



# SOCIAL MEDIA CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP

**ACLU** 70  
Florida

# THE SCHOLARSHIP

Your voice matters in the fight for freedom—now more than ever. As our state and communities face real threats to our rights, this is your moment to step into your power and help defend democracy.

Every generation is tested. This one is being tested right now—and the future of our freedoms depends on whether people speak up and take action. This scholarship is an opportunity to join a long legacy of young people who have helped move our country forward: freedom fighters, organizers, and truth-tellers who refused to accept that rights can be taken away quietly. If you believe that freedom is earned, not given—and that young people have a vital role in shaping the future—this call to action is for you.

The ACLU of Florida (ACLU FL) is awarding three \$5,000 scholarships for Florida high school and college students who are ready to take up the mantle of civic engagement and inspire other young people to action. Scholarships are open to graduating Florida high school seniors and graduates of Florida high schools currently enrolled in an accredited vocational school, community college, college, or university. All applicants must be U.S. citizens.

## THE CALL

Create an original video response to one of the prompts below. You'll conduct your own research, explain what's at stake when rights and freedoms are threatened, and empower other young Floridians to stay engaged and get involved. Your video should include accurate, fact-based information and may reference examples of the ACLU FL's work to protect civil rights and civil liberties in Florida.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$5,000**

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

**MARCH 17**

### PLATFORMS

**IG Reels and/or TikTok**

## HOW TO APPLY

In your video, reference and cite to one or more areas of work that the ACLU FL has championed — such as, Free Speech, Due Process, Freedom of the Press, Academic Freedom, Artistic Freedom, Voting Rights, Racial Justice, Immigrants' Rights, Reproductive Justice, LGBTQ+ Rights, Criminal Justice Reform, Countering State and Executive Overreach, and Protecting Citizen-Led Ballot Initiatives to name a few. You may, but you are not required to cite to specific cases and campaigns led by the ACLU FL as part of your research and examples. Submit your application by uploading your video link(s) using [this form](#).

## HOW WINNERS ARE SELECTED

Winners will be selected based on creativity, accuracy of content, and impact metrics including follower reach, views, and engagement (likes, comments, shares, etc.). Videos must speak to constitutional rights and values, the importance of defending democracy, and the role of limiting government overreach. Winners will be notified by March 31, 2026.

## IMPORTANT ELIGIBILITY & CONTENT RULES

Paid ACLU FL staff, board members, and immediate family members of staff or board members are not eligible to apply. Videos must be educational and fact-based. By submitting a video, applicants consent to the ACLU FL's use, reposting, and sharing of their content across ACLU FL platforms. Any submission that contains misleading information or misinformation, or includes endorsements of a candidate or political party, will be disqualified.

# PROMPTS

## PROMPT ONE

Florida has banned more books (over 4,500) than any other state in our nation and has severely restricted what can be taught in classrooms. Consequently, there have been multiple lawsuits challenging restrictions that critics say infringe on academic freedom and the right to learn. As a result, many students have grown up with fewer books on library shelves and limits on what topics can be discussed in school.

As a student, what have you noticed about censorship or restricted learning in your school experience? Why is the right to free speech—and the freedom to access information—so important in a democracy? What’s at stake for students when governments try to control what can be read, taught, or discussed, and why should these patterns concern all students?

## PROMPT TWO

Across Florida, many students are navigating a school climate shaped by fear and uncertainty—especially in immigrant communities. Some students worry about potential ICE encounters in or around schools. Others have walked into class and learned that a teacher or professor is gone. In some communities, families are keeping kids home because they fear being stopped, arrested, or separated.

What does it do to a school community when students and families are afraid to show up? As a student, explain why the freedom to speak out and organize is important in moments like this. Why should we protect the right for every student to learn safely and with dignity—regardless of immigration status? And why should these patterns concern all students, even those who don’t think it affects them?

## PROMPT THREE

Today, perhaps for the first time in American history, children are growing up with fewer civil rights and civil liberties than their parents had. At the same time, students and young people have always been a catalyst for change—pushing our country closer to its promises of freedom and equality.

What civil rights and civil liberties are you most concerned about protecting right now, and why? What’s at stake for you and your generation if those rights are weakened? And how can young people get involved—through learning, storytelling, organizing, and civic participation—to help expand rights and freedoms for all, alongside organizations like the ACLU of Florida?

# GUIDANCE

## DO'S AND DON'TS

DO: Educate people about Florida's anti-democratic policies.

DO: Focus on the power people have to hold elected leaders accountable and participate in civic engagement.

DO: Center the communities most impacted by harmful laws in your narrative -- BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Disabled, Students, Teachers, Women, and other people who can become pregnant, and Immigrants.

DO: Acknowledge policies and practices that are eroding our rights and liberties, but emphasize we can do something about it.

DON'T: For these videos, we ask that you do not endorse or support a candidate for public office directly. The ACLU FL does not endorse or support candidates for public office.

DON'T: Name specific candidates or elected officials.

NOTE: Video submissions that directly endorse, name, or support candidates will be ineligible to receive scholarship funds.

## PRO-TIP

Don't wait until the March 17 deadline to record and post your video response. Sharing earlier gives your message more time to reach people—and engagement is part of how scholarship winners are chosen.

## QUESTIONS

For advice and for scholarship application clarifications, you may reach out to [media@aclufl.org](mailto:media@aclufl.org)

## REFERENCES

To get started, you can learn more about [our work](#) here. Need some inspiration? Check out our collab videos from activist content creators here: [LauraRogersThat](#), [FruitsOfLinda](#), [YourFemaleEngineer](#), and [Marissa Tanée](#).

To support your research, review our recommended reading list:

- [How Democracies Prevail: Democratic Resilience as a Two-Stage Process](#)
- [Organizations, Resistance, and Democracy: How Civil Society Organizations Impact Democratization](#)
- [The Checklist for Ending Tyranny](#).

# GUIDANCE

## ABOUT THE ACLU OF FLORIDA

The ACLU of Florida, the state affiliate of the national ACLU, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to defending the civil liberties and rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Through litigation, legislation, and public education, the ACLU of Florida strives to ensure that the rights and freedoms of all Floridians are protected.

The ACLU of Florida is non-partisan and does not oppose or endorse candidates or politicians. But we must ensure Floridians understand that our civil liberties and democracy itself are on the ballot.

The Social Media Civic Engagement Scholarship does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or any other restricting classification in its selection of scholarship awardees.