



Contact: Jenny Kefauver
703/850-3533

Tabling Limits at Iowa State Are a Prior Restraint, Southeastern Legal Foundation Warns

(Oct. 4, 2022) Ames, IA: As part of its [1A Project](#), [Southeastern Legal Foundation](#) (SLF) sent a demand [letter](#) challenging [Iowa State University's](#) tabling policy. According to the [policy](#), student organizations can only table eight times a semester. If they reach their limit, they must find a less suitable alternative or stay silent.

As SLF explains in its [letter](#), the problem with the policy is that it penalizes active student organizations and favors silence over speech. Tabling is one of the most popular forms of speech on campus because it allows students to engage in several forms of speech at once: they can erect a display, hand out flyers, and invite students to speak to them at the same time. Tabling can also be a safer means of conveying a message because it invites students to approach speakers instead of the other way around. But by limiting how often student organizations can table, and therefore limiting how they get their messages across, Iowa State engages in a prior restraint.

Director of SLF's 1A Project [Cece O'Leary](#) advises, "The tabling policy forces students to plan carefully. If they can only table eight times a semester, they essentially have to predict when they want to engage in speech activities weeks in advance. If a major news event happens—which is common—students who have used up their eight reservations can't table on that issue. The tabling policy forces students to forgo opportunities to speak."

SLF Director of Litigation [Braden Boucek](#) explains, "Iowa State is favoring silence over speech by telling student organizations that no matter how active they want to be on campus, they are limited to eight opportunities to table. This is unreasonable, it's censorship, and it violates the First Amendment."