

WELCOME BACK STUDENTS!

We hope you had a restful winter break and are ready to kick off the spring semester!

We are excited to work with you to shape the debate both locally and nationally, make a positive difference in your community, and strengthen your progressive networks. The staff at ACS is here to help you, so please reach out to us at any time. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to ensuring that law is a force for protecting our democracy and the public interest and for improving people's lives.



Best,

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

UPDATED ACS "ABOUT US" PAGE

ACS updated its "About Us" Page. See our mission here:

Our Mission: ACS believes that the Constitution is "of the people, by the people, and for the people." We interpret the Constitution based on its text and against the backdrop of history and lived experience. Through a diverse nationwide network of progressive lawyers, law students, judges, scholars and many others, we work to uphold the Constitution in the 21st Century by ensuring that law is a force for protecting our democracy and the public interest and for improving people's lives.

Check out other updates at <https://www.acslaw.org/about-us/>. For more resources on how to familiarize students with ACS's mission, check out ACS's Student Chapter Resources page at <https://www.acslaw.org/acs-chapters/student-chapters/student-resources/>.

Films

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

The **2019 ACS National Convention** featured discussions on women's rights, relying on state courts to safeguard rights, judicial review in national security cases, the ramifications of new technology and our constitutional rights, and prosecutor-led reform. Videos from Convention available [here](#).

Suppressed: The Fight to Vote is a new documentary that weaves together personal stories from voters across the state of Georgia to paint an undeniable picture of voter suppression in the 2018 midterm election. The issues Georgians faced included polling place closures, voter purges, missing absentee ballots, extreme wait times, and a host of voter ID issues – all of which disproportionately prevented many students and people of color from casting their ballots. The documentary features experts, poll watchers, and everyday Georgians speaking to the reality of voter suppression and the threat it poses in 2020. To screen this film at an ACS event, sign up here: https://www.bravenewfilms.org/suppressed_acs.

Films

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

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 U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision (the decision's 10th anniversary is in January 2020). Through this gripping story, DARK MONEY uncovers the shocking and vital truth of how American elections are bought and sold. Check out the [trailer](#). Chapters interested in organizing screenings should reach out to the film's impact producer, Alison Byrne Fields, at alison@whatisaggregate.com.

ACS Chapters have an opportunity to screen **Rigged**, a major new documentary on voter suppression. Shot during the 2016 elections, "Rigged: The Voter Suppression Playbook" exposes how the right to vote is under attack, from gerrymandering to new voter restriction laws to wide scale voter purges to *Shelby v. Holder*. The film makers will also work with chapters to find panelists for post-screening discussions on voting rights. For more on Rigged, email us at campus@acslaw.org and go to www.riggedthefilm.com.

Check out [past newsletters](#) for more films and videos!

2020 ACS Student Convention, March 27-28

Join student leaders from around the country for ACS's 8th Annual Student Convention at Harvard Law School. There will be two days of progressive programming and training focused on empowering the next generation of progressive leaders. For more information and to register, please visit <https://www.acslaw.org/get-involved/acs-conventions/2020-national-student-convention-cambridge-ma-march-27-28/>.



2020 ACS National Convention, June 11-13



The ACS National Convention will be June 11-13, 2020 in Washington, DC. Student scholarships will be available soon! Check out videos and highlights from the 2019 National Convention at <https://www.acslaw.org/get-involved/acs-conventions/acs-national-convention-2019/>.

2020 ACS Next Generation Leader & Board Member Application Available, Deadline: March 2

ACS student members have two exciting opportunities to enhance their engagement in ACS's work: the ACS Next Generation Leaders (NGL) program and a two-year term on the ACS Board of Directors. The NGL program identifies and provides support to recent and forthcoming law school graduates who have demonstrated special leadership in their work with ACS's student chapters, and who have the interest, skills, and ability to remain vital members of the ACS community. Go to <https://www.acslaw.org/membership/careers/next-generation-leaders/> for more information and to download the application form.

2020 ACS Writing Competitions, Deadlines: February 2 and February 9

ACS offers two exciting opportunities for law students to submit papers on constitutional and/or administrative law topics for a chance to win prizes that include scholarships and cash awards (up to \$3000). Please spread the word to your classmates! Submissions for the [Richard D. Cudahy Writing Competition on Regulatory and Administrative Law](#) are due by February 2, 2020 at 11:59 PM. Submissions for the [Constance Baker Motley National Student Writing Competition](#) are due by February 9, 2020 at 11:59 PM.

BOOKS

In addition to the readings listed in the [Fall 2019 Newsletter](#), consider reaching out to your ACS Faculty Advisor(s) and ACS Faculty Friends for book recommendations. Check out this list of recommended books from the University of Michigan Law School ACS Faculty Advisors:

- Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*
- Preet Bharara, *Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment, and the Rule of Law*
- Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*
- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
- Angela J. Davis, *Arbitrary Justice: The Power of the American Prosecutor*
- Cass R. Sunstein, *Impeachment: A Citizen's Guide*
- Jon Krakauer, *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town*
- Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*
- Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*
- Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*
- Steven Greenhouse, *Beaten Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor*
- Katharina Pistor, *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*

GET ENGAGED WITH ACS IN SPRING 2020!

Teach-Ins — ACS created an [impeachment discussion guide](#) for you to use when speaking in your communities. We encourage you to organize teach-ins during the Senate trial. Please review the [linked guide](#), and check out our ACS Impeachment Resources page (<https://www.acslaw.org/inbrief/impeachment-resources-from-the-acslaw-network/>), [FAQs on Impeachment](#), and [Blog Symposium](#) for more information. For law student leaders, an undergrad campus may be the most convenient venue! In addition to teach-ins, organize events on impeachment! Email us at campus@acslaw.org with event information, questions, or for speaker ideas. You can also sign up your impeachment event or community discussion [here](#).

Volunteer! — Through ACS's 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. Information on some of our current projects can be found at <https://www.acslaw.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/>. Please sign up on our [volunteer survey](#) 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 — Now is the time to join our efforts to establish a day of civic service at your law school. 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. For more information on how to get involved and to view our blueprint for cancelling classes on Election Day, go to <https://www.acslaw.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/voting-rights-projects/election-day-class-cancellation/>.

Love Our Constitution — ACS's third annual Love Our Constitution initiative is happening February 10-16. Love Our Constitution encourages ACS members to share their love of the U.S. Constitution by leading community discussions focused on the federal judiciary at any time during Valentine's week. ACS has prepared presentation materials and additional resources to make it easy for everyone to organize a discussion of any size. Sign up [here](#) to host a discussion and check out our [webpage](#) to find the curriculum and answers to frequently asked questions. If you have any additional questions, please email LCEmails@acslaw.org.

Notice and Comment Initiative — [Notice and comment](#) is a key oversight tool for agency activity, particularly in the current political environment, and it's also a great way to develop knowledge in a particular area of the law. 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 essential ways for the public to participate in the rulemaking process. Consider hosting a Notice and Comment event 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 event, 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!

IMPEACHMENT

On December 18, 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives approved two articles of impeachment against President Donald J. Trump, making him the third president in U.S. history to be impeached. The formal trial of President Trump began on Tuesday, January 21, 2020. Both articles of impeachment accuse President Trump of committing “high Crimes and Misdemeanors.” The first article alleges “abuse of power” and states that President Trump “abused the powers of the Presidency” when he “solicited the interference of a foreign government, Ukraine, in the 2020 United States Presidential election” by conditioning official acts on the public announcement that Ukraine would investigate his political rival, former Vice President Joseph Biden. The second article of impeachment alleges “obstruction of Congress” and states that by “direct[ing] the unprecedented, categorical, and indiscriminate defiance of subpoenas issued by the House of Representatives pursuant to its ‘sole Power of Impeachment,’” President Trump has “abused the powers of his office.” It is now the U.S. Senate’s constitutional responsibility to consider the articles of impeachment, pronounce President Trump’s guilt or innocence, and determine whether he should be disqualified from holding future public office.



We are at a momentous time in our nation’s history and ACS is the forum for discussion of constitutional law. ACS created an [impeachment discussion guide](#) for you to use when speaking in your communities. Also check out [ACS’s Impeachment Resources page](#) (<https://www.acslaw.org/inbrief/impeachment-resources-from-the-acslaw-network/>), [FAQs on Impeachment](#), and [Blog Symposium](#). We encourage you to host teach-ins and organize events on impeachment. Email us at campus@acslaw.org with event information, questions, or for speaker ideas. You can also sign up your impeachment event or community discussion [here](#).

WAR POWERS, DETENTION, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

On January 3, 2020, a U.S. drone strike killed Qassim Suleimani, a top Iranian military commander. On January 9, the House voted to limit President Trump’s ability to take further military action against Iran. ACS hosted a briefing call on January 9, 2020 on the legality of the Trump administration’s decision to kill Qassim Suleimani without congressional authorization. Speakers also discussed the threat of military action (including the targeting of Iranian cultural sites) and the [detention of Iranian-Americans detained at the U.S. Border the weekend following the drone strike](#). You can listen to the recording [here](#). For a timeline of the escalation in the Middle East, see this Washington Post article [here](#). Consider coordinating a program on the War Powers Act, the legality of the strike under international law (see Just Security’s [The Targeted Killing of General Soleimani: Its Lawfulness and Why It Matters](#)), and America’s history of detaining and interning American citizens on the basis of “national security.”

Related: Please reach out to ACS at campus@acslaw.org if you are interested in [screening *And Then They Came For Us*](#), an award-winning film that brings history into the present, retelling the difficult story of Japanese-American internment during World War II and following Japanese-American activists as they speak out against the Muslim registry and travel ban.



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, transforming the federal courts. Since Trump took office, [“the Senate has confirmed 175 judges with lifetime appointments — that’s one-fifth of all federal judges . . . More than a quarter of all current appellate judges \[are\] Trump appointees.”](#) In contrast, President Obama only appointed 55 judges to the federal appeals courts. This rapid reshaping of the courts should concern all of us—every issue we fight for and care about is at stake. [“In the next few years, conservative judges will decide the future of *Roe v. Wade*. They will dictate whether colleges can maintain racial diversity. They will permit or forbid reasonable gun regulations.”](#) Please continue to speak out in your community and host programs on the importance of the courts. Let us know if you need any resources or are interested in engaging on this issue by emailing campus@acslaw.org.



You can track the current pace of judicial nominations at ACS’s [On the Bench](#) webpage.

Related: Invite local, state, or federal judges to speak to your chapters on their path to the bench, obtaining a clerkship, the importance of diversity in the judiciary, or whatever topic they’d like to discuss. Encourage your fellow ACSers to see themselves as [future clerks and judges!](#)

DEMOCRACY AND VOTING

Our democracy depends on all eligible citizens having a meaningful opportunity to vote. We encourage our chapters to host programs on accessing and expanding the right to vote, redistricting, the 2020 census, election law, and campaign finance. Consider further engaging on these issues by volunteering with ACS. To learn more about ACS’s Voting Rights Projects and to sign up, go to <https://www.acslaw.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/voting-rights-projects/>.

2020 PROGRAM GUIDE

The 2020 Program Guide marks the centennial anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment’s ratification, an occasion on which to honor the hard work and steadfast commitment that went into its passage, to elevate the women who were and continue to be left behind in the march toward progress, and to explore the Amendment’s legacy and continued significance for gender equality today. ACS encourages chapters to engage in programming designed to do all three.

The Program Guide will be released in January 2020 and available at <https://www.acslaw.org/analysis/acs-program-guides/>.



ACS'S STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL PROJECT

Through ACS's network of students, lawyers, academics, and allies, the ACS [State Attorneys General Project \(AG Project\)](#) develops and disseminates legal resources and hosts programming and events examining the actions of state attorneys general and the emerging legal and policy issues they face. Many state attorneys general are currently engaged in actions, both individually and collectively, to protect constitutional norms and principles from federal government overreach, while simultaneously filling a void created by federal inaction in numerous areas. For example, state attorneys general have brought actions to protect the rights of citizens and non-citizens alike. They are playing a significant role in reforming our criminal justice system. State attorneys general have also defended key federal environmental rules and regulations that protect our air, water, and natural resources, and have used the authority and power delegated to them to bring important cases against those violating federal and state environmental laws.



For more information on state attorneys general, check out ACS's State AG Project [website](#). Also, check out [Last Week Tonight with John Oliver's segment on State Attorneys General](#). If your chapter is interested in planning an event involving the state AG office and would like our guidance, e-mail us at campus@acslaw.org.

IMMIGRATION

In January 2019, the Department of Homeland Security began implementing the "Remain in Mexico" program forcing people arriving at the U.S. southern border who are fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries to remain in Mexico pending an asylum hearing. Because of this program, more than 55,000 migrants have been told to wait in Mexico where they are exposed to threats of extortion and violence, overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, and health consequences. To learn more about the program and its impact, check out:

- [The "Remain in Mexico" Policy: Raising Awareness and Crafting a Response Through Student Organizing](#), ACS.
- [Violence Plagues Migrants Under U.S. 'Remain in Mexico' Program](#), The Wall Street Journal.
- [Few Asylum-Seekers Winning Cases Under 'Remain In Mexico' Program](#), NPR.
- [Policy Brief: "Remain in Mexico" Plan Restricts Due Process, Puts Asylum Seekers Lives at Risk](#), American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Related: The Supreme Court heard arguments in the DACA case in November 2019. To learn more, check out [Supreme Court Hears Arguments in DACA Case](#) (ACS Blog) and [DACA at the Supreme Court: Quick Take on Oral Arguments](#) (ACS Blog).

We encourage you to coordinate programs on the Remain in Mexico program, the DACA program, and the continued attacks against immigrant communities, including the separation of families at the border, the dehumanizing treatment of detainees at migrant detention centers, and the "public charge" immigration rule, which makes it harder for immigrants to obtain permanent residency if they have used or are likely to use public benefits. Engage in critical discussion on immigration and use this programming to build solidarity and inclusion on your campus. Please cosponsor these events 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](#).

LGBTQ+ WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS

Last fall, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in three cases looking at whether Title VII's prohibition on sex discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity: *R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, *Altitude Express Inc. v. Zarda*, and *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*. Check out "[LGBTQ+ Workplace Protections: A Right to Work or A Right to Exist?](#)" by ACS's Jordan Blisk and "[Understanding the Role of Textualism and Originalism in the LGBT Title VII Cases](#)" by Professor Katie R. Eyer. Audio recording from oral arguments available at https://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_audio/2019.

Related: On November 18, 2019, the HRC Foundation released [A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in the United States in 2019](#), documenting the, at least, 22 transgender people and gender non-conforming people killed in 2019. HRC President Alphonso David stated that "Transgender women of color are living in crisis, especially Black transgender women." Work with local student organizations and community groups to raise awareness of these issues, including the current policies, rules, and regulations targeting the transgender community. For more resources, check out [Lambda Legal](#), the [Human Rights Campaign](#), and the [Transgender Law Center](#).



ACS RESOURCES

The ACS Staff is here to support you and the chapter. We are excited to work with you to facilitate your programs, to realize your potential for creating constructive dialogues for change, and to grow and strengthen your progressive networks. Please reach out to your ACS National Liaison or campus@acslaw.org to chat further!

In addition to your ACS National Liaison, we strongly recommend reviewing the [ACS Student Chapters Webpage](#) and the [ACS Student Chapters Resources Page](#), which includes the following resources:

- [Student Chapter Handbook](#)
- [2019-2020 Faculty Advisor Checklist](#)
- An ACS blurb for introducing ACS at your events
- [ACS Sign in Sheet](#) (please send completed sign-in sheets to campus@acslaw.org)
- ACS Welcome Videos
- [ACS Program Guides](#), [ACS Model Calendar](#), and other resources for programming
- [Sample Speaker Invitation Letter](#)
- [Event Posting Instructions](#)
- [Funding and Reimbursement Instructions](#)
- [ACS Speaker Release Form](#)
- [List of Visiting Professors](#)
- [List of Conferences and Conventions](#)



Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is anything we can do to assist you!

CHAPTER UPDATES

Send ACS your updated 2020-2021 ACS Executive Board 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, a Community Engagement Chair, and a Lawyer Chapter Liaison. More information on board positions can be found on page 6 of the [Student Chapter Handbook](#).

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



We expect all of our chapters to have a board member committed to ensuring diversity and inclusion on the chapter. This person, the Diversity and Inclusion Chair, helps to ensure that programming is inclusive and holistic, that programming includes diverse speakers, that membership is diverse, and that your chapter regularly collaborates, communicates, and partners with diverse bar associations and other organizations. Of course, *all* ACS Board

Members should be committed to diversity and inclusion. We expect at least one board member to have diversity and inclusion FRONT AND CENTER when conducting *all* chapter business.

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 Spring 2020.

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR ACS MEMBERSHIP

[Join ACS or renew now](#) and your student membership will be current through July 2020, or through December 2021 if you're graduating in 2020. This year will be a critical year of growth and impact for ACS. Help us invest in ACS chapters, career development, thought leadership, and building the progressive bench. Give now: acslaw.org/join.

501(c)3 GUIDELINES

ACS is a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization. For specific guidance on what this means for your programming, please review the [Student Chapter Handbook](#), and feel free to email us anytime with additional questions.

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? 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](#).

GRADUATING ACS LEADERS

Please don't forget to stay in touch with ACS. We need you now more than ever!

- Consider joining your local ACS Lawyer Chapter. Please reach out to campus@acslaw.org if you need help meeting ACSers in your region.
- If there is no active lawyer chapter in your area, let us know. We'd love to work with you to help you grow a new ACS Lawyer Chapter or connect you with our At-Large Lawyer Chapter.
- ACS offers a [Discounted Young Lawyer Membership](#) rate of \$10 to 2020 graduates. Your membership will be good through December 2021!
- Join us at the 2020 ACS National Convention in Washington, DC, June 11-13, 2020.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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Twitter
[@acslaw](https://twitter.com/acslaw)
[@ACSstudents](https://twitter.com/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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