Foreword

This guide is intended to examine the positions and track records of Iowa candidates for the US House and Senate. Certain issues believed to be of general importance to students were selected, such as racial justice, abortion rights, and the environment. This guide is intended to be nonpartisan and does not support any particular candidate or position. This is to allow the reader to make decisions on who they should support based on their thoughts and feelings about the issues, as well as to comply with school guidelines on nonpartisanship, as this guide was developed as a project for a course. The issues are listed in alphabetical order to avoid an implication of valuing one issue over another.

Generally, the information on candidates' position was a summary of their statements on their websites. In cases where a candidate's language could be considered loaded, biased, or debatable, the original language from their website was used with quotation marks. This is not to imply that the guide agrees or disagrees with their statement, simply that the statement is not universally agreed upon. Furthermore, if a candidate did not state a position on an issue on their website, an internet search was performed to try to find the information. These sources are indicated with a superscript.

The information on candidate's policy positions comes largely from their own websites, with the link provided for each candidate. Information on their voting track records comes from VoteSmart (https://justfacts.votesmart.org), which tracks politicians' positions and voting track records throughout their career. Information on candidates' ratings by political groups, funding, and speeches or press releases can also be found on this website. In cases where the information for either section could not be found on the candidate's website or VoteSmart and outside sources were used, a superscript number next to the statement will indicate as such. This corresponds to a references section at the end of the guide. For candidates who have previously held office, there were frequently too many bills voted on to document all of them. Instead, this guide attempts to provide a representative sample, but may still have omitted legislation that could sway readers' opinion of this candidate.

There is also a voter resources section at the end of this guide, with information on voting and voting rights, how to get involved in voting efforts, and—given the lack of diversity in the candidates listed here—a list of organizations supporting people of color in different areas of the political arena.

Incumbent



Joni Ernst U.S. Senator Republican Party 2015-Present

https://www.ernst.senate.gov/public/

Positions

Abortion: Ernst has previously stated her position to be pro-life. She has supported redirecting funding away from Planned Parenthood and towards community health centers- which provide family planning services and preventative care but not abortions- and hospitals. She has also supported legislation banning abortion after 5 months.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: Ernst supports some sentencing reform, as well as police reforms that increase oversight and transparency. She as also mentioned the possibility of adding additional support for police, possibly in the form of mental health counselors that specialize in deescalation. She called defunding the police a "quick and provocative soundbite" (Ernst.senate.gov).

Environment: Supports using US fossil fuel reserves, increasing renewables, making use of energy efficiency gains as energy sources, and supports the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. She has stated that she believes in a "common sense and cost-effective way to protect the environment" (Ernst.senate.gov), but wants to consider the impact on jobs and businesses when enacting such policies. She has stated support for dissolving the EPA and returning the job to states, and has been evasive about the impact of climate change.

Gun control: Ernst supports the second amendment and does not support stricter gun control.

Track Record in Office

Abortion: Ernst co-sponsored a bill criminalizing abortions performed after 20 weeks, with exceptions for rape, incest, and the health of the mother. She also co-sponsored the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, which requires doctors to try to save and care for babies born after failed abortions.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: Supported the First Step Act, which reduces some mandatory minimums and grants judges more leeway when sentencing non-violent drug offenses.

Environment: In Congress, Ernst voted for the Great American Outdoors Act, which permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Act among other statutes. She has supported the nominations of Scott Pruitt and Andrew Wheeler to positions in the EPA, who are largely in favor of reducing environmental regulation. She voted no on a measure related to expressing the federal government's obligation to pass legislation related to the Green New Deal.

Gun Control: Ernst supported a bill allowing citizens to have concealed carry privileges, in addition to working to overturn a previous ban on M855 ammunition.

Health Care: Ernst states that insurance premiums have increased under Obamacare, which she states has had "painful effects" on Iowa residents. She supports reforms that provide "patient-centered, affordable health care reforms that enhance competition, increase flexibility" and "constrain rising costs" and wants to repeal and replace Obamacare (Ernst.senate.gov).

Higher education: Ernst supports increased transparency regarding the costs that students have to pay to go to college, including financial counseling. She does not mention support for full student debt forgiveness, but supports efforts to help students pay off current debt. She does not mention reducing or eliminating college tuition in any form. She also supports "accessible" student loans with "reasonable" interest rates.

Immigration: Ernst has voiced her support for ICE, and has emphasized the need to "secure our border" and "close the asylum loopholes in our existing immigration laws" (Ernst.senate.gov).

LGBTQ+ Rights: Ernst has no stated position on LGBTQ+ rights on her website. However, a comment in 2014 indicated that she believed that gay marriage should be decided by states but would support a federal ban on same-sex marriage⁹. On the other hand, she opposed President Trump's ban on transgender people serving in the military⁸.

Racial Justice: No issue position is directly stated on her website. However, in a debate in October of 2020, when asked whether she believed in systemic racism, she stated "I would not say just broadly that we have systemic racism across the board" and "No. I don't," Ernst said. "I do believe that you will find racist individuals in those systems but I don't believe that entire systems of people — of people — are racist. There are racists out there." It should be noted that systemic racism is defined as "the policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary." (ACLRC, Toronto Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations.)

Track Record in Office

Health Care: Ernst voted yes on the 2017 Health Care Freedom Act, the 2017 Obamacare Repeal Reconciliation Act, and the 2017 Better Care Reconciliation Act, all of which were attempted repeals of the ACA. She also voted yes on the Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act in 2018, which increased transparency in how drug prices and alternative methods of payment are communicated to patients.

Higher education: Ernst supported the Employer Participation in Repayment Act, which allows employers to help pay off their employee's student debt without taxation. She has also supported a number of bills aimed at increasing transparency in the cost and financing of college.

Immigration: Ernst has introduced "Sarah's Law", which would "require the federal government to take custody of anyone who entered the country illegally, violated the terms of their immigration status, or had their visa revoked *and* is thereafter charged with a crime resulting in the death or serious bodily injury of another person." (Ernst.senate.gov).

LGBTQ+ Rights: No bills related to this issue were documented in VoteSmart for any point in Ernst's political career.

Racial Justice: Ernst has proposed the "Ending Taxpayer Funding of Anarchy Act", which is intended to "restrict federal funding for "anarchist jurisdictions," or jurisdictions that "abdicate their constitutional duty to their citizens to uphold the rule of law and provide police, fire, or emergency medical services due to non-governmental actors" (ernst.senate.gov).



Positions

Abortion: She supports women's health care rights and opposes shutting down Planned Parenthood.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: She has stated support for police reform targeted at increased transparency as well as racial bias training, de-escalation training, and a ban on chokeholds. She hasn't stated a position on defunding the police. She supports restoring voting rights to previously incarcerated people.

Environment: Greenfield says that she believes in climate change, supports clean-energy jobs, and wants to strengthen environmental laws in addition to adding infrastructure to protect people from the effects of climate change. She does not state a position on the Green New Deal.

Gun control: Greenfield supports gun control legislation such as background checks, funding for gun violence research, and legislation that would prevent domestic abusers and some previous offenders from owning guns.

Health Care: Greenfield supports affordable healthcare, and wants to create a buy-in option, reduce healthcare costs, protect the ability of people with preexisting conditions to get healthcare, and wants to support rural health care access.

Theresa Greenfield
Running for U.S. Senate
Democratic Party
https://
greenfieldforiowa.com/

Track Record in Office

Higher education: She has stated that there should be investment in higher education and job training, and that education should be affordable. She has also stated support for debt-free community college.

Immigration: On her website, Greenfield calls the immigration system "broken", and wants to improve the borders, protect national security, and fix the immigration system. She has also stated that she wants to see wait times for legal immigration reduced, and more technology implemented at the border. She also supports the DREAM act.

LGBTQ+ Rights: Greenfield has stated her support for equal rights for lowans, and that she would support legislation like the Equality Act, which would "prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation" (greenfieldforiowa.com).

Racial Justice: Greenfield says that she wants to improve racial disparities in a number of areas across the board. She supports restoring voting rights to people who have completed their sentences as well as police reform, in addition to the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which strengthens the Voting Rights Act of 1965. She also wants to reduce disparities in health care, education, and business and lending practices.

Track Record in Office



Rick Stewart
Running for U.S. Senate
Libertarian Party
https://
www.rickstewart.com/

Positions

Abortion: According to VoteSmart, Stewart supports neither pro-choice nor pro-life legislation, instead thinking that the federal and state government should not be involved in abortion legislation. He would consider allowing small municipalities to pass abortion legislation.

Criminal Justice and Policing: Stewart says that he wants to end the war on drugs and legalize all drugs. In response VoteSmart's question on whether government officials and police officers should be protected from personal liability in civil suits over misconduct, he stated, "No one should be able to violate the constitutional rights of any citizen, anytime, anywhere."

Environment: Stewart wants to impose a carbon tax⁶, and wants to impose a Watershed Cooperative plan where water leaving a landowner's watershed must be as clean as when it entered, to improve water pollution⁶.

Gun Control: Stewart says that he supports the second amendment.

Health care: Stewart believes that a possible solution to make healthcare affordable is for the US to institute a Universal Basic Income and deduct the premiums of a high deductible plan from the check. He believes this would result in a competitive healthcare market where quality increases and prices decrease⁶.

Track Record in Office

Track Record in Office

Higher Education: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on his website.

Immigration: Stewart said in a response to VoteSmart that he would sell permanent Green Cards for 50,000 dollars, but would keep the existing citizenship system as is.

LGBTQ+ Rights: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on his website.

Racial Justice: Stewart said in an interview that his top priority in office would be "ending the racist drug war".



Credit: KWQC

Positions

Abortion: Herzog supports women's agency over their bodies and their right to choose whether or not to continue a pregnancy. She does not state the exact point up to which abortion should be legal, just that decisions must be made "in the best interest of the mother and baby" (herzogforussenate.com) in cases where the baby could potentially live outside the mother.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on her website.

Environment: Herzog has stated that she supports the environment and sustainable farming practices. She supports renewable energy, advancing fuel standards, and a carbon tax.

Gun control: Herzog supports the right of people to own guns responsibly, but wants to make sure that it is done safely and with respect to public safety. She supports expanding background checks, limiting magazine sizes, and making buying a gun when prohibited a federal crime, for a start.

Health Care: Herzog posits a healthcare system that has been separated from employment status and changed into a regulated market. She argues that this will be more affordable and efficient, while still ensuring quality care.

Suzanne Herzog
Running for U.S. Senate
Independent
https://
www.herzogforussenate.c
om/

Track Record in Office

Track Record in Office

Higher education: She believes that how students pay for college, and how it is priced, should change, and put forth the possibility of national service as one means with which to achieve this goal.

Immigration: Herzog wants to "revive" the proposals regarding immigration reform made in 2013 while streamlining the immigration process. She also does not support the Trump administration's decision to withdraw humanitarian aid from Latin American countries.

LGBTQ+ Rights: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on her website.

Racial Justice: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on her website.

Incumbent



Positions

Abortion: Finkenauer says that women should be able to make their own decisions as to what is best for their health, and supports funding providers like Planned Parenthood.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: In a recent debate, Finkenauer said that she doesn't support defunding the police, and would like to see more training for police officers⁵.

Environment: Finkenauer supports policies that encourage conservation, as well as alternative energy and a "strong renewable fuel standard" (abbyfinkenauer.com), and supports tax incentives for the development of renewable energy. She wants to support renewable energy and reduce emissions to combat climate change.

Abby Finkenauer

U.S. House of
Representatives, District 1

Democratic Party

2019–Present

https://
www.abbyfinkenauer.com/]

Track Record in Office

Abortion: While in the Iowa House, Finkenauer voted no on bills prohibiting abortions after a heartbeat is detected (SF 359), and after 20 weeks (SF 471), as well as voting no on a bill prohibiting the sale of fetal tissue (HF 2329).

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: Finkenauer voted yes on the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020, which is intended to increase the transparency, data collection, and accountability of law enforcement and prohibit discriminatory policing practices, as well as the Emmett Till Antilynching act, which made lynching a hate crime, and says that those convicted of hate crimes may be imprisoned for up to 10 years.

Environment: Finkenauer voted yes on every environmental bill documented, including the Expanding Access to Sustainable Energy Act of 2019, the Great American Outdoors Act (appropriates funding for National Parks and conservation, among many things), the PFAS Action Act (requires the EPA head to designate per-and polyfluoroal-kyl substances as hazardous for CERCLA purposes), and the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (designated new Wilderness Preservation Lands and instituted a pilot program to reduce methane emissions).

Gun control: In a press release from 2019 posted on her website, Finkenauer states that she supports "bipartisan, commonsense gun violence prevention legislation" including universal background checks and closing the Charleston loophole.

Health Care: Finkenauer believes that healthcare is a human right, and supports legislation like a public option. She wants to build on the ACA and opposes efforts to raise premiums or reduce coverage of certain issues, like maternity care and addiction.

Higher education: Finkenauer says that the cost of college has become "way too high" (abbyfinkenauer.com) and that greater transparency would help, as would refinancing options for those with loans. She also supports funding for career and technical training opportunities.

Immigration: Finkenauer supports a pathway to citizenship, border security, and "strong interior immigration enforcement" (abbyfinkenauer.com). She also supports renewing DACA and making E-Verify (a program for confirming the identity and work eligibility of employees, and one which generally prevents undocumented immigrants from being legally employed¹) mandatory, and does not support abolishing ICE.

LGBTQ+ Rights: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on her website.

Racial Justice: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on their website, except that which is stated under criminal justice and police reform.

Track Record in Office

Gun Control: Finkenauer votes yes on the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019 and the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019. While in the Iowa House of Representatives, she voted no on a bill limiting weapons restrictions and on another allowing individuals under the age of 14 to possess a handgun.

Health Care: Finkenauer voted yes on many bills aimed at expanding access to healthcare, including the Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019 and the Protecting Americans With Preexisting Conditions Act of 2019, and a bill that authorized the use of medical marijuana.

Higher education: Finkenauer voted yes on the Comprehensive CREDIT Act of 2019, which provides a grace period and certain privacy protections for people who temporarily defaulted or stopped making payments on a private education loan.

Immigration: Finkenauer voted for bills such as the US Border Patrol Medical Screening Standards Act, which directs the development of standardized medical screening processes for people "interdicted between ports of entry" (VoteSmart) and the Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act, which is intended to create health and hygiene standards in the care of undocumented immigrants in ICE custody.

LGBTQ+ Rights: Finkenauer voted yes on the Equality Act, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in certain areas, and on a bill stating opposition to banning transgender individuals from the Armed Forces.

Racial Justice: Finkenauer voted for bills such as the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys Act, the Strength in Diversity Act of 2019, which awards grants to certain educational agencies trying to improve diversity, and yes on the Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act of 2019, which allows people to "file legal complaints against policies that disproportionately impact students of color" (VoteSmart).



Positions

Abortion: Hinson stated her position to be pro-life and does not believe that government funding should be used for abortions, but supports over the counter birth control.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: The candidate does not state a position on this issue on their website, but said in a recent debate that she supports police but is against police brutality⁵.

Environment: Hinson states that she supports renewable energy, biofuels, and protecting the environment, but doesn't support "unfair" taxes and "onerous" regulations on energy producers. She also believes that the Green New Deal would "destroy" lowa's agricultural industry and put thousands of farmers out of business.

Ashley Hinson
Running for U.S. House
of Representatives,
District 1
Republican Party
https://
ashleyhinson.com/

Track Record in Office

Abortion: Hinson voted yes on bills prohibiting abortion after 20 weeks, prohibiting abortion after a fetal heartbeat is detected, requiring a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion, and a Health and Human Services budget that prohibits funds appropriated to a medical assistance program from being used for abortions.

Criminal Justice and Police Reform: Hinson voted for HF 2647, which "Amends Law Enforcement Policies and Training Requirements", and is intended to regulate the use of deadly force, chokeholds, and update training guidelines, as well as SF 2348, which requires people convicted of a felony to pay restitution to the victim of the crime to regain their right to vote.

Environment: Hinson voted yes on Senate File 548, which would prevent private entities from using a state low-interest loan fund to buy land for water quality improvement before giving it to the government.

Gun control: Hinson does not state a position on her website, but PoliticianCompare says that she is a strong supporter of the 2nd Amendment².

Immigration: Hinson believes that the system has been "overwhelmed" by illegal immigrants, and wants to increase funding for border security and make changes to the legal immigration system.

LGBTQ+ Rights: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on her website.

Health Care: She opposes Medicare for All, but wants to protect the coverage of people with preexisting conditions. Hinson wants to lower healthcare costs, including that of prescription drugs, and eliminate surprise billing. She also wants to increase competition and improve access to healthcare, especially in rural areas.

Higher education: Hinson says that she supports funding for vocational schools and training programs to expand access and career options.

Racial Justice: No information could be found on this candidate's position on this issue, including on her website, except that which is stated under criminal justice and police reform on the previous page.

Track Record in Office

Gun control: Hinson voted yes on HF 517 "Authorizes Use of Deadly Force when Deemed Necessary", which allows individuals to use deadly force if they believe a "forcible felony" (VoteSmart) is happening or is about to happen, among other regulations. She also voted yes on HF 2502, which prohibited localities from enacting gun laws more restrictive than those of the state, among other policies.

Immigration: Hinson voted yes on SF 481, which "Requires Law Enforcement for Comply with ICE Detainer Requests"

LGBTQ+ Rights: A provision of the HHS budget mentioned under the abortion category "prohibits any state or local government unit or tax-supported district to provide for sex reassignment surgery", among other procedures.

Health Care: Among the bills voted on during her tenure, Hinson voted yes on SF 2338, which "Establishes Legal Protection to Businesses and Healthcare Providers during COVID-19" and reduces liability over exposure, as well as SF 684, which established limited medical amnesty in cases of alcohol-related emergencies involving minors.

Higher education: No votes related to student loans or other financial issues have come up recently. However, Hinson voted yes on bills targeted at free speech (SF 274) on campus and authorizing stun gun use on campus (SF 188).

Racial Justice: Hinson voted yes on HF 516, which requires individuals to present some form of ID to cast a ballot.

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Voter Resource Guide

2020 Voting Information

https://www.usa.gov/how-to-vote

Provides information on how, where, and when to vote, from the US government.

https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/how-to-vote-2020/

This guide from FiveThirtyEight provides a map with stateby-state information on voting, including mail-in and early voting.

https://www.whenweallvote.org/

When We All Vote, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 2018 with the intention of closing the race and age gap in voting, offers resources on voting, like voting rights and deadlines. The website also offers ways to get involved in helping to get out the vote.

Voting Rights, Voter Suppression, and Systemic Barriers

https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/vote-suppression

The Brennan Center provides a simple primer on voter suppression, as well as further reports and analyses on the issue.

https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/block-the-vote-voter-suppression-in-2020/

The ACLU also provides information on voter suppression, as well as a map of states that have imposed voter ID laws since 2010.

https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights.aspx

The NCSL provides basic information and state-specific information on voting rights for people convicted of a felony.

https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/felony-disenfranchisement/

The Sentencing Project provides additional information on the disenfranchisement of those convicted of a felony, as well as publications and news related to the issue.

https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2019/08/07/473003/systematic-inequality-american-democracy/

The Center for American Progress offers information on the history and current state of systemic barriers to voting targeted at communities of color.

Supporting Voters and Candidates of Color

These organizations were found on the 'Brown-Girl Friendly Organizations' page of The Brown Girl's Guide to Politics (https://www.thebgguide.com/).

https://www.theblue.institute/

Blue Institute hosts training sessions on campaign management for politically interested young people of color in the South and Southwest

https://inclusv.com/

Inclusv is an organization that aims to promote staff of color in the political arena. Membership is free with a resume submission, and the organization provides information on job opportunities and professional development.

http://www.powerpac.org/

PowerPac is an organization dedicated to voter engagement, campaign support, and issue advocacy for people of color.

https://blackpac.com/

BlackPAC works to help Black voters to vote, as well as to hold politicians accountable to a goal of defending Black rights and ending white supremacy.

http://www.ncai.org/

The National Congress of American Indians strives to protect tribal governance and treaty rights, advocate for policy, educate the public, and pursue economic development and health and welfare.

https://www.shethepeople.org/

She the People is an organization building a network of women of color to effect change and mobilize in politics.

Get Involved

These three organizations are some of the many that individuals interested in helping people vote can get involved with.

Campus Vote Project:

https://www.campusvoteproject.org/state-student-voting-guides

Rock The Vote:

https://www.rockthevote.org/get-involved/

VoteRiders:

https://www.voteriders.org/volunteer/