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## ALL HANDS ON DECK, ACLU MOBILIZES TO DEFEND CIVIL RIGHTS FROM TRUMP ATTACKS

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

When Donald Trump was sworn in as president, he lost no time launching Project 2025—a right-wing policy agenda rooted in white supremacy that he had claimed to know nothing about.

He issued executive orders to end birthright citizenship, gut Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) programs and strip transgender people of their rights. He has aggressively attacked voting rights, freedom of speech, and reproductive choice.

He unlawfully used an 18th century law called the Alien Enemies Act as cover to deport 200 Venezuelan men who he accused of being gang members—without producing any evidence whatsoever to a court. The U.S. government forced the men onto planes bound for El Salvador where they were locked up in a notorious gang prison.

We are witnessing abuses of presidential power the likes of which we have never seen.

The ACLU stands ready—as we have for more than a century—to defend our vision of an inclusive democracy based on fundamental principles of equality.

“Our priorities remain clear as we confront the Trump administration’s many threats to our civil rights and civil liberties,” said Abdi Soltani,

executive director of the ACLU of Northern California. “We will challenge discriminatory policies and block efforts to dismantle constitutional protections. And we will resist the disturbing normalization of anti-democratic threats.”

### BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

On Day 1, Trump signed an executive order that would strip babies born in the United States of citizenship unless at least one parent is a citizen or permanent legal resident.

Two hours later, the ACLU sued him in federal court in New Hampshire. A judge temporarily blocked the order days later calling it “blatantly unconstitutional.”

Every child born in the United States, regardless of who their parents are (unless they are foreign diplomats) is automatically a U.S. citizen. Birthright citizenship is a cornerstone of our multi-racial democracy.

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# IN MEMORIAM: MARSHALL KRAUSE

The ACLU of Northern California and the broader civil liberties community celebrate the life of Marshall Krause, who served as lead attorney for the ACLU of Northern California from 1960 through 1968. Krause passed away on December 29, 2024 at the age of 91.

Krause, a recipient of ACLU NorCal’s Chief Justice Earl Warren Award last year, was renowned for his exceptional legal advocacy before the U.S. Supreme Court, winning five of six cases he argued. His landmark victory in *Camara v. Municipal Court* expanded Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches beyond criminal cases, establishing privacy as a fundamental right for all. This decision laid the groundwork for later constitutional advancements, including marriage equality and abortion rights.

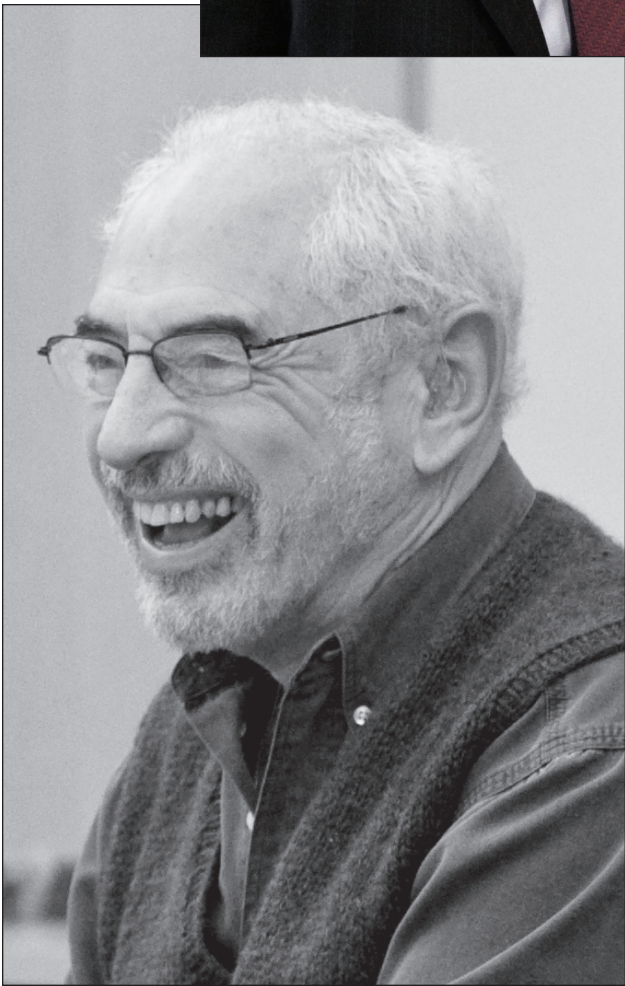
His first case before the Supreme Court, *Lamont v. Postmaster General*, succeeded in striking down a McCarthy-era law that required people to register before they could receive mail from communist countries. This marked the first time the Court declared an act of Congress unconstitutional for violating the First Amendment.

When asked about his motivation to become an attorney, Krause said he felt compelled from an early age to challenge authority and fight for the underdog—the people against whom the system is stacked. This philosophy guided his lifelong commitment to defending individual freedoms against government overreach.

Krause was a rebel with a cause, and his impressive legacy and willingness to take on controversial issues during politically charged times will continue to inspire attorneys and advocates for generations to come. 




Above, Marshall Krause (right) with ACLU NorCal Executive Director Abdi Soltani when Krause accepted the Chief Justice Earl Warren Award in 2024.



At left, Marshall Krause participating in an ACLU NorCal oral history project in 2009.

## IN MEMORIAM: JOE GRODIN

At press time, we also learned of the passing of former California Supreme Court Justice Joe Grodin, who served on ACLU NorCal’s Legal Committee for many years. Grodin was the last surviving member of the 1986 state supreme court. He died on April 6, 2025, surrounded by family in Oakland, at the age of 94. In addition to his work on the court and with ACLU NorCal, he was a lawyer, law professor, and social justice advocate who will be remembered for both his work and mentorship. His last visit to the ACLU office was the event honoring Marshall Krause. 

### ACLUNews

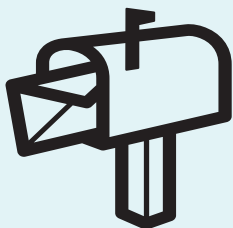
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# AT THE CALIFORNIA CAPITOL: LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

## FEATURED ACLU CALIFORNIA ACTION PRIORITY BILLS



ACLU Cal Action Exedutive Director David Trujillo speaking to the press after the January 21 rally.

The day after Trump’s inauguration, the ACLU mobilized in Sacramento to launch our Fight for Freedom campaign.

Each legislative session, ACLU NorCal works with ACLU California Action to advance a legislative agenda that pushes our state forward. Here are two of our key bills we’re advocating for this year.

### CALIFORNIA HOUSING JUSTICE ACT (AB 1165)

Housing affordability is a pressing crisis in California. Nearly 30% of California’s renters pay over half their income on housing, with well over 1 million households experiencing severe rent burden, paying over half of their incomes in rent. Due to generations of racism, including in housing policy, Black Californians are disproportionately impacted by our state’s housing crisis.

Housing is a human right. To truly fulfill this right, the State must invest ongoing funding to address the scale of our housing crisis. The Housing Justice Act is a crucial step toward achieving that important goal.

The California Housing Justice Act will:

- ♦ Require the Legislature to make ongoing investments at the scale needed to solve our housing crisis.
- ♦ Build a strategic roadmap to end the housing crisis.
- ♦ Create new accountability measures to ensure housing and houselessness funds are used correctly.
- ♦ Ensure that decisions are shaped by the people who have been failed by decades of policy choices that led to this crisis.

### BANNING POLICE MISCONDUCT NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS (AB 1388)

For years, California police departments have routinely found clear evidence of wrongdoing by their officers, but instead of firing them outright they allow

officers to leave the agency in exchange for complete secrecy over their misconduct.

The misconduct these agreements obscure is egregious, and oftentimes illegal. Police misconduct nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) have been signed for officers who have sexually harassed and assaulted people in custody, embezzled taxpayer dollars, destroyed evidence of sex crimes against minors, and falsified police reports. These officers face no civil liability, criminal charges, or other consequences.

**These police misconduct NDAs reward bad cops and make our communities vulnerable** by keeping their misconduct hidden from the public. These NDAs put every member of the public at risk, break down trust in law enforcement, and waste taxpayer dollars on severance checks for bad cops. AB 1388 will stop this unjustifiable process by:

- ♦ Prohibiting law enforcement agencies from signing police misconduct NDAs.
- ♦ Voiding the hundreds of police misconduct NDAs that currently shield bad cops from scrutiny and accountability.
- ♦ Ensuring that previously signed agreements are public records that must be released upon request by members of the public, including journalists and researchers.
- ♦ Emphasizing existing duties for agencies to report to the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) serious misconduct and recent separations.

### REMARKS FROM DAVID TRUJILLO, ACLU CAL ACTION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*The day after inauguration day, ACLU California Action held a rally on the steps of the state capitol, followed by legislative briefings for policymakers on the ACLU’s agenda in response to the expected policies of the Trump administration, including on immigrants’ rights, privacy and housing. David Trujillo shared these remarks at the rally:*

I became a naturalized U.S. Citizen on May 10, 2017. During my swearing in ceremony, the speakers explained that we were becoming “Americans by choice.” I love that phrase because it not only captures the essence of the immigrant journey to this country, but it truly describes our democracy. As immigrants, we chose to come to this country because this is the place that nearly 250 years ago boldly declared that we are all created equal and are born with inalienable rights.

In the decades and centuries since that declaration, Americans across this country have fought at great personal peril to remind us of those ideals and to push us to continue to do better, to correct past mistakes, and to create a more equitable and just nation.

That is why I am proud to be a part of the ACLU, to be an American and to be a Californian.

Today, California has a choice. Together, we must dare to pursue actions that lean into our highest ideals, to confront gilded policy agendas that benefit the few with policies that take down systems of oppression and lift up all communities. We must dare to lean into the values that make California the Golden State and in doing so, demonstrate to the rest of the country that WE THE PEOPLE means all of us. 



# ALL HANDS ON DECK, ACLU MOBILIZES TO DEFEND CIVIL RIGHTS FROM TRUMP ATTACKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The 14th amendment enshrined birthright citizenship in the constitution in 1868 and reversed the Supreme Court's odious *Dred Scott* ruling that had denied citizenship to Black people. Trump's order is an abuse of executive power, violating the constitution and laws enacted by Congress, and creating an underclass of people who would be denied the benefits of U.S. citizenship even though they were born here.

## FIGHTING MASS DEPORTATION

Trump's anti-immigrant attacks on Black and Brown people have only intensified during his second term. At the same time, he has offered political asylum to Afrikaners, members of the white minority who ruled during apartheid in South Africa. Trump preposterously claims that they are victims of racism.

Much of our ACLU litigation has focused on stopping Trump's efforts to deport immigrants—most of them immigrants of color—without due process.

Here in California, the ACLU Foundations of Northern and Southern California and our legal partners (National Day Laborer Organizing Network, the Center for Immigration Law and Policy at UCLA School of Law, and the Haitian Bridge Alliance) sued Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in federal court in San

Francisco on behalf of the National TPS Alliance and eleven Venezuelan and Haitian immigrants who are in the Temporary Protected Status program, known as TPS.

Trump officials revoked an 18-month temporary extension that had allowed some 600,000 Venezuelans to live legally in the United States because their home country is in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. The DHS Secretary canceled the Temporary Protect Status for the majority of them just weeks after the Biden administration had renewed it.

In our lawsuit, we argued that the Trump administration exceeded its legal authority and that the decision was based on prejudice. The case was amended in March to also defend the rights of 500,000 Haitians at risk of losing their temporary immigration status.

"I am stunned to have TPS ripped out from under me, at a moment's notice," said one plaintiff, Freddy Arape, an IT support specialist in Texas. "It doesn't make sense. TPS exists exactly for the situation that Venezuelans face right now. We cannot safely return."

On March 31, a federal judge blocked the Trump administration's attempts to strip Venezuelans of their temporary protected status, while the case moves through the courts.

## THE ACLU HAS FILED 17 LAWSUITS AGAINST THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACROSS THE UNITED STATES SINCE HIS INAUGURATION. HERE ARE SOME OF THE KEY CASES:

- ♦ In March, we joined Democracy Forward to file a lawsuit over Trump's illegal invocation of the Alien Enemies Act to deport 200 Venezuelan men to El Salvador. It was the same law used to justify the shameful internment of 120,000 people of Japanese descent during World War II. A federal judge blocked the Trump administration from enforcing the executive order. In April, the U.S. Supreme Court lifted the temporary injunction, but said that individuals must be given due process to challenge their removal—an important victory.
- ♦ Also in March, we joined the legal coalition defending Mahmoud Khalil, a legal permanent resident and Columbia University graduate of Palestinian descent who was arrested by ICE in New York and shipped 1400 miles away to an immigration detention center in Louisiana. Trump officials claimed, with no evidence, that Khalil, who was active in Gaza protests at Columbia, was a Hamas supporter. His American wife was 8 ½ months pregnant at the time of his arrest. A federal judge has blocked the Trump administration from deporting him while his cases goes through the courts.
- ♦ We asked a federal judge to block Trump's illegal termination of CBP One, a mobile app that was one of the last remaining ways for someone arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border to apply for asylum.
- ♦ We sued to stop Trump's illegal attempts to massively expand fast-track deportations for immigrants who can't prove they've been in the U.S. for at least two years, violating their due process.
- ♦ We challenged Trump's false declaration that there is an "invasion" at the border—to justify denying people asylum and forcing them to return to countries where their lives would be at risk.
- ♦ We've filed two lawsuits over the administration's illegal and unprecedented transfer of immigrants from the United States to Guantanamo Bay.



Press conference and rally before a March 24 San Francisco courthouse hearing against the Trump Administration's efforts to deport people legally protected by Temporary Protected Status (TPS).



CHALLENGING UNLAWFUL RAIDS

Even before Trump officially took office, his election victory emboldened U.S. Border Patrol agents who couldn't wait to terrorize immigrant communities.

The day after Congress certified the election, Border Patrol agents based at the U.S. Mexico-border went rogue. They traveled 300 miles north to initiate raids in predominately Latino farming communities in and around Kern County and began indiscriminately stopping people because of their skin color. They targeted day laborers and farm workers.

They smashed people's car windows and slashed their tires. They threw a grandmother to the ground. Legal residents and U.S. citizens were among those stopped and arrested in the unlawful sweeps.

In February, the ACLU Foundations of Northern California, Southern California and San Diego & Imperial Counties and Keeker, Van Nest & Peters LLP., filed a class action lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Border Patrol officials over these gross violations of people's constitutional rights during "Operation Return to Sender"—on behalf of people arrested in the raid and the United Farm Workers.

The agents arrested at least 78 people. As we detailed in our lawsuit, they transported the people they arrested back to the border patrol station where they held them in frigid cells, denied them adequate places to sleep, showers, or enough food. They refused to let them make phone calls to their lawyers or family members.

These pressure tactics were meant to break them so they would "voluntarily" agree to be expelled from the country.

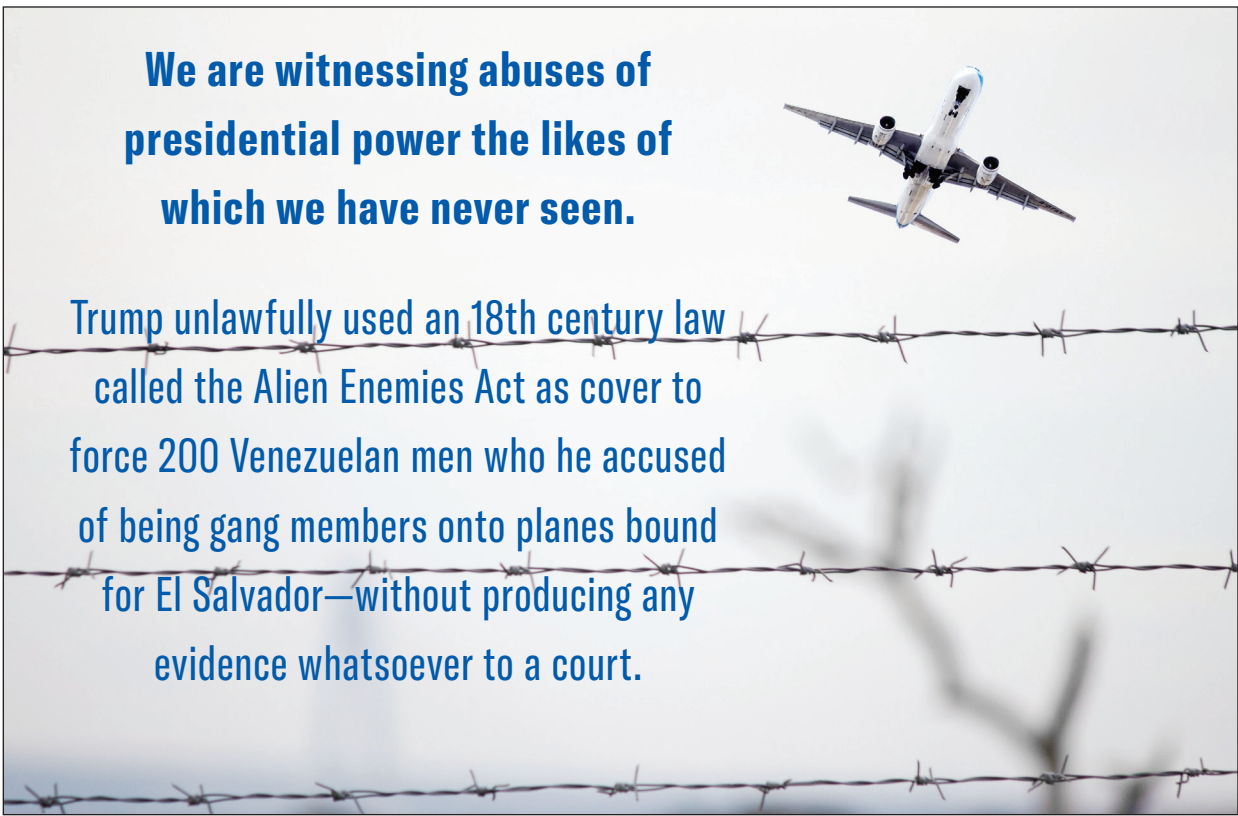
Maria Hernandez Espinoza who is one of the plaintiffs in our lawsuit, lived in Kern County for 20 years. After her arrest, the border patrol agents made her sign forms, but wouldn't let her read them. They refused her plea to see an immigration lawyer. She was among approximately 40 people stranded in Mexico with no idea when she will see her loved ones again.

"We're suing to end Border Patrol's unlawful reliance on racial profiling, indiscriminate arrests without a warrant, and using coercion and deception to deny people their rights," said Bree

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Together, we will fight efforts to take our country backward to a time when almost everyone except white, straight Christian men were denied equal protection under the law.

.....



Bernwanger, a senior staff attorney at the ACLU Foundation of Northern California. "These lawless practices do not make anyone safer. All they do is terrorize communities."

PROTECTING TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

Trump continues to launch his vile attacks against transgender people.

He issued an executive order that threatened to yank federal funding from medical institutions that provide gender affirming care to people under 18.

In a major victory for gender affirming care, a judge blocked the unconstitutional order.

Trump issued another executive order blocking transgender people from being able to update their gender on their passport. We again sued to stop more of his cruel scapegoating of transgender people.

"We have an administration that is using rhetorical attacks on trans people in order to expand executive power and open up a series of attacks that are going to affect all of us," said Chase Strangio, director of the ACLU's LGBT & HIV project during an ACLU Town Hall. "We all need to be vigilant about what's going on."

A CALL TO ACTION

The ACLU is prepared for the critical mission at hand, and we are on the ground in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

Litigation is one of the most powerful tools we have. We have scored some important victories in court, but we know more challenges will come.

Beyond going to court, we are building a firewall for freedom to harness the power of political advocacy and community organizing. The ACLU produced a 96-page playbook providing tools to state policymakers to help prevent the Trump administration from executing its vicious and unconstitutional attacks.

Here in Northern California, we're developing local strategies to help people resist Trump's draconian agenda. For instance, we've produced Know Your Rights (KYR) resources to educate immigrant communities about how to protect themselves from federal immigration enforcement agents. They provide valuable tips on what to do—and not to do—at home, at work, at school, or in a public place when confronted by ICE. We've also produced KYR videos in English and Spanish that have been viewed more than 500,000 times on TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. And we're partnering with immigrants' rights advocates to ensure that the information reaches the people who need it.


And we need you, our members and supporters, some four million strong, to join us for the long fight ahead.

We're summoning all our friends and supporters.

We need all hands on deck.

Together, we will stop our country from going backward to a time when most everyone but white, straight Christian men were denied equal protection under the law.

We the people are the only ones with the power to save our democracy.

Stand with us! Make your voice heard! 

*Tammerlin Drummond is a principal communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.*

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The ACLU is prepared for the critical mission at hand and we will do our part in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

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# LEGAL ADVOCACY UPDATES

## A LETTER FROM LEGAL DIRECTOR SHILPI AGARWAL



There are battles of enormous importance currently being waged on the national scale. Here at ACLU NorCal, our legal docket reflects many of those fronts. But it also reflects the issues that continue to plague California specifically—these are our fights. Like the rest of the country, we are seeing new forms of aggressive surveillance and penalization of student protestors on higher education campuses. These are the very places where young people should feel most free to explore and express burgeoning—and sometime radical—ideas.

We see local governments, with the blessing of those in power at the state and federal level, relying on criminalization so that they may hide—rather than address and solve—the growing unhoused population in our state. And we see a dizzying pendulum swing away from our recent gains in creating a more just and humane policing and criminal legal system.

All of these battles are taking place amidst continuing rapid changes in the composition of the federal bench and in federal law. On top of the big decisions from the United States Supreme Court over the last few years, there are also many incremental, more technical ways that federal courts are becoming less friendly to impact civil rights cases. Accordingly, we are increasingly turning to our state courts as the presumptive venue for enforcing and protecting the civil liberties that are the bedrock of this country.

## ACLU NORCAL SUES UCSC FOR UNLAWFUL CAMPUS BANS AND RESPONSE TO STUDENT PROTESTS

### LITIGATION



BY CARMEN KING

In May of 2024, the University of California Santa Cruz issued harshly punitive and unconstitutional campus bans on more than 100 students and faculty members who were participating in a pro-Palestine protest on campus.

The bans took effect immediately, cutting students and faculty off from classes, jobs, and other school resources, such as meal plans and health care. Banned students were subjected to tremendous hardship, and many reported struggling to take final exams, turn in assignments, and receive critical medical attention.

In September, the ACLU Foundation of Northern California filed suit to stop UCSC from banning students, faculty, or other staff without the findings and protections required by state and federal law.

Soon after the complaint was filed, the lawsuit achieved a significant outcome: UCSC reformed its policies for addressing campus protests. Officials must now follow constitutional protections and provide students with due process before they can banish members of the school community from campus.

Last December, a judge appropriately rejected a search warrant issued by the University of California Santa Barbara that sought information from two activist Instagram accounts related to Gaza and Palestine.

The warrant, served last year, would have seized the information of anyone who engaged

## ACLU STEPS IN TO PREVENT UNIVERSITY OVERREACH INTO STUDENT’S ONLINE ACTIVISM

### AMICUS BRIEF



BY CARMEN KING

with the accounts through likes, comments, messages, or even simply viewing a post—effectively treating everyone associated with the activist movement as a suspect.

In November, the ACLU of Northern California filed an amicus brief in support of a legal challenge to the warrant, arguing that the warrant represented a violation of people’s constitutional rights who interacted with the activist accounts. Basic rights to privacy and free speech apply to everyone who engaged with these accounts.

Universities have an educational mission and responsibility to safeguard students’ rights to political discourse and organizing. The warrant’s broad scope threatened the privacy rights of the entire university community and fell short of the institution’s responsibility to protect free speech.

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**Universities have an educational mission and responsibility to safeguard students’ rights to political discourse and organizing.**

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## CENTER FOR GENETICS AND SOCIETY V. BONTA

### LITIGATION

BY LISA P. WHITE

Since 2009, anyone arrested on suspicion of a felony in California must provide a DNA sample for inclusion in the state database. Since then, the state has retained the DNA of individuals who were never charged or convicted unless they filed a request to have their biological specimen destroyed and profile deleted from the database. Because the onus of learning about this process is on the individual, fewer than 2 % of eligible people have applied.

In 2018, ACLU NorCal sued the California Department of Justice, arguing that indefinitely retaining DNA from people who had never been convicted of a felony violated the right to privacy enshrined in the state constitution. We filed a motion for judgment last year, and in a major win for privacy, San Francisco Superior



Court recently ruled that the state must develop a plan to expunge the DNA of people who were arrested but ultimately had not been prosecuted or convicted.

## CALIFORNIA VALUES ACT

### ADVOCACY LETTER



BY LISA P. WHITE

California is home to more immigrants than any other state in the country. To limit cooperation between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities during the first Trump administration, the legislature passed the California Values Act (SB 54) which prohibits sheriffs and police departments from using resources to aid immigration enforcement, with some exceptions. The law is intended to foster trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. Residents who are not citizens are more likely to seek help from police when they don't fear being turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In 2019, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld California's sanctuary law in its entirety.

In light of Donald Trump's pledge to carry out mass arrests and deportations, in December 2024 we sent letters to the sheriffs in our region reminding them of their duties under the Values Act and the restrictions the law imposes on notifying ICE of individuals' release dates and responding to requests to transfer individuals into federal immigration custody.

We also urged the sheriffs to adopt policies that go beyond the Values Act and further limit their office's entanglement in immigration enforcement such as not responding to ICE transfer or notification requests.

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**In light of Donald Trump's pledge to carry out mass arrests and deportations, we sent letters to the sheriffs in our region reminding them of their duties under the California Values Act.**

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**There are battles of enormous importance currently being waged on the national scale. Here at ACLU NorCal, our legal docket reflects some of those same issues and battles. But it also reflects the issues that continue to plague California specifically—these are our fights.**

**–ACLU NorCal Legal Director Shilpi Agarwal**

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## FREMONT ANTI-CAMPING ORDINANCE

### ADVOCACY LETTER



BY LISA P. WHITE

In February 2025, ACLU NorCal, the National Homelessness Law Center, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, and other legal and social services organizations wrote a letter urging the Fremont City Council to reject a proposed anti-camping ordinance.

The ordinance imposes misdemeanor penalties of up to six months in jail and a maximum fine of \$1,000 for camping or storing personal belongings on public property. Without access to shelter or housing, the measure's broad language would make it effectively illegal to be unhoused in Fremont.

Our letter argued that despite the U.S. Supreme Court's 2024 decision overturning *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, which had barred cities from citing and arresting people simply for being homeless, other laws, like the California constitution's cruel or unusual punishment clause and disability protections prohibits camping bans.

The council passed the draconian measure over our objections. Following widespread criticism, at a subsequent meeting council members voted to remove the controversial "aiding and abetting" provision that could have penalized groups that provide food, medical care, and other humanitarian aid to unhoused individuals.

If Fremont follows through on seizing personal property, community members are likely to lose medication, IDs, vital records, phones, and other belongings they need to survive on the street. Furthermore, fines and jail time can trap people in homelessness by making it more difficult to access services, employment, and housing.

## FIGHTING SEBASTOPOL'S CRUEL PARKING BAN TARGETING UNHOUSED COMMUNITY

### LITIGATION




BY CARMEN KING

RVs provide shelter and safety for those who are unable to afford fixed housing. Protecting this option has become more critical as cities and counties increasingly criminalize homelessness in the midst of a housing affordability crisis.

In October of 2022, the ACLU Foundation of Northern California, together with Disability Rights Advocates, California Rural Legal Assistance, and Sonoma Legal Aid, sued Sebastopol for enacting an ordinance prohibiting vehicles used for human habitation from parking anywhere within city limits during the daytime.

Unlike similar bans elsewhere, Sebastopol's ordinance explicitly targeted vehicles "designed or altered for human habitation," a term that is so vague that ordinary people cannot understand whether their vehicles are covered, and that allows for discriminatory enforcement. In addition to being discriminatory, the "one strike, you're out" policy permits confiscation of people's only means of shelter upon first citation.

Our legal advocacy has stopped other jurisdictions from banning RV parking, but the court's decision in favor of Sebastopol unfortunately defied this trend.

We are currently appealing on grounds that the ordinance is unconstitutionally vague and is based on a desire to discriminate, denying people who live in their vehicles the equal protection of the law. 

*Carmen King is a senior communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California. Lisa White is a principal communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.*



# FAMILIES OF PEOPLE KILLED BY VALLEJO POLICE JOIN ACLU TO DEMAND JUSTICE

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

Willie McCoy, Jr. Sean Monterossa. Ronnell Foster. Jeremiah Moore. They were all young men killed by Vallejo police officers.

Their family members were among dozens of Vallejo community members who answered our call to join us in Sacramento to give their personal testimony to the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). Under legislation passed in 2021, POST now has the power to investigate law enforcement officers for decertification and strip them of their badges in instances of serious misconduct.

“Willie McCoy Jr. was executed by six Vallejo Police Officers on Feb. 9, 2019,” McCoy’s older brother Kori told the commission. To drive home his point, he wore a t-shirt that read, “No one is above the law.”

Michelle Monterossa was there for her brother Sean, 22, who was shot and killed by a Vallejo police officer June 2, 2020.

“What we know is these officers have never been held accountable,” Monterossa said. “We hope that by bringing our stories, the POST board will take immediate action.”

The Vallejo Police Department (VPD) has a shameful history of brutality and police corruption that has made national headlines. Yet police officers alleged to have been involved in serious misconduct that caused deaths and serious injuries remain on the force to this day.

The ACLU has been working to hold VPD accountable through litigation and community organizing.

In October 2024, we filed a complaint with POST calling on the commission to use its authority to conduct decertification investigations of nine current and former VPD officers.

Lisa and Eugene Moore were at the POST meeting to represent their son Jeremiah, 29, who was killed Oct. 21, 2012.



Kori McCoy, brother of Willie McCoy who was shot and killed by police in 2019. Watch a video of him speaking at [www.instagram.com/reel/DBbxE3zSfjY/](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DBbxE3zSfjY/).

“Jeremiah was autistic, there was no reason to shoot and kill him,” Eugene Moore said. “We’re here to advocate and get something done about all of this injustice.”


After the hearing, POST said it would investigate the allegations in our complaint.

Willie McCoy’s sister Barbara Dorsey said that for the first time she felt heard.

“I want to thank you guys from the bottom of my heart for actually staying on this case and doing something about it, Dorsey wrote in an email to the ACLU. “You’re helping us get the justice we need.”

More recently, we testified in March before the Vallejo City Council. We successively advocated for councilmembers to reject the police union’s efforts to weaken the city’s police oversight law.

If there were ever a police department that cried out for accountability, it is the Vallejo Police Department, with its long, sordid history of rights violations.

We will continue our work to hold Vallejo police officers and the department accountable to the community they are sworn to serve. 

## WANT TO TAKE ACTION?

Join our email list to stay informed about current issues and campaigns both locally and nationally, find out about upcoming events, and learn about opportunities to get more involved in the fight to protect civil liberties.

**Subscribe to our email action list at [ACLUNC.ORG/EMAIL](https://aclunc.org/email)**




# AS TRUMP TRAMPLES FREEDOMS, ACLU TEACHES HOW TO STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS IN A KNOW YOUR RIGHTS VIDEO SERIES

Donald Trump has launched an all-out assault on our civil liberties. That's why it's more important than ever for Californians to know our legal rights so we can better protect ourselves, our families, and our neighbors from tyrannical attacks. ACLU NorCal has just released our newest animated video, *Police Interactions: Know Your Rights*, which you can watch at [www.aclunc.org/police-interactions](http://www.aclunc.org/police-interactions).

It gives you important information about what to do—and, just as important, what not to do—if you are stopped by the police. Knowing this valuable information, before you actually need it, can help save your life.

Whether you are interacting with an ICE agent or a police officer, planning to take part in a protest or want to find out what your government is doing, our Know Your Rights resources help you take back your power.

This video is the latest in a series that includes: *Know Your Rights: Free Speech, Protests & Demonstrations*, *Know Your Rights: The Brown Act and Open Meetings Rights*, and *Know Your Rights: If ICE Confronts You*. All four are available in English and Spanish. You can find all our Know Your Rights material at: [www.aclunc.org/KYR](http://www.aclunc.org/KYR).


Share these important and timely resources with your community and beyond! 

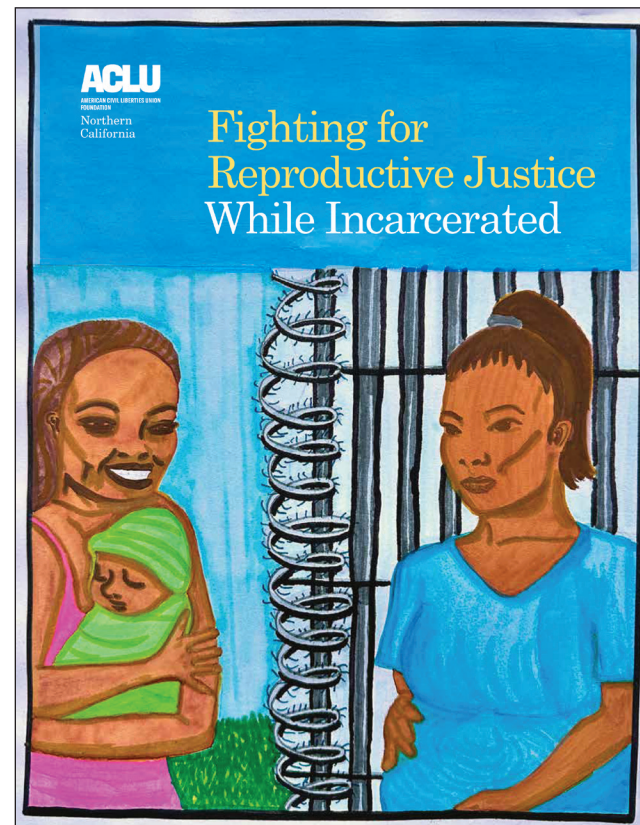
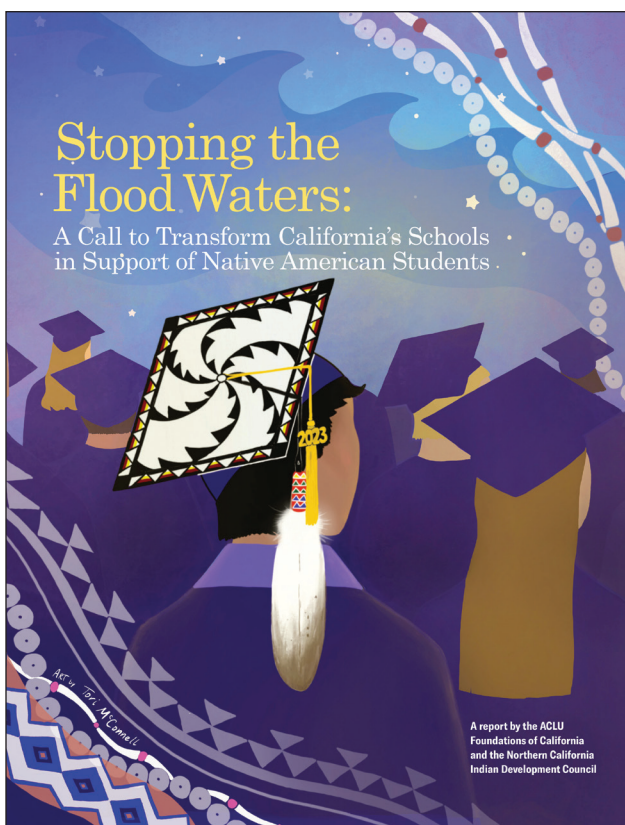


## ACLU NORCAL RELEASES TWO NEW REPORTS

“Stopping the Flood Waters: A Call to Transform California’s Schools in Support of Native American Students” is a new report by the ACLU Foundation of Northern California and the Northern California Indian Development that serves as a tool to support local and statewide advocacy to improve educational equity for Native American students, who face ongoing inequities.

California’s Native American students learn and grow amid a fundamental contradiction: while their families, cultures, and Tribes embrace education as central to their ways of life, California’s school systems too often fail to adequately serve Native American students. In the report, readers can use the appendices to investigate school accountability statistics in their own districts and bring the data to school leaders, along with the report recommendations that are most relevant to their students.

The ACLU of Northern California also recently released “Fighting for Reproductive Justice While Incarcerated,” which examines challenges faced by incarcerated people in California’s jails and prisons. Building on another ACLU report published in 2016 and subsequent 2020 legislation, the report highlights personal stories and proposes solutions to barriers to reproductive health created by conviction and incarceration. 



New ACLU NorCal reports: “Stopping the Flood Waters: A Call to Transform California’s Schools in Support of Native American Students” (cover artwork by Tori McConnell) and “Fighting for Reproductive Justice While Incarcerated” (cover artwork by Laura Lutrell).

**Read these reports and more at [www.aclunc.org/publications](http://www.aclunc.org/publications).**



# ACROSS SEVERAL GENERATIONS, DIFFERENT WAYS OF GIVING


## THE ROBERT PAINE AWARD FOR ACLU NORCAL LEGAL INTERNS, FOUNDED IN 1989 AND GOING STRONG IN 2025

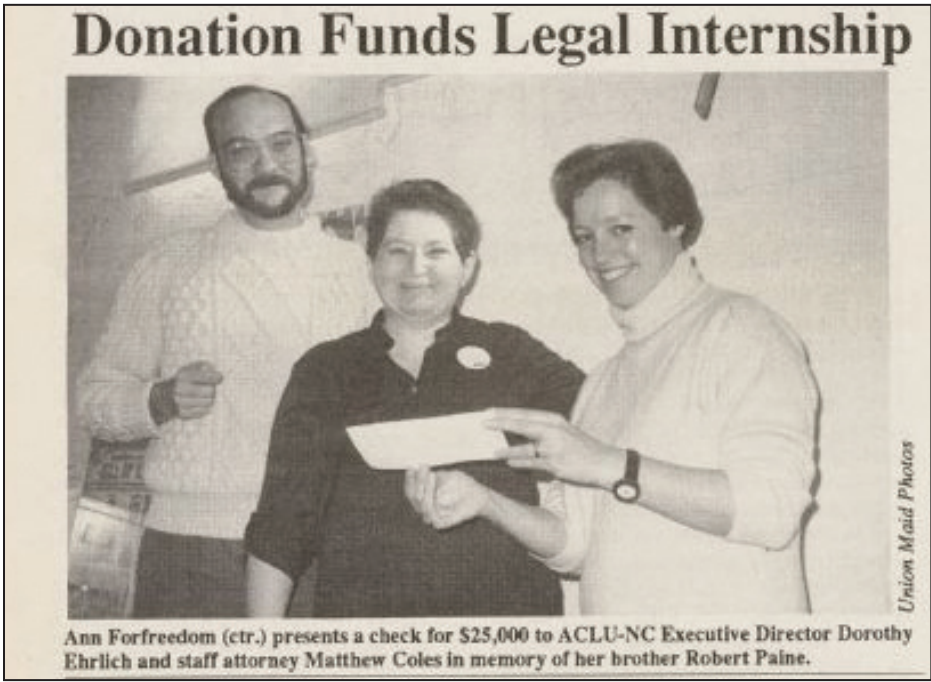
ACLU supporter Ann Forfreedom donated \$25,000 to ACLU NorCal in 1989 to establish legal internship funds for law school students interested in civil liberties law. She named it for her brother, Robert Paine, who died of cancer at age 30, shortly after receiving his law degree focusing on human rights law. Over 35 years later, the program exists as an award to an ACLU NorCal law student intern.

“Originally,” Forfreedom said, “I had dedicated a certain amount of an inheritance that I received, to sponsor the Robert Paine internship. And I knew that was running out around the year 2000. So I began saving up. Every year I have sent in a donation to the Robert Paine Internship Fund to underwrite the annual award, and it’s been a wonderful experience.”

Second-year law school student Jin Heo was awarded this year’s Robert Paine Award in recognition of outstanding work during his legal internship at the ACLU of Northern California.

“It is truly an honor to be receiving the Robert Paine Award,” said Heo. “I came to law school wanting to push for change


in the criminal legal system and fight against laws and policies that subject marginalized communities to the harms of over-policing and mass incarceration. During my summer with the ACLU of Northern California, I had the opportunity to directly support the incredible work being done to address these issues and was continuously moved by the team’s thoughtful and unwavering commitment to change. I consider myself very lucky to have worked with so many people who inspired me to continue empowering communities through progressive reform.” 



Ann Forfreedom (center) in a clipping from a 1989 issue of the ACLU News announcing the legal internship fund.  
Explore more of the **ACLU News** archive at [www.aclunc.org/CHS](http://www.aclunc.org/CHS).

## THANK YOU TO TWO OF OUR YOUNGEST DONORS

Our thanks to young Miles Tafolla and his brother Malcolm for showing us what it looks like to act on the courage of one’s convictions. They trusted their allowance money with us, and we’re proud to have been able to deliver.

See the top story in this issue for how the ACLU is fighting back against the Trump administration. 

*Photo and letter shared with permission of the Tafolla family.*

Dear ACLU,  
I'm donating some of my brothers and mine allowance money so you can sue Trump for all the unconstitutional things that he wants to do.  
  
Sincerely,  
Miles



Miles Tafolla (right) and his brother Malcolm



# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: MARIA-ELENA YOUNG

Maria-Elena Young is an ACLU NorCal board member and Merced County chapter member who has been involved with the ACLU for the past 6 years. She first got involved in the ICE Out of Merced coalition in 2019 and has been an advocate for immigrants for many years, with a particular emphasis on public health. She spoke with Luis Ojeda, ACLU NorCal’s regional organizing and program manager, about how she got involved in advocacy and with the ACLU.



## DO YOU HAVE A CHILDHOOD MEMORY THAT AWAKENED YOUR POLITICAL AWARENESS?

Young: My political awakening was in the early ‘90s when California voters passed proposition 187, the measure that restricted undocumented immigrants from access to public services like public education and healthcare. The law generated a lot of conversation among my peers at Claremont Middle School in Oakland. It was upsetting and exposed us early to xenophobia and how harmful it can be. As a seventh grader I debated friends about why the policy was bad and why I wanted to speak up for immigrants’ rights. It’s sad to think back to that time and think about where we are now and how much things haven’t changed. But it gives me hope that people are willing to speak up.

## AS SOMEONE WHO NOW LIVES AND WORKS IN MERCED, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO SHARE ABOUT MERCED, OR THE CENTRAL VALLEY AT LARGE, THAT YOU THINK DOESN’T GET ENOUGH ATTENTION?

Young: The Central Valley is huge, spanning from Redding to Bakersfield. It is considered a conservative region, but there’s really a very vibrant progressive community here, which has created numerous complex and exciting efforts to push for a more progressive state. But as someone who works in public health, I recognize the inequities that exist in the Central Valley. Nonetheless, we can’t be discouraged; we must foster homegrown efforts and allow them to flourish.

## WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE ACLU THAT BROUGHT YOU AND KEEPS YOU ACTIVE TODAY?

Young: I support the ACLU’s values and its mission, and I think what’s great is that it exists at the national level, but at the state and local levels as well. My first local connection to the ACLU was in 2019 through the ICE Out of Merced coalition. As somebody who studies immigrant health, I think that the ACLU’s work on immigration issues has been vital for advancing and protecting immigrants’ rights. The ACLU has also been a national and state leader on issues like criminal justice reform and reproductive rights, and so it’s really awesome to get to be a part of an organization that’s like a big, huge team.


## HOW DO YOU RECHARGE AND PRACTICE SELF-CARE IN ORDER TO STAY ENGAGED IN THIS WORK?

Young: I love playing with my three cats, Tito, Elvis, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. It’s just a chance to put away my computer, my phone, and have down time. I also love to read and so I read a lot of novels. The Merced County Library system here is excellent and I’ve gotten access to all sorts of incredible books. I am able to disconnect in a creative way by reading literature and poetry from all over the world, from Mexico to Palestine. Some recent highlights include *El Invencible Verano de Liliana* by Christina Rivera Garza and *James* by Percival Everett.

## WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO FOCUSING ON THIS YEAR AS A BOARD MEMBER AND CHAPTER LEADER?

Young: As an ACLU NorCal board member, I’m on the community engagement committee, and I’m really excited to learn about the different bills that the ACLU will be working on and to support its chapter program. It’s the state and local advocacy that’s going to be critical in the next few years. Given the current political context, our chapter has had an increase in people who are interested in getting involved so I’m just really excited to build community and foster their leadership. We’ve already started to generate some great ideas about meeting with our local policy makers and doing Know Your Rights trainings.

## WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO ANYONE WHO FEELS OVERWHELMED IN THIS MOMENT AND ISN’T SURE HOW TO GET INVOLVED?

Young: If you are interested in getting involved with something, find your favorite people and get them to go with you. Find an organization or cause and show up and see where you’re needed even if it seems like a small role or is outside of your comfort zone. Everyone has a role to play, and it’s really going to be a team effort to push back against impending fascism. 

# BOARD ELECTION NOTICE

We’re always looking for committed members to join the Board. The nominating committee is now seeking suggestions from the membership to fill positions on the Board.

Candidates and ballots will appear in the Fall issue of the *ACLU News*. Elected Board members will begin their three-year term in January.

Pursuant to Article VI, Section 4 of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California’s bylaws, there are two ways for members to participate in the Board nominating process:

1. Send suggestions for the nominating committee’s consideration by July 1, 2025. Address suggestions to: Nominating Committee, ACLU-NC, 39 Drumm Street, San Francisco, CA 94111. Include your nominee’s qualifications and how the nominee may be reached.
2. Submit a petition of nomination with the signatures of 15 current ACLU-NC members. Petitions of nomination, which should also include the nominee’s qualifications, must be submitted to the Board by July 1, 2025.

Current ACLU members are those who have renewed their membership during the last 12 months. Only current members are eligible to submit nominations, sign petitions of nomination, and vote. No member may sign more than one such petition. ACLU members will select Board members from the slate of candidates nominated by petition and by the nominating committee. The ballot will appear in the Fall issue of the *ACLU News*.

## BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

### ARTICLE VI, SECTION 4B NOMINATIONS BY MEMBER PETITION

Any 15 or more members of this corporation in good standing may themselves submit a nomination of a member in good standing of this corporation to be included among those voted upon by the general membership by submitting a written petition to the Board not later than 20 days after the adoption by the Board of the slate of Board nominees. No member of this corporation may sign more than one such petition and each such nomination shall be accompanied by a summary of qualifications and the written consent of the nominee. This provision of these bylaws shall be printed in an issue of the *ACLU News* or other document mailed to this corporation’s members before each election, together with an article advising members of their rights in the nominating process.



A LETTER FROM ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ABDI SOLTANI

This is our first issue of ACLU News since Donald Trump’s second presidency. We are finalizing this issue as close to press time as possible, but by the time you read this, other matters may overshadow what we are reporting here. For this we have no control, so please bear with us.

On day one, the Trump administration began with a blatantly unconstitutional order to end birthright citizenship and on April 14, they openly defied a court order to return a wrongly deported El Salvadoran man back to the United States.

Regarding Trump’s defiance of court orders, I received this email from an ACLU supporter. He wrote: “I know you all are on top of this, but to me this is maybe more important than most other things they are doing because it heads toward that constitutional crisis business. Other than supporting ACLU, is there anything private citizens can do on this front?”

As we survey the damage of the first 100 days of the Trump presidency, I am sure this question is also on your mind. My main message is that none of this is normal. This constitutional crisis is unfolding on many fronts, and all of it demands our unrelenting vigilance and courage.

The executive branch itself is abusing its power and removing the internal controls within federal agencies in violation of the constitution. Trump boasts about the court rulings in his favor, and yet frequently denigrates the judges or defies the decisions of the courts that seek to hold him accountable. Meanwhile, the current Congress has ceded its power as a co-equal branch of government by permitting Trump to single-handedly close agencies created by Congress and deny funds appropriated by Congress.

Frederick Douglass said, “The law on the side of freedom is of great advantage only when there is power to make that law respected.” When the power of so many parts of government is aligned against that freedom and in defiance of our constitution, there is one answer. Now more than ever, you are that power.

And you are not alone. Working together and using all the strategies available to us, Americans are mounting our own defense of freedom and the constitution.

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None of this is normal. This constitutional crisis is unfolding on many fronts, and all of it demands our unrelenting vigilance and courage.

**First, continue to speak up and speak out.** Through all the channels you have, raise your voice in opposition to these policies, call out the abuses of power, and speak for our shared values of democracy, equality, and freedom. Especially at a time when the administration is trying to silence—or even deport—its critics, continue to use your voice.

**Second, join with others to protest.** Earlier this month, I attended the Hands Off protest in Oakland, one of hundreds of events organized throughout the nation. The event was energizing, the hand-made signs were creative, but most of all, the show of force and collective power sent a powerful message to our fellow Americans that we will defend this democracy.

**Third, donate as generously as you can to the vital organizations on the frontlines.** We deeply appreciate your support of the ACLU—and we will do our part to litigate these cases to the fullest and use all our advocacy tools. And we encourage you to donate to grassroots organizations, direct legal service providers and other advocacy and legal organizations. ACLU depends on these partners and networks nationwide.

**Fourth, make the most of the mid-term elections.** In the design of our system of government, elections for every member of the House of Representatives every two years were meant to be the surest check on abuses of power. In whatever way you choose, make a plan to vote in the mid-term elections in 2026.

**Finally, do not “acquiesce in advance.”** These simple words are the title of the opening chapter of Timothy Snyder’s *On Tyranny*. In whatever role or position you have, as a person, citizen, or leader of any organization, do not cede your rights or power in advance to authoritarian rule. While many law firms and universities have acquiesced, we also see many with the courage to stand up. Now is the time to stand up.



ACLU of Northern California Executive Director Abdi Soltani

Now is the time to stand up. What we are facing is truly unprecedented—but there are lessons from our history.

What we are facing is truly unprecedented—but there are lessons from our history.

When John Adams targeted his political opponents with the newly enacted Alien and Sedition Acts, the next Congress repealed at least the Sedition Act (but left the Alien Enemies Act for us to deal with). When Attorney General Palmer deported immigrants en masse for their viewpoints after World War I, the ACLU was founded in 1920 to respond and defend the rights of all people.

I won’t give you false reassurance or promises. What I can say is I am confident in all of us, and our ability to mount a powerful response. Be the power on the side of freedom.

Abdi Soltani

Abdi Soltani, Executive Director ACLU of Northern California

