

## Primer on Legally Protesting in Public Space

Our picket outside of a local “Crisis Pregnancy Center” is a public demonstration designed to raise awareness about the nature and existence of these non-medical facilities.

(The following advice is adapted from ACLU.org)

### **Picketing on a Public Sidewalk:**

We have a right to picket on public sidewalks without a permit when done in an orderly, non-disruptive fashion (e.g., pedestrians can pass, entrances are not blocked).

### **Stay on the Public Sidewalk, Allow Pedestrians to Pass Obey traffic and pedestrian signals/laws:**

Stay on the sidewalks and obey traffic and pedestrian signals. Allow enough space on the sidewalk for normal pedestrian traffic and do not obstruct or detain passers-by.

### **Hand out our Informational Leaflets:**

You may approach pedestrians on public sidewalks with leaflets, newspapers, petitions and solicitations for donations without a permit.

### **What about counter-demonstrators?**

Counter-demonstrators have free speech rights but they should not be allowed to physically disrupt the event they are protesting. Police are permitted to keep two antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within the general vicinity of one another.

### **What should I do if my rights are being violated by a police officer?**

Do not argue. Ask to talk to a supervisor and explain that you are not disrupting anyone else's activity and that the First Amendment protects your actions. If you do not obey an officer, you might be arrested. You should not be convicted if a court concludes that your First Amendment rights have been violated.