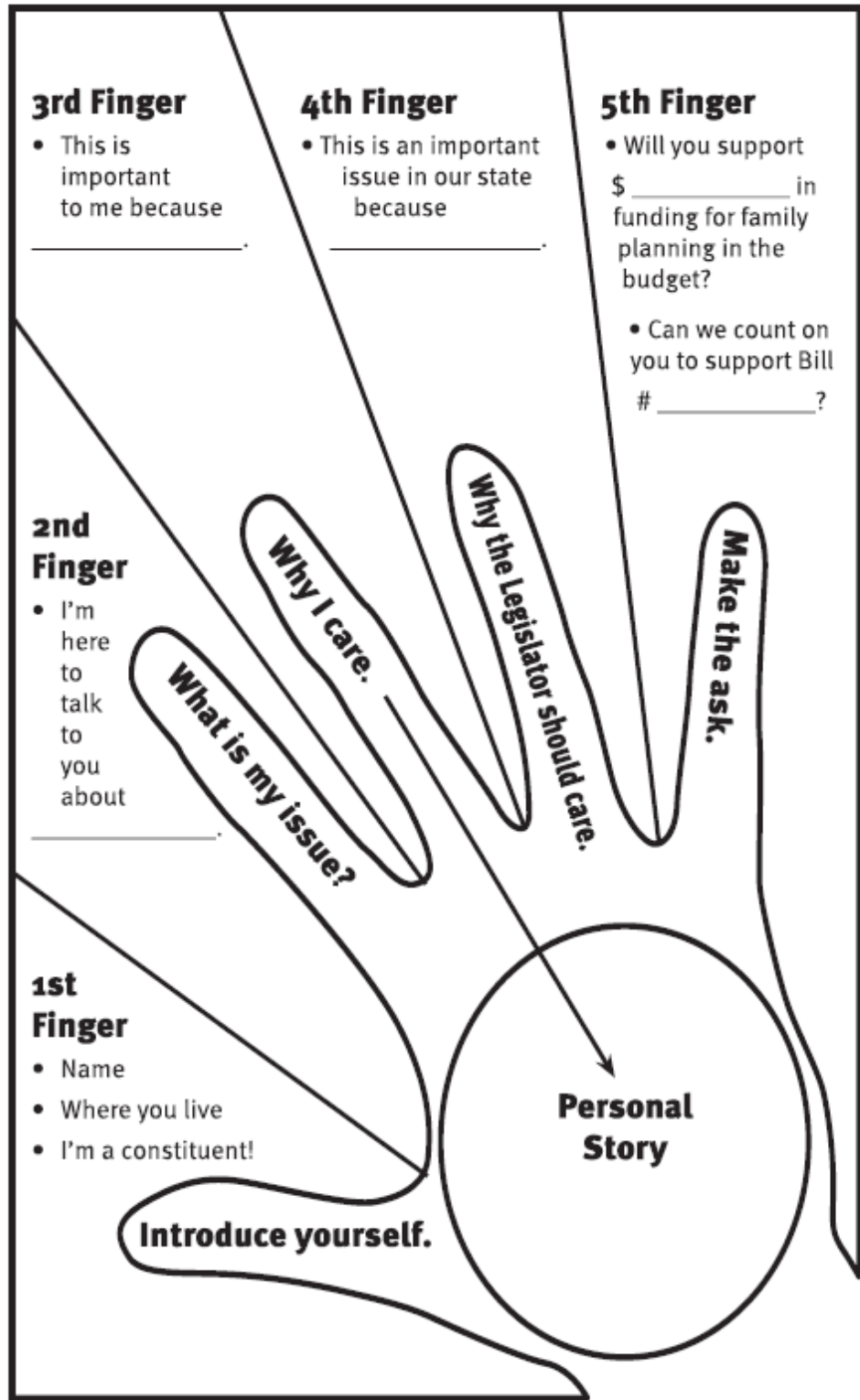
This is where you use the talking points and messages from our fact sheet. Some examples are, “This is important because reproductive health care is basic health care,” or “Did you know that for every \$1 spent on family planning, the state saves \$4.39 according to the Guttmacher Institute?” Just be sure that all the facts you use come from the fact sheet!

**The fifth finger—the pinky—is “Make the ask.”**

This is the part where you ask for their support. You can say, “Will you support bill # \_\_\_\_\_” and “Can we count on you to restore \$3 million for Family Planning Funding?”

**Finally, the whole hand – is a handshake and “Thank you for your time.”**

Be sure to express your appreciation for the legislator’s time and for considering the issues you’ve brought up today.





# **ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! ACTION!**

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Letters to the editor should be very short and to the point. They can only be about 200 words! In each letter, you should to include the problem, the solution, and the action that you want taken.**

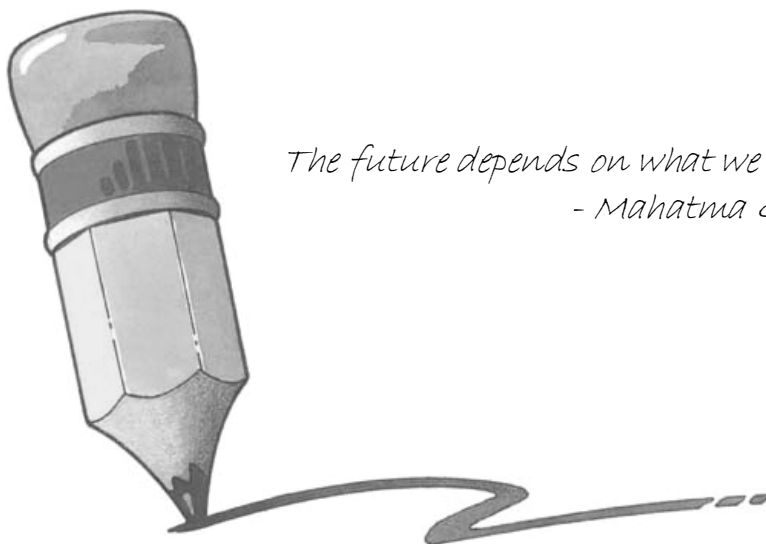
Example:

**Problem:** It's a fact that in Idaho individuals can be discriminated against and fired from a job simply because they are gay or transgender. Idaho's Human Rights Act currently does not prevent discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation in housing, education, and public accommodations. Additionally, there has been increased intolerance toward community members who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered. This is a problem for Idaho and it must be addressed.

**Solution:** Idaho must amend the Idaho Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity and bring our Human Rights Act up to date. In these tough economic times, people should not have to worry about losing their job because of who they are or who they love. Additionally, skills and ability should be the basis for employment, not a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Action:** The Idaho Legislature needs to pass legislation to amend the Idaho Human Rights Act. Legislators should stop postponing taking action on this very important issue that the majority of Idahoans are already in support of.

**Make sure to sign your full name, and include your address and phone number. Newspapers will not print anonymous letters.**



*The future depends on what we do in the present.*  
- Mahatma Gandhi

# **SAMPLE LTE ON THE IDAHO HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Dear Editor,

I have lived in Idaho for over 20 years; this is home for me and my family. As a person of who cares deeply for my neighbors, I am saddened to know that that in Idaho gay, lesbian and transgender individuals can be discriminated against or fired from their job simply because of who they are or who they love. This is wrong and it must be changed.

I have been following the campaign to include the words sexual orientation and gender identity to the Idaho Human Rights Act; I believe time is way past due. This simple change is needed to ensure we have protections for members of our community who want to make Idaho their home and work to provide for their family.

Today, I urge the legislature to take action and amend the Idaho Human Rights Act. It's the right thing to do.

Sincerely

Name

Address

Phone

## Letters to the Editor – Addresses

Letters to the editor should be limited to 150-200 words. Guest opinions can be up to 500 words. Please refer to your local paper for more specifics. Remember to include your name, address, and daytime phone number so the newspaper staff can call to confirm your letter.

### *Idaho Statesman*

Online: <http://forms.idahostatesman.com/lettertoeditor/>

By email: [editorial@idahostatesman.com](mailto:editorial@idahostatesman.com) By fax: (208) 377-6449

By mail: Letters to the Editor, The Idaho Statesman, Box 40, Boise, ID 83707

### *Idaho Press-Tribune*

Online: <http://www.idahopress.com/opinion>

By email: [op-ed@idahopress.com](mailto:op-ed@idahopress.com) By fax: (208) 467-9562

By mail: Letters to the Editor, Idaho Press-Tribune, P.O. Box 9399, Nampa, ID 83652

### *Boise Weekly*

By email: [editor@boiseweekly.com](mailto:editor@boiseweekly.com) By fax: 342-4733, Attn: editor

By mail: Boise Weekly, Attn: Editor, 523 Broad St. Boise, ID 83702

### *Twin Falls Times-News*

Online: <http://www.magicvalley.com/app/cpntact/>

By email: [letters@magicvalley.com](mailto:letters@magicvalley.com) By fax: (208) 734-5538

By mail: The Times-News, Editor, P.O. Box 548, Twin Falls, ID 83303

### *Pocatello Idaho State Journal*

By email: [ifennell@journalnet.com](mailto:ifennell@journalnet.com) By fax: 233-8007

By mail: Letters to the Editor, Idaho State Journal, 305 S. Arthur, PO Box 431, Pocatello, ID 83204

### *Blackfoot Morning News*

By email: [mnews@cableone.net](mailto:mnews@cableone.net) By fax: (208) 785-4239

By mail: Morning News, Attn: editor, PO Box 70, Blackfoot, ID 83221

### *Idaho Falls Post Register*

By email: [letters@postregister.com](mailto:letters@postregister.com) By fax: (208) 529-9683

By mail: Post Register, Attn: News Room, Editor, PO Box 1800, Idaho Falls, ID 83403

### *Lewiston Tribune*

By email: [letters@lmtribune.com](mailto:letters@lmtribune.com) By fax: (208) 746-1185

By mail: Letters to the Editor, Lewiston Morning Tribune, 505 Capital St. Lewiston, ID 83501

### *Spokesman Review*

Online: <http://www.spokesman.com/letters/submit/>

By email: [editor@spokesman.com](mailto:editor@spokesman.com) By fax: (509) 459-3815

By mail: The Spokesman-Review, Attn: Editor, 999 West Riverside Avenue, Spokane WA 99201

### *Coeur d'Alene Press*

Online: [https://cdapress.com/submissions/letter\\_to\\_the\\_editor/letter\\_to\\_the\\_editor/](https://cdapress.com/submissions/letter_to_the_editor/letter_to_the_editor/)

By email: [mpatrick@cdapress.com](mailto:mpatrick@cdapress.com)

By mail: Coeur d'Alene Press, Attn: Editor, 215 N. Second St, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

# Notes