

Student Chapter Newsletter

WELCOME BACK STUDENTS!

Welcome back students! We hope you had a wonderful summer and are ready to kick off the fall semester!

We are excited to work with you to help you shape the debate, make a positive difference in your community, and build and strengthen your progressive network! The staff at ACS is here to help you, so please reach out to us with ideas and questions at any time. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to ensuring that the law is a force to improve the lives of all people.

A quick thank you and update regarding ACS's Strategic Planning: For those that weighed in, Thank You! Your feedback was so valuable in helping us shape our focus for the next phase of ACS. Expect an update from us sometime this semester on the final plan and next steps.

Best,

Zinelle, Meghan, Peggy, Molly, Michelle, Jordan, Toni, and Kennedy

ENGAGING WITH ACS IN FALL 2019

2019 REGIONAL CONVENINGS

Midwest: Thursday, September 5 at America's Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee and Friday, September 6 at Marquette University Law School.

Southeast: Friday, September 27 at North Carolina Central University School of Law.

Northeast: Friday, October 4 at New York Law School.

West/Rocky Mountains: Friday, Oct 25 and Saturday, October 26 at the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law.

ANNOUNCING FALL MEMBERSHIP COMPETITION

ACS is pleased to announce the 8th Annual Student Membership Contest to see which ACS chapter can make the biggest gains in national membership. ACS will award two winners in the Fall membership competition based on the following categories: (i) Percentage of membership increase, and (ii) Raw number of new members and renewals.

Each winning chapter is awarded one full scholarship to attend the 2020 ACS Student Convention. Students can sign up for national membership [online](#). For assistance in building your membership base, reach out to your ACS National Contact. Remember, all Executive Board members should be national members. [Competition ends November 30.](#)



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SAVE THE DATE

The ACS National Convention will be June 11-13, 2020 in Washington, DC. Check out videos from the 2019 Convention [here](#).

FILMS

Consider hosting screenings and discussions of the following videos and films:

2019 ACS NATIONAL CONVENTION

Our featured speakers included Rep. Colin Allred, Rep. Sharice Davids, Hon. Anita Earls, Washington AG Bob Ferguson, Hon. Goodwin Liu, Bryan Stevenson, Rep. Jennifer Wexton, and many more. Videos available [here](#).

FAIL STATE

Executive produced by news legend Dan Rather, "*FAIL STATE*" investigates the dark side of American higher education, chronicling the decades of policy decisions in Washington, DC that have given rise to a powerful and highly-predatory for-profit college industry. With echoes of the subprime mortgage crisis, the film lays bare how for-profit colleges exploit millions of low-income and minority students, leaving them with worthless degrees and drowning in student loan debt. Director Alexander Shebanow traces the rise, fall, and resurgence of the for-profit college industry, revealing its Wall Street backing and the lawmakers enabling widespread fraud and abuse in American higher education. Trailer available [here](#). Information on streaming the film available at: <https://failstate-movie.com/watch-the-film>. To host a screening, click [here](#).

FILMS

Consider hosting screenings and discussions of the following videos and films:

Rigged

Available this fall for ACS Chapters – the chance to screen a major new documentary on voter suppression. Shot during the 2016 elections, “Rigged: The Voter Suppression Playbook” exposes how our most important right, the right to vote is under attack. The film uncovers the tricks used to reverse the growing demographic shift, from gerrymandering to new voter restriction laws to wide-scale voter purges to *Shelby v. Holder*. For more on Rigged, go to <https://www.riggedthefilm.com/>.

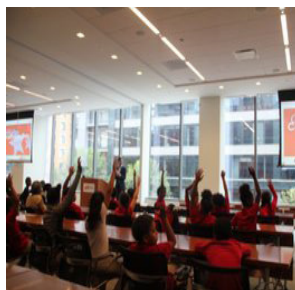
13th

The title of Ava DuVernay’s extraordinary and galvanizing documentary refers to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which reads, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States.” The progression from that second qualifying clause to the horrors of mass criminalization and the sprawling American prison industry is laid out by DuVernay with bracing lucidity. With a potent mixture of archival footage and testimony from a dazzling array of activists, politicians, historians, and formerly incarcerated women and men, DuVernay creates a work of grand historical synthesis.

See Netflix’s “GRANT OF PERMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL SCREENINGS” terms [here](#).

2020 ACS STUDENT CONVENTION

ACS will hold its 8th Annual National Student Convention in Spring 2020. Stay tuned for more details on Convention, including dates, location, and scholarships. Check out highlights from the 2019 Student Convention [here](#).



CELEBRATE CONSTITUTION DAY!

Programming. Constitution Day is September 17. Commemorate the document’s birthday by hosting a substantive event on [voting rights](#), [Court Capture](#), [Safeguarding the Rule of Law](#), or constitutional interpretation. Also, consider hosting a judge for your event. Check out ACS’s 2018-2019 Supreme Court Review [here](#) and additional resources [here](#).

Constitution in the Classroom (CITC). ACS’s CITC program provides an opportunity for lawyers and law students to teach lessons based on the Constitution in elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the country. Participating is a great way to increase constitutional literacy in schools and excite young minds about the Constitution. Check out the 2019 Voting Rights lessons and additional information [here](#). If you are interested in participating, please email LCEmails@acslaw.org.

Draft an Op-Ed. Consider submitting an op-ed to your local paper (including your school newspaper) about current challenges to our constitutional order. As an example, expanding on a recent investigation in the *Washington Post* about Leonard Leo and his agenda to take the Constitution backward, ACS National Board of Academic Advisors Member Jamal Greene wrote [this](#) piece for Slate. Topics you could address might include executive power and the current impeachment inquiry process; women’s rights and reproductive justice; voting rights; Second Amendment issues, including gun violence; racial justice; and climate change. If you need ideas for drafting or placement, please email us at campus@acslaw.org.

FILMS

Consider hosting screenings and discussions of the following videos and films:

DARK MONEY

A political thriller, **DARK MONEY** examines one of the greatest present threats to American democracy: the influence of untraceable corporate money on our elections and elected officials. The film takes viewers to Montana to follow an intrepid local journalist working to expose the real-life impacts of the US Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision. Through this gripping story, **DARK MONEY** uncovers the shocking and vital truth of how American elections are bought and sold. This Sundance award-winning documentary is directed/produced by Kimberly Reed (PRODIGAL SONS) and produced by Katy Chevigny (E-TEAM). Check out the [trailer](#).

Check out the regularly updated [list of screenings](#). Chapters that are interested in purchasing group tickets should be in touch with the film's impact producer, Alison Byrne Fields at alison@whatisagregate.com. Chapters that would like to organize their own screenings should also be in touch with Alison.



ACS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Consider [volunteering](#) with ACS! Through our volunteer efforts, we connect lawyers and law students across the country to opportunities tailored to their interests, skills, and schedule. We are constantly looking for volunteers for ongoing research and pro bono projects. Please sign up on our [volunteer webpage](#) or email us at LCEmails@acslaw.org if you'd like to help or if you know of any volunteer opportunities or trainings where our members could be helpful.



CLASS CANCELLATION

Several law schools have either cancelled classes or allowed for class accommodations on Election Day to encourage law students to engage in the election process and to promote civic engagement on campus. These initiatives give students the time (and a reminder) to vote. More importantly, these changes encourage students to engage with the election process in a meaningful way, which can be hard if students have limited availability on Election Day. For more information on Class Cancellation on Election Day, see "Democracy on the Ground Floor: Law Schools Lend a Hand on Election Day" [here](#). If you are interested in pitching class cancellation to your school, let us know by emailing campus@acslaw.org.

NOTICE AND COMMENT INITIATIVE

This initiative identifies opportunities to comment on key regulations put forth by federal and state agencies. Submitting a comment for a federal or state notice of proposed rulemaking is one of the simplest and most essential ways for the public to participate in the rulemaking process. Consider hosting a Notice and Comment Party to encourage your members to write and submit comments. Check out ACS's [Notice and Comment Webinar](#). If you are interested in hosting a Notice and Comment party, email LCEmails@acslaw.org with the subject line "Notice and Comment." We are excited to work with you to help your members get engaged with federal and state rulemaking!



READINGS

Consider hosting discussions on the follow readings:

- * [Letter From a Birmingham Jail](#) by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- * [Court Capture, Diversity Counts](#), and [The Gavel Gap](#)
- * [The Hour of the Attorneys General](#) by Rachel M. Cohen
- * [Racial Anxiety](#) by Rachel D. Godsil & L. Song Richardson
- * [Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics](#) by Kimberle Crenshaw
- * [The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey](#)
- * [The 1968 Kerner Report](#)
 - [Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders](#)
 - See "Race & Inequality in America: The Kerner Commission at 50" conference for additional resources [here](#)
- * [Keeping Faith with the Constitution](#) by Pamela S. Karlan, Goodwin Liu & Christopher H. Schroeder
- * [It Is a Constitution We Are Expounding: Collected Writings on Interpreting Our Founding Document](#)
- * [Why You Shouldn't Care Whether Kavanaugh Is an 'Originalist'](#) by Aziz Huq
- * [The 1619 Project](#) by The New York Times
- * Check out additional readings on the Analysis section of the ACS website: <https://www.acslaw.org/analysis/>

FOCUSING ON THE COURTS

On July 30, 2019, ACS signed onto a letter urging CNN to ask Democratic Presidential Candidates about the Supreme Court. See more [here](#). For more on why the courts are a defining issue of the 2020 campaign, see [here](#).

[Path to the Bench](#). ACS's [Path to the Bench Initiative](#) is developing a highly qualified pool of legal professionals dedicated to long-term, positive change and a fair judiciary. Our chapters, working closely with their local legal communities, are identifying talented progressive lawyers at every stage in their careers and giving them the support necessary to obtain influential legal positions at the state and federal level. Check out ACS's Pathways to Clerkships conference call [here](#).

[Judicial Nominations](#). Every day, federal courts decide cases critical to our rights — from the environment to voting to immigration. Those who are appointed to serve on the bench must be qualified, fair, and impartial. Under President Trump, judicial vacancies are being filled at a breakneck speed, which could transform the federal courts. [View updates on President Trump's effort to push the federal bench to the right](#). Also, check out ACS's Judicial Nominations page [here](#).

[Court Capture](#). The Far Right is pursuing an audacious effort to capture America's courts. Fueled by \$250 million in secret "dark money" contributions, they seek to enact a radical social and economic agenda they could never achieve legislatively. [ACS's Dark Money and the Courts page](#) shares reporting on the secret donor network behind the Far Right's attempt to turn the judiciary into a tool for partisan and corporate interests. Learn more [here](#).

[Inviting Judges](#). Invite local, state, or federal judges to speak to your chapters. Judges can discuss their path to the bench, discuss clerkships, speak on a topic of their choosing, or discuss diversity in the judiciary. See ACS's [The Path to the Bench](#) for more information. Also, check out ACS's [Gavel Gap report](#). Reach out to your local lawyer chapter, faculty advisor, and ACS for assistance in locating speakers.



We strongly encourage our chapters to cover these important issues and cosponsor these events with other diverse and progressive law student organizations. ACS can also provide you with speaker and event suggestions and talk through event ideas with your chapter. Check out our [student chapters website](#) for additional resources on programming (see the [Student Chapter Resources page](#) [here](#)). Also, do not hesitate to reach out to your ACS National Contact for further assistance.

PROGRESSIVE FEDERALISM



Nearly a century ago, Justice Brandeis famously wrote that “[i]t is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country.” This notion of states as “laboratories of democracy,” is rooted in the Tenth Amendment’s directive that “[t]he powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” At a time when the federal government seems single-mindedly dedicated to revanchist policies, these laboratories of democracy offer a path toward more progressive policies in a range of areas. ACS’s 2019 [Program Guide](#) discusses how federalism can be used to further progressive policies, specifically, in immigration, voting rights, environmental policy, and police accountability. The 2019 program guide is available at <https://www.acslaw.org/analysis/acs-program-guides/2019-program-guide-progressive-federalism/>. You can also check out past program guides [here](#).

Also, in recognition of the unique and expanding role state attorneys general play in our system of government, we encourage you to learn more about ACS’s State Attorneys General Project [here](#).



THE ATTACK AGAINST IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Immigrant communities and communities of color are under attack. From the [devastating shootings in El Paso, Texas](#), the [detention of American citizens of color](#), the [dehumanizing treatment of detainees at migrant detention centers](#), the separation of families at the border, to a proposed rule that would bar almost all asylum applications at the southern border, with limited exceptions (read more from [The New York Times](#), [NPR](#), and [The Washington Post](#)). We encourage our chapters to engage in critical discussions on immigration, use this programming to build solidarity and inclusion on your campus, and work to reshape the narrative on immigration. Please cosponsor this event with local student organizations and community groups. For more resources, check out the [Immigration section of the ACS website](#) and [ACS Volunteer Opportunities](#), including [Notice and Comment](#) opportunities.



2020 CENSUS

On June 27, 2019, the Supreme Court in *Department of Commerce v. New York* denied the Trump Administration's efforts to include a citizenship question on the 2020 census. The Court ruled that the Trump administration's stated explanation for why a citizenship question was needed on the 2020 census was "contrived," but also left it to the administration to provide a better rationale. We encourage our chapters to consider programming on the 2020 census, *Department of Commerce v. New York*, election law, campaign finance, and voting rights. For more information, check out the Democracy and Voting and the Voting Rights section of the ACS website. Also check out, "Expanding the Vote," from the ACS National Convention here.



INCARCERATION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In the words of Toni Morrison, "The function of freedom is to free someone else." People impacted by our criminal justice system, primarily men and women of color, deserve to be free from police violence and the inhumane and destructive culture of incarceration. We encourage our chapters to inform the debate on police practices, including excessive force and police accountability; the detention of immigrants in local jails; racism in the U.S. criminal justice system; the link between slavery and incarceration; possible reforms to improve prison conditions; and the importance of judicial selection reform in criminal justice reform. Also, consider programming on prosecutor-led reform (see "Promoting Progress: Opportunities and Obstacles to Prosecutor-Led Reform" from the 2019 ACS National Convention). Please use this programming to familiarize yourself with criminal justice work being done in your communities. For more resources, check out the Criminal Justice section of the ACS website and ACS Volunteer Opportunities, including Notice and Comment opportunities.



SECOND AMENDMENT

In the weeks following the devastating shootings in El Paso and Dayton in August 2019, law enforcement officials say that they have thwarted at least six separate mass shootings or white supremacist attacks (as of August 20, 2019). A review of these attempts are detailed [here](#). The week after the shootings, a white man in Springfield, Missouri walked around a Walmart wearing body armor, carrying an AR-style rifle, a semi-automatic handgun, and more than 100 rounds of ammunition. When apprehended by the police, the man stated that he was “testing” whether “his Second Amendment rights would be honored in a public area.” As Dahlia Lithwick notes, “Missouri is an open-carry state” and as such, the man “gets to do whatever he wants in Missouri, so long as he is (a) white and (b) not scaring the good people of the Springfield Walmart because of some unquantified temporal proximity to the El Paso shootings.” Lithwick further notes that she is “mindful of what privilege buys you in America: the right to not get shot when you’re armed to the teeth, and the right to not have to explain beyond the fact that you were just “experimenting” with constitutional freedoms.” Read more from Lithwick [here](#). As of August 21, 2019, there have been 263 mass shootings and 9,452 gun-related deaths in America. For more information on gun violence in 2019, see <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>. We encourage your chapter to host discussions on the Second Amendment, common-sense gun regulations, and mass shootings. Consider noting the importance of the judiciary in this discussion. See “Senate Republicans Are Quietly Advancing a Radical Gun Plan” by Mark Joseph Stern [here](#). For more information on this issue, check out ACS’s “[Gun Control, Dark Money, and the Supreme Court: Senators File Amicus Brief](#).”

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

On August 19, Planned Parenthood announced that, “[t]he Trump administration [was] forcing Planned Parenthood and other providers out of the national program for birth control and reproductive health care — Title X.” The Title X Family Planning program was enacted in 1970. It is “[the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services. The Title X program is designed to provide access to contraceptive services, supplies, and information to all who want and need them.](#)” Under a new rule, recipients of Title X funding are no longer allowed to provide women with information regarding accessing abortions. Planned Parenthood is challenging this rule in court.

Additionally, in 2019, [several US states passed laws that effectively banned abortions](#) while others took steps to dramatically restrict abortion access. Check out “Abortion laws in the US – 10 things you need to know” by Amnesty International [here](#). For more resources, check out the [Reproductive Rights](#) section of the ACS website.



CHAPTER UPDATES



Have you sent us your 2019-2020 ACS Executive Board yet? If not, do so as soon as possible by emailing campus@acslaw.org (please include Board Members' Name, Email Address, Board Position, and Graduation Year).

We encourage adding a Diversity and Inclusion Chair and a Community Engagement Chair. More information about board positions can be found on page 4 of the [Student Chapter Handbook](#).

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At ACS, we believe that the law should be a force to improve the lives of all people. Our members—our lawyers, law students, judges, professors, and policymakers—aim to build inclusion and equity. The best way to ensure that we meet this goal, is to be explicit and direct, and to have a board member committed to executing this goal. As we know, despite our best intentions, our behavior and choices are often influenced by biases that operate outside of our conscious awareness. We need to interrupt these biases, be strategic, and be mindful.

A Diversity and Inclusion Chair is vital to ensure that membership is diverse, that speakers are diverse, and that communities see themselves represented at ACS. A diverse membership provides our chapters, members, and the national organization with vital points of view to broaden and strengthen our strategies for emerging issues. It provides us with more tools in our toolbox!

If you have any questions or need assistance building diversity and inclusion at your chapter, please let us know! We are here to help you! Also, look out for our next Diversity and Inclusion Roundtable in November 2019.



BECOME AN ACS MEMBER

Membership to the national organization is \$10. Students can sign up for \$10 [here](#). All board members should be national members. National members have access to [our job bank](#), members-only conference calls, and ACS Convention scholarships. For the job bank, if you see any jobs that interest you, let us know. We are happy to provide networking help. 2020 Graduates: Renew or join and your membership will be current until December 2021!

ACS RESOURCES

Check out ACS's Student Chapter Resources Page (<https://www.acslaw.org/acs-chapters/student-chapters/student-resources/>) for a list of Visiting Professors and Conferences and Conventions. Some exciting scholars, practitioners, and judges will be in your city soon! We encourage you to check both documents and invite speakers to engage with your chapter!

We are happy to provide you with speaker and event suggestions and talk through event ideas with your chapter. Contact your chapter's national liaison for further assistance. You should also check out the [Student Chapters webpage](#) and [Resource Page](#) for downloadable materials and other helpful resources, such as the updated Student Chapter Handbook, 2019-2020 ACS Model Calendar, and 2019 Program Guide and Past Program Guides. We also have tips on how to recruit and build a chapter, sample invitation letters, an event checklist, a flyer template, and much more!



POSTING EVENTS AND REQUESTING FUNDING



Remember to post ALL the events your chapter hosts or co-sponsors onto the ACS National website. Posting instructions are available [here](#). Make sure to also email us your event pictures and [sign-in sheets](#) at campus@acslaw.org.

To access ACS funding and receive reimbursement for approved Student Chapter expenses, you must follow the instructions [here](#).



FALL CONFERENCE CALLS

ACS's Chapters Team hosts summer and fall conference calls to speak with your chapter's Executive Board Members and if possible, Faculty Advisor(s). These calls are a great time to discuss upcoming events, programming ideas, chapter policies, and funding with the national staff. Please look out for emails from our Chapters team about these upcoming calls or email us at campus@acslaw.org to schedule a call today.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Post your upcoming events on social media and live stream/tweet them (with the consent of your speakers)! Check out our [Social Media Guidelines](#) for tweeting and taking photos at events. Please email campus@acslaw.org for additional tips on increasing your social media presence, growing your chapter, and learning how to best advertise your events online. Also, check us out on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).



PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

We are happy to provide you with promotional materials to distribute at events or organization fairs. Please email campus@acslaw.org with your name and mailing address to request materials.

501(C)3 GUIDELINES

ACS is a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization. For more guidance, please read pages 6-7 of the [Student Chapter Handbook](#), and feel free to email us anytime with additional questions. Also, be sure to use our [speaker release form](#) for your events.



COSPONSOR EVENTS



Cosponsor events with other student groups on your campus. These shared events broaden your programming, increase your student audience, and allow for more networking opportunities. Reach out to your Faculty Advisor(s) for ideas and assistance. Remember to meet with your Faculty Advisor(s) at the beginning of each semester and after board elections. Don't forget to also cosponsor events with your local ACS Student Chapter(s) and local ACS Lawyer Chapter!

JOBS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ACS Leaders: Would you like ACS's help with your summer/post-grad employment search? Are you interested in clerking or becoming a judge? If so, please email campus@acslaw.org with your resume and a brief description of what you are interested in. We would love to connect you with opportunities shared with our network.

Let us know where you will be next summer/post-grad so that we can connect you with ACSers in your summer/post-grad city. Email campus@acslaw.org or complete your designated Student Chapter Historian Document (see your chapter historian for more information).

ACS National Members should also check out ACS's Job Bank [here](#).

WRITING COMPETITIONS

Consider submitting one of your papers to ACS's writing competitions!

The [Constance Baker Motley National Student Writing Competition](#) honors the legacy of Constance Baker Motley as a civil rights leader, elected official, and the first African-American woman appointed to the federal bench. The winner will receive \$3,000 and an offer to publish in the [University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law](#). The two runners-up will receive \$1,000. The deadline to apply is February 9 2020.

The [Richard D. Cudahy Writing Competition on Regulatory and Administrative Law](#) honors the late Judge Cudahy's contribution to the field. Each winning author will receive a cash prize of \$1,500. The deadline to apply is February 2, 2020.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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[@ACSstudents](#)

LinkedIn

[American Constitution Society \(ACS\) - official group](#)

Facebook

[American Constitution Society for Law and Policy \(Official\)](#)

AMAZON SMILE

Visit smile.amazon.com, join AmazonSmile, and enter American Constitution Society when you're prompted to search for a charity. Whenever you start your Amazon shopping at smile.amazon.com, ACS will receive a percentage of eligible purchases. Thank you for supporting our work through this great program.



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