



STAR Act Message Guidance

Frames, values, talking points and guardrails to shape the conversation and pass the law

Document purpose

To equip STAR Act supporters with the tools to strategically frame the debate and communicate powerfully. This guide will help you persuade, save time, ensure consistency and avoid traps. Messages may be used verbatim or as guidelines for your own remarks.

Condensed 30-Second Message

Use if you have a very brief opportunity to speak

Minnesotans believe in family, community, and safety. But lawless federal immigration enforcement is breaking up families, undermining trust in law enforcement, and creating fear in our neighborhoods. The STAR Act protects our communities by making sure local police focus on public safety, protecting sensitive places like schools and hospitals, and holding federal agents accountable when they violate our rights. That's how we make Minnesota a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

Values narrative message

While the content of your messages may vary according to the specific legislative plank(s) you address, messages should adhere to the sequence of Values→Villain→Vision. Here's an example:

- 1. Lead with values:** "Minnesotans work hard to make our state a North Star for people seeking freedom, community, safety and a better life. As a result, people who immigrate put down roots, raise families and make Minnesota stronger. This is worth defending."
- 2. Name the villain and the problem:** "But cruel and lawless federal immigration enforcement has terrorized and broken up families, devastated schools and small businesses, and trampled our constitutional rights. This makes us all less safe and sows fear and division across Minnesota."
- 3. Close with a vision of the better future we are building:** "We need state laws that keep all Minnesota families and institutions safe, ensure accountability for violations of our rights, and restore federal respect for state and local law enforcement. The STAR Act meets these needs and protects us from abuses of federal power. That's why Minnesotans of all backgrounds are working together to pass it. Together, we're making Minnesota a safer place for everyone who calls our state home."

Our values

Ground messages in one or more of these values at the beginning of remarks and throughout stories.

Family – Minnesotans of every background put family first. Nothing is more important to us than being there for the people we love the most. Speak vividly from the heart about family. Use relational terms like “parent,” “mom,” “dad” and “child.”

Community – Use stories that illustrate communities working together in response to lawless, cruel immigration enforcement. Stories about delivering groceries to housebound families, protecting children at school, supporting small businesses, peaceful protest, and bearing witness to injustice paint a vivid moral picture.

Safety – We all deserve to be safe in the places we live, learn, work and get the care we need. Invoke safety as a contrast to immigration enforcement agents’ intimidation and violation of our rights at sensitive places like schools, workplaces, courts and healthcare facilities. Also use safety to contrast the social distrust caused by misusing local law enforcement as a tool of immigration enforcement.

Respect – All people have dignity and deserve respect. Appeal to this value when discussing protections of our constitutional rights and disentangling state and local law enforcement from civil immigration enforcement.

Accountability – Accountability is the foundation of our freedom. Without it, rights are empty promises. Invoke this value when speaking about civil action against people who violate our rights while conducting civil immigration enforcement.

Guardrails

Mind these guidelines as you formulate messages and tell personal stories.

Do	Don't
Make families, everyday Minnesotans working together, and local leaders (e.g., teachers, entrepreneurs, healthcare providers) the main characters.	Don't make ICE, President Trump, or members of his administration the main characters. They seek to dominate our attention.
Anchor messages in what we are <i>for</i> – not what we are against.	Don't use “repeat and rebut” messages (for example, “they aren't going after ‘the worst of the worst’”).
Emphasize the resilience, love and determination Minnesotans are showing in the face of cruel, lawless immigration enforcement.	Don't make trauma and heartbreak the central emotions of your message.
Always connect personal stories to STAR Act policies.	Don't focus on evoking passive pity or compassion.
Explicitly include the bad actors in stories.	Don't describe hardships without explaining how they happen.

Speak in everyday language.	Don't use policy jargon or soaring oratory.
Talk more about solutions than problems.	Don't dwell excessively on harm and cruelty. It shuts people down.
Make "Minnesota families and businesses vs lawless federal enforcement" the axis of conflict.	Don't make "the DFL vs Republicans" or "progressives vs conservatives" the axis of conflict.
Emphasize that STAR Act policies make us <i>all</i> safer.	Don't frame the STAR Act as protections solely for immigrants.

Responses to Attacks

NOTE: Effectively countering opponents' attacks requires us to affirmatively make our argument. Avoid repeating and negating the opposition's arguments. For example, "ICE is terrorizing families and snatching valued members of our communities," not "They aren't deporting the worst of the worst."

Attack: "The STAR Act stops law enforcement from protecting us from criminal aliens."

Response: That's false. The STAR Act disentangles state and local law enforcement from civil immigration enforcement only. Investigation and enforcement of criminal law is an entirely separate matter.

Here's the big picture: Minnesotans of every background, including immigrants, want law enforcement that truly keeps us all safe. But tangling up local law enforcement with federal immigration creates a climate of fear and a threat to public safety in many communities. When people expect that police will assist in the kinds of rights violations ICE is notorious for, they become afraid to call 9-1-1. That's the real everyday threat to public safety in immigrant communities. The STAR Act solves this problem by making it clear that local law enforcement keeps the local community safe.

Guardrail: Talking about "criminals" helps the opposition by reinforcing their association of immigration with crime. Avoid it.

Resource: The [STAR Act bill summary](#) addresses this issue specifically.

Attack: Blaming STAR Act supporters or "both sides" for the chaos caused by ICE and CBP's lawless actions.

Response: Across the state, Minnesotans have come together like never before in response to the crisis caused by lawless targeting of our immigrant neighbors. The blame game is a political conversation that has nothing to do with the reality of everyday people in Minnesota.

Guardrail: This accusation is a trap. Directly rebutting it mires us in a blame game that makes this whole debate look like politics as usual.

Messaging on key STAR Act issues

Disentangling state and local law enforcement from federal civil immigration enforcement.

Values: Safety, responsibility, respect.

Problem/villain: Federal pressure on state and local law enforcement strain local resources and compromise public trust and safety. When people think calling 9-1-1 could result in an unjust deportation, we are all less safe.

Solution: The STAR Act restores respect for the distinct roles of federal, state and local law enforcement. It provides detail and clarity about each level of our government's responsibilities, gives residents reassurance, and ensures that all agencies focus on the responsibilities they are best equipped to handle.

Guardrails: This policy area involves nuances and details that are easy for the opposition to misrepresent. Consult with a legal expert in advance of public communications.

Resource: The [STAR Act bill summary](#) addresses this issue specifically.

Safeguarding our personal data from abuse and resale

Values: Safety, family, community

Problem/villain: Vendors and public institutions sharing our sensitive personal data with unaccountable federal government agencies.

Solution: The STAR Act requires federal immigration agents to obtain a signed judicial warrant to access personal data from educational and governmental institutions, safeguards HIPAA protection of our health data, and ensures that personal data is not sold by vendors to federal contractors that enforce immigration.

Protecting sensitive sites from warrantless immigration enforcement

Values: Safety, family

Problem/villain: Federal agents terrorizing our communities by lurking at schools, healthcare facilities, campuses and courts without judicial warrants.

Solution: The STAR Act makes Minnesotans safer by protecting schools, healthcare providers and courts from intrusion by immigration enforcement agents without a signed judicial warrant and clear identification.

Right to civil action against personnel who violate constitutional rights.

Values: Accountability

Problem/villain: Federal agents trampling our constitutional rights with impunity – including unlawful detention, excessive force, warrantless searches and arrest, defying judicial orders to release, and illegally confiscating personal property.

Solution: The STAR Act holds federal agents accountable by creating a state civil cause of action against individuals who knowingly violate our constitutional rights while conducting civil immigration enforcement.

Message for faith leaders

Scriptural grounding

“You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” — Deuteronomy 10:19

“Let justice roll down like waters.” — Amos 5:24

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.” — Matthew 25:40

People of faith affirm that every person carries sacred dignity. Our traditions call us to protect families, welcome the stranger, and build communities where people can live without fear.

Values

- Families belong together and deserve stability and safety.
- Communities are stronger when people trust schools, hospitals, and local institutions.
- Justice requires accountability when rights are violated.
- Faith calls us to care for neighbors and strangers alike.

What the STAR Act Does

- Protects schools, hospitals, and courts from warrantless immigration enforcement.
- Strengthens trust between communities and local law enforcement.
- Protects sensitive personal data from misuse.
- Creates accountability when constitutional rights are violated.

What Faith Communities Can Do

- Speak publicly about family, dignity, safety, and justice.
- Support neighbors experiencing fear or uncertainty.
- Encourage respectful public dialogue about community well-being.
- Advocate for policies that protect families and strengthen communities.