

WHAT'S INSIDE

Civil Liberties Pioneers Honored
p. 2

View our Annual Report Online
p. 3

Legal and Advocacy Updates:
The Right to Sue Public Officials, New
Surveillance Report, Death Penalty
Lawsuit, and Racial Justice Act Database
p. 4-5

Voting in California
p. 8

Making a Difference in Local
Government
p. 9

Reclaiming Free Speech
p. 11

ACLU, FAMILY MEMBERS DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEATHS OF MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE IN CALIFORNIA JAILS

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

Markese Braxton, 26. Rene Snider, 39. Stanley Wilson, Jr., 40. They all had severe mental illness and were deemed incompetent to stand trial for crimes that they had allegedly committed during a mental health crisis. But instead of getting court-ordered treatment, they were sent to jail to wait for a bed to become available at a state psychiatric hospital. Then they unexpectedly died, leaving their families devastated and in search of answers.

"To this day we've had no accountability," said the Rev. John Braxton, Jr., the father of Markese



Braxton who died June 6, 2018, in the Twin Towers Jail in Los Angeles. "What's happening is just evil."

In April, the ACLU of Northern California sued the California

Department of State Hospitals (DSH) for refusing to provide public records about the circumstances of the deaths of individuals like Markese Braxton, Rene Snider, and Stanley Wilson, Jr., who were on the DSH wait list. State officials claimed that doing so would violate the privacy of the deceased.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH SENIOR ATTORNEY JOHN DO

BY LISA P. WHITE

For John Do, who grew up poor in subsidized public housing, ending homelessness is personal.

"I've always seen homelessness as a direct result of decades of poor policymaking and a lack of investment in affordable housing," said Do, a senior attorney with the Racial and Economic Justice Program. "Without it, I know with one hundred percent certainty that my family would have been homeless."

The ACLU of Northern California has a long history of fighting for the rights of poor people. In 1941, we argued *Edwards v. California*, which struck down a state law that made it a crime to knowingly bring an indigent person into California. In 1993, we sued San Francisco for citing and arresting people for sleeping in parks and on public property. The class action lawsuit argued that the San Francisco Police Department's "Matrix" enforcement program criminalized homelessness and poverty. Despite abundant



evidence that San Francisco continued to harass and arrest unhoused people, in 1996 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the case because the city claimed SFPD had ended the program. In response to the court's ruling, lead plaintiff Bobby Joyce remarked, "Matrix is over in name only."

He would be proven right.

Nearly three decades later, ACLU NorCal and the Lawyers' Committee

for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area filed *Coalition on Homelessness v. City of San Francisco*, a lawsuit challenging the city's costly and ineffective practice of destroying unhoused individuals' belongings, and citing, arresting, and moving them without offering shelter. The federal court has determined that the plaintiffs are likely to prevail in showing that San Francisco has a record of doing both. The case is scheduled to go to trial in May 2025.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

NonProfit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 11168
San Francisco, CA

American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California
39 Drumm St.
San Francisco, CA 94111

ACLU
Northern
California

LONGTIME ACLU ATTORNEY MARSHALL KRAUSE HONORED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS

BY CARMEN KING

Marshall Krause, a prominent civil liberties attorney and creative thinker, served as the lead attorney for the ACLU of Northern California from 1960 through 1968. During his tenure, he played a pivotal role in numerous cases defending and expanding the civil liberties and civil rights of all people, particularly in the context of free speech and the value of personal expression, protection from government overreach, the right to privacy, women’s rights, and racial discrimination.

On April 17th, Krause was honored with ACLU NorCal’s Chief Justice Earl Warren Award for his lifelong commitment to defending individual freedoms. It is also fitting that Krause’s tenure at ACLU NorCal—and many cases—coincided with the Chief Justice. When questioned about his motivation for becoming an attorney, he stated that he has always felt compelled to challenge authority and fight for the underdog—for the people against whom the system is stacked.

During the award ceremony, Krause recounted his handling for the ACLU of the landmark case *Camara v. Municipal Court*. The plaintiff was charged with refusing entry to his home to a health inspector. Krause explained that, at that time, health inspectors were not required to have a warrant to enter private residences. Krause initially lost in municipal court due to the precedent set by the U.S. Supreme Court case *Frank v. Maryland*—which ruled that Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure only applied in criminal cases. Krause and the ACLU pursued the case all the way to the Supreme Court. The decision resulted in overturning *Frank v. Maryland* and established that the Fourth Amendment applied in all cases, not just criminal cases.

After this decision, the privacy of individuals became paramount, regardless of whether they were facing criminal prosecution. This expansion of privacy rights paved the way for significant legal developments, such as the constitutional protection of abortion rights and the legalization of same-sex marriage.

“That’s what the ACLU can do, to challenge what is accepted dogma about what the constitutional rights of people are and move ahead in a progressive way,” said Krause.



Board Chair Adam Bailey (right) presenting Marshall Krause with the Chief Justice Earl Warren Civil Liberties Award.

.....

“That’s what the ACLU can do, to challenge what is accepted dogma about what the constitutional rights of people are and move ahead in a progressive way.”

—Marshall Krause

.....


In his legal career, Krause won five out of six cases he argued before the Supreme Court. His first case, *Lamont v. Postmaster General* involved an act of Congress that required individuals to register at the post office before they could receive

mail from behind the Iron Curtain. This was at the height of the McCarthy era, where any association with Russia and the Soviet Union had serious implications.

In preparation for the case, Krause learned of a bill that had been debated in the U.S. Senate prior to the Civil War that had attempted to prevent abolitionist literature from entering the South. The bill was defeated on the basis that it would violate the First Amendment.

Krause shared this historical precedent at oral arguments, and the justices took notice. The case was won with a 6 to 3 vote, marking the first time an act of Congress was deemed unconstitutional for violating the First Amendment.

When asked about the current makeup and ideology of the Supreme Court and what it means for the ACLU and for civil liberties work today, Krause responded that the Constitution should be seen as a living document. “The framers of the Constitution were not people who were stuck in old ideas, they were people who were open to new ones,” Krause said, “The Constitution is a wonderful, marvelous, genius construction because it leaves room for interpretation. It invites new ideas by its open language which ensures that it remains effective in contemporary contexts.”

As the ACLU of Northern California celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2024, we recognize Marshall Krause for his partnership in 64 of those 90 years. To learn more about the cases during Marshall’s tenure, visit ACLU NorCal News digital archive at www.aclunc.org/CHS. 

Carmen King is a communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.

ACLU NEWS

The publication of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California

For more information about the ACLU, call (415) 621-2493 or visit www.aclunc.org. Address changes: giving@aclunc.org

Adam Bailey, Chair

Abdi Soltani, Executive Director

Candice Francis, Editor-in-Chief

Gigi Harney, Managing Editor & Designer

Lisa P. White, Proofreader

39 Drumm Street, San Francisco, CA 94111


(415) 621-2493 | editor@aclunc.org

FORMER ACLU NORCAL STAFF ATTORNEYS ALAN SCHLOSSER AND ANN BRICK HONORED

Former ACLU NorCal legal director Alan Schlosser received the American Constitution Society Bay Area’s Fearless Advocate Award for his 40-plus years fighting for civil rights and civil liberties in California at the ACLU of Northern California. In addition to his work on numerous issues—including defending free speech, the right to privacy, immigrants’ rights, freedom of the press, and challenging the death penalty—he was recognized for his mentoring of young attorneys.

Also this spring, Ann Brick, a staff attorney at the ACLU of Northern California from 1988

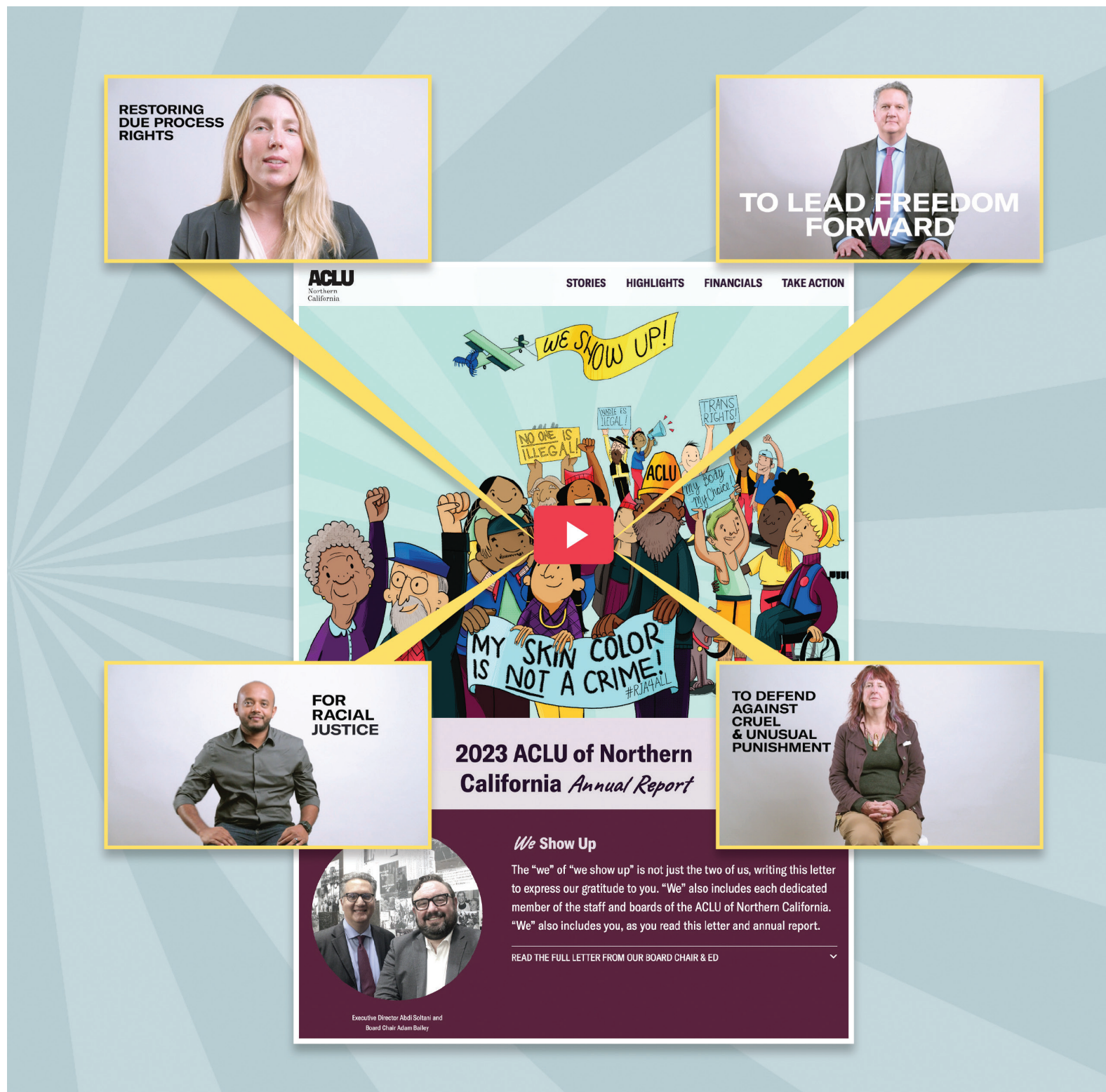
to 2008, was honored with the prestigious Judge D. Lowell and Barbara Jensen Public Service Award, for her public service and contributions to public interest law during her time on staff. The award is given to a prominent Berkeley Law graduate who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to public service in the legal profession.

We are grateful to Alan and Ann, and to countless other ACLU NorCal staff past and present, for their service in defense of civil liberties. 

2

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

WE SHOW UP: ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



OUR ANNUAL REPORT IS READY AND WAITING FOR YOU! EXPERIENCE IT AT WWW.ACLUNC.ORG/ANNUALREPORT2023

“Power concedes nothing without a demand,” said Frederick Douglass in a speech a few years before the start of the Civil War, a time of political division that, in many ways, provides insights for today. He followed this ringing truth with another, less often quoted: “Find out just what any people will quietly submit to, and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them.”

We’ve learned, over the course of 90 years in Northern California, what can happen when clear demands, rooted firmly in just laws, are made. We’ve seen that when people of conscience do not submit quietly to injustice, but instead choose action, anything can happen. Usually not overnight. And we also must defend each win, for they, too, are only as durable as our will to preserve them.


We must resist cynicism, or compassion fatigue, or hopelessness from poll- or pundit-fueled proclamations about what’s inevitable. The only thing that’s inevitable is that when we choose to act, change happens. So, *we show up*.

WE SHOW UP is the theme of our Annual Report, which highlights a multitude of reasons and ways we show up for justice. It highlights the power of our whole community showing up together: clients and staff, community-based organizations, volunteers, activists, members, and supporters. With your partnership, we have shown up all over Northern California to see to it that:

- advocates can access the records they need to give life to the Racial Justice Act;
- the First Amendment is applied equally;
- the constitutional rights of homeless people are respected;

- people who are incarcerated are not further punished by federal immigration enforcement;
- LGBTQ+ and nonbinary students' right to privacy is respected at school; and
- digital surveillance technology isn’t allowed to magnify the harms of biased policing.

We invite you to learn more about what we’ve been able to accomplish together by visiting aclunc.org/AnnualReport2023. There you’ll find stories, stats, and video featuring members of our staff, along with a client, describing some of the past year’s work. You’ll also be able to download the companion print report, delve deeper into our issue areas, find ways you can get more involved, and take action on pressing issues.

Thank you for continuing to show up! We have much to do from now ‘til November and beyond. And there is so very much we’re able to do, when we show up together. 

RAJU V. SUPERIOR COURT

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

The ACLU of Northern California filed an amicus brief in a critical case before the California Supreme Court, *Raju v. Superior Court*, to uphold the historic right of taxpayers to sue public officials and agencies to stop corruption and other illegal activities.

The state supreme court is weighing a petition that could do away with, or dramatically scale back, what has been an indispensable tool in the public’s arsenal for holding state officials and agencies accountable to the people they serve.

Taxpayer lawsuits have been a vital remedy for challenging systemic violations of individuals’ constitutional rights and other unlawful practices that would otherwise go unchallenged in the courts. That’s because in a standard civil action, a plaintiff must meet an often impossibly high barrier to establish the right to make a legal claim. Taxpayer lawsuits, meanwhile, allow any individual or corporation who pays state or local taxes broad standing to seek injunctive relief. For example, an ACLU taxpayer lawsuit recently challenged the Kern County Superior Court’s operation of an unconstitutional, fast track “plea mill,” where prosecutors pressured defendants into pleading guilty at their arraignments when they had never even met with an attorney.


Now, however, court officials from the San Francisco Superior Court are calling on the state Supreme Court to exempt state courts—and potentially all state officials—from taxpayer lawsuits altogether.

Taxpayer lawsuits have been a vital remedy for challenging systemic violations of individuals’ constitutional rights and other unlawful practices that would otherwise go unchallenged in the courts.

In 2021, San Francisco Public Defender Mano Raju, serving as a taxpayer plaintiff, sued San Francisco Superior Court over its failure to prioritize criminal cases during the height of the COVID pandemic. Because of that failure, hundreds of defendants languished in jail and were denied their right to speedy trial. Nearly 200 people were subjected to 23 hour-a-day lockdowns in their cells.

The trial court dismissed Raju’s complaint. Instead of simply arguing against the merits of Raju’s complaint, the San Francisco Superior Court took a far more sweeping position – saying he did not have standing to bring the case in the first place. But the appellate court reversed and held correctly that the lawsuit could move forward. Now the defendants, in this case the San Francisco Superior Court itself and its presiding judge and CEO, are attempting to undo that decision with their appeal to the California Supreme Court.

Official misdeeds surely don’t stop at the courthouse steps. We are calling on the state Supreme Court to reject the petition and uphold taxpayer standing which is key for access to justice.

And one more note to readers, this case is one of many you will read about in the years ahead as part of our new program to expand our legal advocacy before the California Supreme Court. 

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

SEEING THROUGH SURVEILLANCE

The ACLU of Northern California released *Seeing Through Surveillance: Why Policymakers Should Look Past the Hype*, a new report that brings together dozens of case studies to help communities understand what is really at stake with state and local surveillance decisions. The report provides a framework to scrutinize proposals ranging from cameras and license plate readers to drones and new artificial intelligence systems.

The evidence is clear that while surveillance has increased exponentially, public safety has not. Surveillance systems often make people less safe, especially community members that have historically been in the government’s crosshairs.

As the government pushes new systems—including new and unproven systems billed as artificial intelligence – the report illustrates how surveillance is at odds with racial justice, immigrants’ rights, reproductive justice, LGBTQ+ rights, privacy, and free speech.


Modern surveillance technology makes it possible to track who we are, where we go, what we do, and who we know. We have already seen surveillance used to fuel high-tech profiling and perpetuate systems of biased policing. It was used during the Trump administration to facilitate deportations and target activists. It is increasingly a threat to people who need reproductive and gender-affirming care.

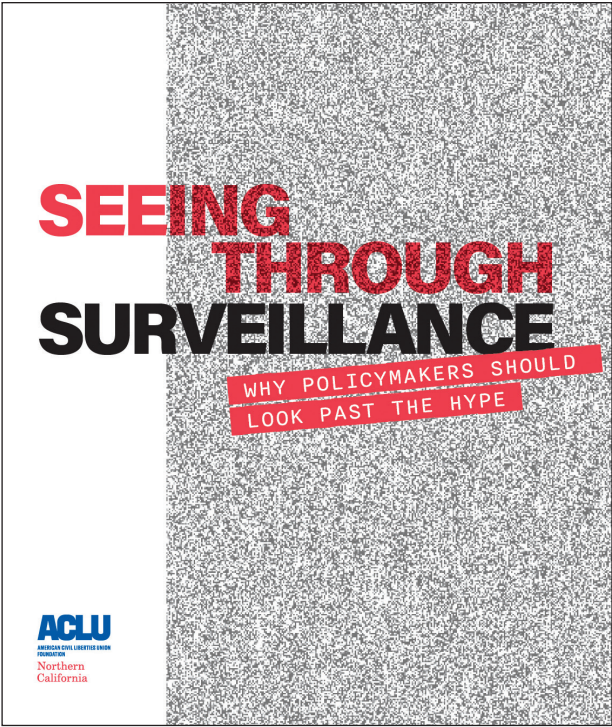
This new report builds on a decade of cutting-edge work by ACLU NorCal’s Technology and Civil Liberties Program to fight dangerous government surveillance in the technology age. Since we released our first surveillance

While surveillance has increased exponentially, public safety has not.

report and its model surveillance oversight legislation in 2014, dozens of communities in California and across the country have used it to enact important laws that bring independent oversight to surveillance technology and prohibit systems such as face surveillance. But much more needs to happen.

“The new report comes at a critical moment,” said Technology and Civil Liberties Director Nicole Ozer. “When civil rights are under attack in many communities and the possibilities of AI-powered surveillance loom larger, the stakes are even higher for policymakers to have the resources they need to make informed decisions about surveillance and focus on real public safety.”

The new report and supplemental resources are all available at www.aclunc.org/tech. 



Seeing Through Surveillance: Why Policymakers Should Look Past the Hype is a new report to help communities understand what is really at stake with state and local surveillance decisions.

DEEP-SEATED RACIAL BIAS IN CALIFORNIA’S DEATH PENALTY

BY CARMEN KING

A coalition of civil rights organizations, including the ACLU of Northern California, has taken a bold step toward the abolition of the death penalty in California.

In April, we filed suit in the California Supreme Court, challenging the state’s death penalty statute as racially discriminatory and unconstitutional under the Equal Protection guarantees of the California Constitution.

Capital punishment’s origins in this country can be traced back to slavery, lynchings, and white vigilantism targeting Black people and their communities.

The lawsuit exposes alarming racial disparities in capital charging and sentencing. Black individuals face a staggering fivefold increase in the likelihood of receiving a death sentence compared to non-Black defendants; Latinos are at least three times more likely to be sentenced to death. The likelihood of receiving a death sentence significantly increases when the victim is white, as studies across the country have shown.

These disparities are not new. Capital punishment’s origins in this country can be traced back to slavery, lynchings, and white vigilantism targeting Black people and their communities. Perpetuating racial biases entrenched in the criminal justice system renders the death penalty inherently unjust and incompatible with the principle of equal protection.

Now, the onus is on the court to fulfill its duty of upholding the state’s commitment to equal protection under the law. We urge the court to take decisive action and ban capital charging and sentencing in California and end executions statewide. This lawsuit is the latest chapter in ACLU NorCal’s decades-long advocacy to end the death penalty. 

Want to change your address or mailing preferences?

Contact giving@aclunc.org

NEW RACIAL JUSTICE ACT DATABASE LAUNCHED THIS SUMMER

In 2020, the ACLU of Northern California was part of a coalition that helped pass California’s landmark Racial Justice Act. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person’s race, ethnicity or national origin with respect to charges, convictions or sentences. The RJA allows people to challenge their conviction or sentence if they can demonstrate that bias infected their case proceedings. The original law only applied to people who were sentenced after January 1, 2021. A second law passed in 2021 made the RJA retroactive to people sentenced before January 1, 2021.

Passing a law, however, doesn’t guarantee that people will be treated fairly in the criminal legal system. We must see the law through to its implementation. That’s why we’ve built a new Racial Justice Act database. It includes policies and data that the ACLU has collected from prosecutors across California. This information should be readily available, but it is often difficult, if not impossible to obtain.


The Racial Justice Act allows people to challenge their conviction or sentence if they can demonstrate that bias infected their case proceedings.

We’ve spent several years submitting public records requests to all 58 District Attorneys in California to collect this vital information. Data is key for successfully challenging and rectifying bias in the criminal legal system.

Our new user-friendly database will help public defenders, defense attorneys, impacted individuals and their families access information they need to help prove racial bias, and to seek relief. The database includes policy and training documents, along with prosecution data to

support allegations of disparate charging and sentencing decisions, the systemic exclusion of Black or Latinx people from juries, and other records that would support a claim of bias.

The content is categorized by county and easily searchable.

We’re excited to present this new online resource which is a valuable tool to help ensure effective enforcement of the Racial Justice Act. Visit the new database at www.aclunc.org/racial-justice-act. 

TO OUR MEMBERS

Mailings to our members and the general public provide opportunities to describe complicated legal and political issues in ways not possible in other media and to describe strategies we plan to use for future actions. They enable us to explain, in detail, the benefits and provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the ways our rights can be protected in today’s world, and the costs of preserving those rights. We use the mail to inform people of the importance of our legal work and to solicit funds that enable us to continue our litigation, public education, and legislative lobbying.

Sometimes, as part of our program to find and recruit members, we exchange or rent our list of members’ names to like-minded organizations and publications. We do this so that we will be able to send our membership letters to their lists.

The ACLU never makes its list available to partisan political groups or those whose programs are incompatible with the ACLU’s mission. Whether by exchange or rental, the exchanges are governed by strict privacy procedures, as recommended by the U.S. Privacy Study Commission. Lists are never actually given into the physical possession of the organization that has rented them or exchanged for them. No organization ever possesses our list and no organization will ever see the names of the members on our list unless an individual responds to their mailing.

While mailings—under strict privacy guidelines—form the basis of our new member acquisition program, and are key to our growth, we understand some members do not wish to receive solicitations from other groups and we gladly honor requests from our members to be removed from the process. Once you make this election, you do not need to do so again unless you wish to change your preference back.

If you do not wish to receive materials from other organizations, please email membership@aclu.org or complete this coupon and send it to:

ACLU Membership Department
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004

☐ I prefer not to receive materials from other organizations.
Please eliminate my name from membership exchange/rental lists.

Member #

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

ACLU, FAMILY MEMBERS DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEATHS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“The Department of State Hospitals is trying to hide behind privacy laws to insulate itself from public scrutiny,” said Emi MacLean, a senior staff attorney with the Criminal Justice Program at the ACLU of Northern California. “The fact that people with severe mental illness are dying in such numbers in California jails due to a lack of prompt treatment and a safe setting is unconscionable.”

This latest lawsuit is a continuation of our ongoing legal and advocacy work to stop the prolonged detention of people in county jails who have been declared mentally incompetent to stand trial. In 2015, we sued DSH and the Department of Developmental Services, in *Stiavetti v. Ahlin*. The courts ordered the state to reduce lengthy delays that forced individuals with mental illness to languish in jail for months, while waiting for a transfer to a treatment facility. And for the last several years, we have fought to ensure state officials’ compliance with the court order.

DSH is responsible for providing mental health treatment to defendants deemed mentally incompetent to stand trial so they can eventually return to court to participate in the criminal proceedings against them. The agency reported to the ACLU in response to a request for information that at least 35 people on the wait list passed away between January 2018 and September 2023.

Our ACLU investigators combed through public records, news articles, and other sources to identify as many of those people as possible.

We’re highlighting testimonials from three families as part of our continuing campaign to advocate for changes to an inhumane system that fails to protect some of the most vulnerable among us. They have all filed wrongful death lawsuits relating to the death of their loved ones.

MARKESE BRAXTON

The Rev. John Braxton, Jr. and his wife Kathy visited their son Markese at Twin Towers Jail. He was in a good mood because he thought he was about to finally be transferred to a state hospital for treatment.

Three days later, on June 6, 2018, a sheriff’s deputy arrived at their Riverside home and told them Markese had died.

The coroner’s report labeled the cause of death “undetermined.” It noted that Markese had soft tissue damage on his hands, back, shoulder, and shins. A second autopsy cited blood between his brain and skull.

Markese’s parents struggled to understand what could have happened in the few days since they had last visited him. Five years later, Rev.

Braxton said it is painful to look at pictures of his son.

Growing up, Markese loved basketball. He was on his school honor roll. Then he began hearing voices. He was diagnosed with severe bipolar disorder and schizophrenia and placed on medication.

The Braxtons tried to get help for their son. But because he was an adult, there was little they could do. The Braxtons took Markese food. They did his laundry and paid his bills. Then one day in September 2016, he disappeared. He’d been arrested, accused of carjacking a bus and robbing a Carl’s Jr. It was the first time he had ever been in trouble.

Markese was deemed mentally incompetent to stand trial and transferred to Patton, a state psychiatric hospital. After just one week, doctors deemed him competent to stand trial. His parents pleaded with the hospital to keep him. They told authorities that their son was not ready to go back to court to stand trial. But they sent him back to jail anyway.

He was again found incompetent to stand trial and recommitted to DSH on March 21, 2017. But he was never transferred back to a state hospital. Instead, on June 6, 2018, he was found slumped on the floor of his cell, unresponsive.

“What happened?” asked the Rev. John Braxton. “A 26-year-old man with no history of physical health problems, heart problems, liver problems just ended up dying in a one-man cell with his knuckles busted up?”

RENE SNIDER

The last time Lyza Martinez saw her mother Rene Snider alive, she was screaming that she loved her from a jail cell. It was October 2016. Lyza was 11. Her sister Drea was 12.

Rene was devoted to her young daughters. Even as she began to experience paranoia and delusions brought on by borderline personality



Left to Right: Markese Braxton, Rene Snider, and Stanley Wilson, all of whom died while on the DSH wait list for mental health treatment. Photos courtesy of their families.

The ACLU of Northern California sued the California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) for refusing to provide public records about the circumstances of the deaths of individuals on the DSH wait list for mental health treatment.

At least 35 people on the wait list passed away between January 2018 and September 2023.

disorder, Rene held down a job as a medical transcriber. She provided a comfortable home and took the girls on family outings.

Rene sought help from psychiatrists who prescribed various medications. But her condition continued to deteriorate. She feared someone had planted microphones at her home in Merced. She sometimes read Bible verses to the wall. Her mental illness eventually cost her joint custody. Her daughters went to live with their father and his wife. Rene became convinced – falsely – that her daughters’ father was molesting them. She became fixated on the need to protect her daughters.

OF MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE IN CALIFORNIA JAILS



said she was a flight risk and posed a danger to her children. On March 18th, 2019, Rene was arrested and booked into Merced County Jail. Her mother said that once there Rene was abruptly taken off her psychiatric medications.

After five days in jail, Rene hanged herself with a bedsheet from a twin bunk bed.

“My mom broke the law because of her mental illness. She should have been taken to a hospital and never should have been in jail,” Lyza said. “We’ve gone through hell and a lot of guilt since she died.”

STANLEY WILSON, JR.

It has been more than a year since D. Pulane Lucas received the worst news a mother could get. Her only son, Stanley Wilson, Jr., had died suddenly. Her grief has been made all the more painful by the fact she and her family have been fighting since Stanley’s death on Feb. 1, 2023, to get answers to basic questions about what happened to him.

For the last five months of his life, Stanley was incarcerated at Twin Towers Jail.

Stanley had once been a student leader and star athlete in track and football at Stanford. He later went on to play in the NFL for the Detroit Lions, until an Achilles injury ended his career. A long history of untreated trauma stemming from childhood sexual abuse and mental illness had derailed his once promising life.

After football, Stanley struggled with substance abuse and severe mental illness. He started trespassing into people’s homes in the nude, symptoms of psychotic episodes. In August 2022, he was arrested for trespassing

after breaking into a house in the Hollywood Hills and bathing in an outdoor fountain. Stanley was found mentally incompetent to stand trial. But he died before he ever got the mental health treatment that he was legally entitled to.

Lucas said the Los Angeles County medical examiner first told her that Stanley had collapsed in his cell and died. Then, she was told that he passed away while in an ambulance on the way to the hospital. Later, the medical examiner’s storyline—that was buttressed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s

Department (LASD)— was that Stanley had fallen out of a chair and died during the hospital intake process.


The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and the state Department of Hospitals each insist that Stanley was in the other’s custody when he died.

As a result, his name does not appear in county or state correctional health care databases that track in-custody deaths.

Lucas said her son had ligature marks on his wrists and head wounds that suggest he was a victim of intensive restraint or excessive force. LASD has refused her numerous requests to view the correction facility’s video footage of the last 45 minutes of Stanley’s life.

After his death, Stanley was diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy or CTE, a progressive neuro-degenerative disease that affects people who have suffered repeated concussions and has been linked to football players.

Lucas has become a tireless advocate, demanding accurate reporting of in-custody deaths. She feels Stanley’s spirit as she travels the country testifying before state legislatures and helping organize vigils to remember those who died. She is committed to working with grassroots organizations to push for improved prison and jail conditions.

“Our loved ones deserve to be protected in life and counted in death,” Lucas said. “Because their lives mattered too.” 

.....
“The fact that people with severe mental illness are dying in such numbers in California jails due to a lack of prompt treatment and a safe setting is unconscionable.”

—Emi MacLean, senior staff attorney with the Criminal Justice Program at the ACLU of Northern California
.....



In October 2016, Rene picked up her daughters in a rental car. She drove them to Canada where she planned to seek asylum. They were detained at the border. Lyza and Drea were returned to their father in California. Back in Merced, authorities charged Rene with kidnapping. Her bail was set at \$1 million. She posted bail. But she was banned from having any contact with her daughters.

For nearly 2 ½ years, she complied with her bail terms. But according to her mother Denise Sawyer, Rene’s mental health grew worse. Rene’s attorney scheduled her for a mental competency evaluation. A court psychiatrist

ON THE CALIFORNIA BALLOT IN FALL 2024

BY ASHLEY MORRIS

This November, in addition to the opportunity to vote in important federal elections, voters will find a long list of state and local issues on their ballots. ACLU NorCal will be providing a full voter guide in the fall. In the meantime, here are some key issues on the ballot.

ENSURING MARRIAGE EQUALITY IN CALIFORNIA


While the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* made marriage equality the law of the land, the California Constitutional ban on marriage for same-sex couples as a result of 2008’s Proposition 8 remains.

The 2022 Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* was just one example that this court cannot be trusted to uphold precedent and protect civil rights. And if the court is willing to undermine many decades of its own precedent protecting the right to abortion, the same could happen for marriage equality. This year, ACLU is helping lead the ballot measure campaign to repeal the ban on marriage for same-sex couples from the state constitution to ensure that, regardless of what the Supreme Court does, marriage will be safe in California.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS IN JEOPARDY

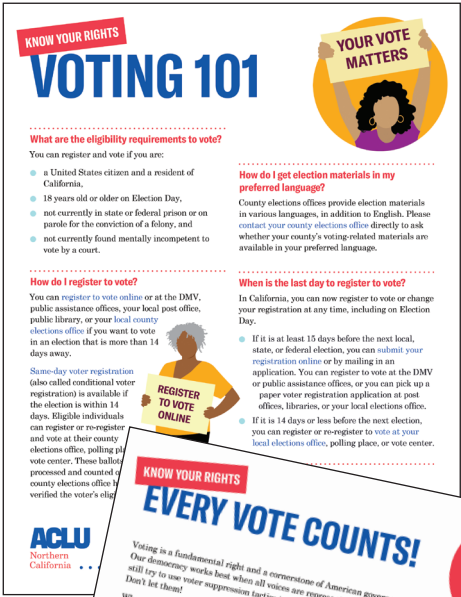
A measure that would roll back progress made to prioritize treatment and services over incarceration for certain drug and theft-related offenses has gained enough signatures to qualify for the November ballot. This measure is in response to an inaccurate narrative that today’s

retail crime trends are a direct result of 2014’s Proposition 47. It feeds off the tough-on-crime narrative about fentanyl and the overdose crisis. This costly measure promotes incarceration, imposes new sentencing enhancements, and expands the universe of people who would be excluded from rehabilitation programs, in conflict with the progress that California has made in the past several years. ACLU NorCal is helping lead the opposition to this ballot measure.

ACLU NorCal is also opposing the recall of the Alameda County district attorney, which will appear on the November ballot. DA Pamela Price was in office for just a few months before proponents began organizing the recall. While ACLU NorCal does not endorse or oppose candidates, we are opposing this recall as it is based on her record of supporting pro-civil liberties and civil rights public safety solutions. This recall is part of a broader conservative strategy to roll back criminal justice reforms and would do nothing to address Alameda County residents’ crime concerns. 

Ashley Morris is the organizing director at the ACLU of Northern California.

VISIT [ACLUNC.ORG/KYR](https://aclunc.org/kyr) FOR VOTING RIGHTS RESOURCES IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS VOTING 101

What are the eligibility requirements to vote?

You can register and vote if you are:

- a United States citizen and a resident of California,
- 18 years old or older on Election Day,
- not currently in state or federal prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony, and
- not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

How do I register to vote?

You can **register to vote online** or at the DMV, public assistance offices, your local post office, elections office, if you want to vote in an election that is more than 14 days away.

Same-day voter registration (also called conditional voter registration) is available if the election is within 14 days. Eligible individuals can register or re-register and vote at their county elections office, polling place, vote center, or by mail. These ballots are processed and counted at county elections offices.

How do I get election materials in my preferred language?

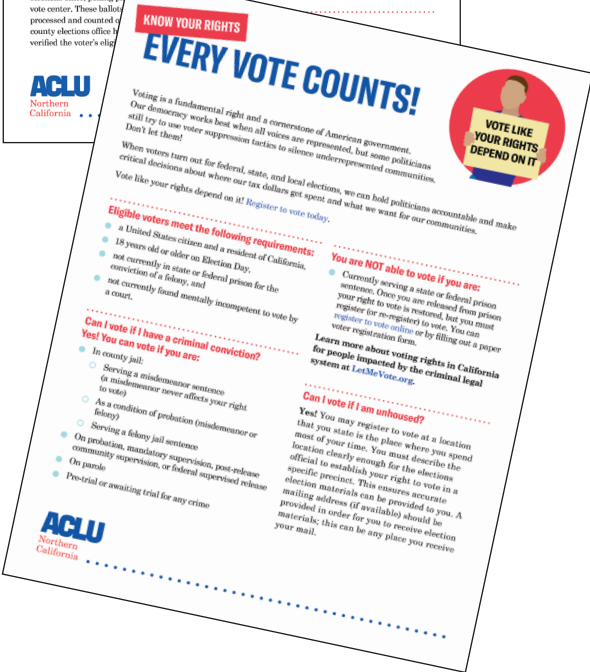
County elections offices provide election materials in various languages, in addition to English. Please contact your county elections office directly to ask whether your county's voting-related materials are available in your preferred language.

When is the last day to register to vote?

In California, you can now register to vote or change your registration at any time, including on Election Day.

- If it is at least 15 days before the next local, state, or federal election, you can submit your registration online or by mailing in an application. You can register to vote at the DMV or public assistance offices, or you can pick up a paper voter registration application at post offices, libraries, or your local elections office.
- If it is 14 days or less before the next election, you can register or re-register to vote at your local elections office, polling place, or vote center.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Voting is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of American government. Our democracy works best when all voices are represented, but some politicians still try to use voter suppression tactics to silence underrepresented communities. When voters turn out for federal, state, and local elections, we can hold politicians accountable and make critical decisions about where our tax dollars get spent and what we want for our communities.

Vote like your rights depend on it! **Register to vote today.**

Eligible voters meet the following requirements:

- a United States citizen and a resident of California,
- 18 years old or older on Election Day,
- not currently in state or federal prison for the conviction of a felony, and
- not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

You are NOT able to vote if you are:

- Currently serving a state or federal prison sentence. Once you are released from prison your right to vote is restored, but you must register to vote online or by filling out a paper voter registration form.

Learn more about voting rights in California for people impacted by the criminal legal system at aclunc.org.

Can I vote if I have a criminal conviction?

Yes! You can vote if you are:

- In county jail.
- Serving a misdemeanor sentence in misdemeanor never affects your right to vote.
- As a condition of probation (misdemeanor or felony).
- Serving a felony jail sentence.
- On probation, mandatory supervision, post-release community supervision, or federal supervised release.
- On parole.
- Pre-trial or awaiting trial for any crime.

Can I vote if I am unhousehold?


Yes! You may register to vote at a location most of your time. You must describe the location clearly enough for the elections official to establish your right to vote in a specific precinct. This ensures accurate election materials can be provided to you. A mailing address (if available) should be provided in order for you to receive election materials; this can be any place you receive your mail.

ACLU Northern California


ACLU CALIFORNIA ACTION’S LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

As part of our legislative work, we need strong legislative allies year after year who collaborate with us and vote for policies that matter. Since 2019, we have produced a scorecard reflecting legislators’ prior-year votes on our sponsored bills. Our sponsored bills are transformational and focused on protecting our most vulnerable residents. Typically, these bills face significant opposition. Examples of major bills in recent years include: SB 2 (Bradford, 2021) established police decertification; AB 256 (Kalra, 2022) made the Racial Justice Act retroactive, and SB 274 (Skinner, 2023) protects students from being suspended for “defiance.” This year, we are celebrating the five-year anniversary of our Legislative Scorecard.


ACLU California Action has unveiled a scorecard with a three-tier recognition structure. Legislators have been graded specifically for taking tough votes repeatedly and earning our highest honors over the last five years. Legislators who have maintained a 100% record—meaning they have voted completely in line with our sponsored legislation—for multiple years, or for the entire duration of the scorecard, will receive more prominent recognition. This scorecard celebrates our partnership by illustrating their commitment to advancing equity, justice, and freedom for all.

Visit aclucalaction.org/legislative-scorecard to see the scorecard. 

ACLU CALIFORNIA ACTION State Legislative Scorecard 2023



5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD



VIEW THE SCORECARD AT [ACLUCALACTION.ORG/LEGISLATIVE-SCORECARD](https://aclucalaction.org/legislative-scorecard)

AN INSPIRING LOBBY DAY

BY TANISHA HUMPHREY

On April 29th, volunteers and activists convened in Sacramento for our annual Lobby Day. Each year, ACLU NorCal supporters gather to advocate for legislation that advances civil rights and civil liberties. After a short advocacy training, participants marched to the capitol, chanting, “Hey hey! Ho ho! Housing inequality has got to go!”

The day began with inspiring and rousing speeches from David Trujillo, the new executive director of ACLU California Action, Lindsey Weatherspoon, a youth leader in the ACLU of Southern California’s Youth Liberty Squad, and California State Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San José). Participants then met with 12 California state senators and 19


Assemblymembers to advocate for housing as a human right, a more equitable criminal legal system, stopping the school-to-prison pipeline, and ending slavery in California’s forced prison labor programs. The specific bills that we are promoting this year are:

ACA 10 (Haney, D-San Francisco) would amend the state constitution to recognize that housing is a fundamental human right in California.

AB 2441 (Kalra, D-San José) would keep students in school and out of the school-to-prison pipeline and reduce traumatic interactions with police by granting educators discretion over when to report certain student behaviors to law enforcement.

ACA 8 (Wilson, D-Antioch) would amend the state constitution to end forced labor in California prisons.

We also are advocating for additional funding for indigent defense which Gov. Gavin Newsom cut in his proposed budget. Public defense programs are critical to ensure people have adequate legal representation in court.

Our advocacy for these bills will continue as they make their way through the legislative process, and we hope to see you next year in Sacramento. 

Tanisha Humphrey is the grassroots advocacy manager at the ACLU of Northern California.




ACLU volunteers and activists gathered in Sacramento in April for Lobby Day to meet with California State Senators and Assemblymembers about key ACLU issues.

THE BROWN ACT: CALIFORNIA’S OPEN MEETINGS LAW

Did you know California has a law that gives you a voice when local elected officials are making decisions that affect your community? The Ralph M. Brown Act is California’s open meetings law, which mandates open and transparent government meetings for local legislative bodies including city councils, school boards, and county boards of supervisors.

The open meetings law gives us a valuable tool to hold our local elected officials accountable. It helps fight corruption and backroom dealings that benefit special interests—but only if people use it.

Therefore, the ACLU of Northern California has created a video and fact sheet about the Brown Act. View a short video that explains the law, as well as a downloadable fact sheet in both English and Spanish, at www.aclunc.org/open-meeting-rights. 



THE BROWN ACT

Frequently Asked Questions

.....

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BROWN ACT

A. What is the Brown Act?

The Ralph M. Brown Act is California’s open meetings law. It mandates open and transparent government meetings for local legislative bodies.

The Brown Act applies only to local agencies such as city councils, school boards, and county boards of supervisors.

It requires local agencies to adhere to a set of rules so that government officials are not meeting in secret.



These rules mandate that members of the public have notice of government meetings and an opportunity to comment on what officials are doing in their name. The Brown Act creates transparency that strengthens democracy.

B. What bodies are subject to the Brown Act?

The Brown Act governs local bodies, including:

- City Councils
- County Board of Supervisors
- School Boards
- Special Districts such as water districts
- Other similar governing bodies such as commissions, committees, and even some agencies governing private corporations or hospitals.

The Brown Act applies to: “the governing body of a local agency or any other local body created by state or federal law; a commission, committee, board or other body of a local agency or that governs private corporations if a certain criteria is met; and the lessee of any hospital subject to specific provisions.”



READ MORE AT WWW.ACLUNC.ORG/OPEN-MEETING-RIGHTS

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH SENIOR ATTORNEY JOHN DO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Do, who joined ACLU NorCal in 2021 after nearly a decade at the U.S. Department of Justice, is lead counsel for the *Coalition* case. Being raised in an immigrant family that relied on food stamps and other government benefits shaped his world view and career path. Guided by faith, a Jesuit education steeped in the principles of social justice and service, and the values his parents instilled, Do extends empathy and compassion to those who are less fortunate.

As someone whose family existed on the fringes of the community, Do is frustrated that society scapegoats and dehumanizes unhoused people—who are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals with disabilities—instead of holding lawmakers accountable for their policy failures.

“We should want a government that does not criminalize poverty and instead ensures that people don’t have to live on the street,” he said. “We should not want police officers being social workers, we should not want our jails and prisons to function as our mental health care system. What we want is a society that takes care of its most vulnerable and provides access to safe and affordable housing.”

Do’s parents immigrated to the United States from Vietnam after the war. His mother, who fled the country on a crowded fishing boat with her two eldest sons, settled in a burgeoning Vietnamese refugee community in San Jose where a large extended family offered support. Do’s father, who had served in the South Vietnamese army, reunited with them about five years later following a stint in a “reeducation camp.”

While his father worked temporary jobs on assembly lines and in construction, Do’s mother, who is disabled and spoke limited English, didn’t always have stable employment. Yet, she was incredibly resourceful and determined to give her children every opportunity to thrive in her adopted country. A devout Catholic, she convinced the parish to give her four sons a free elementary and secondary education.

Despite mild dyslexia, Do excelled in school and was accepted at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. His parents wanted him to become a doctor, but he had other ideas. Motivated by a desire to help others, Do co-founded Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE), a student organization that partnered with unhoused people and the local religious community to work on ending homelessness. The group, which also advocated for inclusive zoning for affordable housing, was Do’s introduction to homelessness policy.

“Housing has always been important to me because I think it dictates so much of one’s life. Your zip code speaks to what school access you have, what job prospects you have, your health, how long you will live and who you interact with on a day-to-day basis,” said Do, who as a child slept in the living room of his family’s cramped apartment. After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in



Senior attorney John Do traveled to the U.S. Supreme Court in April to hear oral arguments in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, the landmark homelessness case.

public policy and religion, Do joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and returned to the Bay Area for a yearlong placement with the Bar Association of San Francisco's Homeless Advocacy Project where he helped clients appeal denials of Social Security and disability benefits and negotiated settlement agreements for tenants fighting eviction.

When the time came to choose a profession, Do considered architecture, but he was only interested in building suspension bridges, baseball parks, and affordable housing, and there weren't any firms with that niche specialization. At Brown, he had developed a reputation as a contrarian who enjoyed playing devil's advocate during late night debates. Naturally, friends suggested he become an attorney.

“My mom always says, ‘an honest lawyer is a poor lawyer,’ so my parents weren’t necessarily a fan of me going into the law because we grew up poor and they didn’t want me to be poor,” said Do, who endured years of childhood teasing about his name (his mother still blames the nurse who didn’t warn her about the implications of the biblical name she had chosen for her youngest son). Although he gave himself the middle name ‘Thomas’ as a teen and went by J.T. for a while, now he appreciates a good ‘John Doe’ joke he hasn’t heard before.

He earned a full ride to Boston College Law School where he was an editor of the Law Review and a Public Service Scholar. He interned at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and in the housing and civil enforcement section of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice. In 2012, he joined DOJ’s Environmental and Natural Resources Division where he learned to litigate. By 2020, he

was eager to resume work in the civil rights and housing discrimination field and was attracted to ACLU NorCal’s intersectional approach to racial and economic justice, which resonated with his lived experience. In addition to the San Francisco homelessness lawsuit, Do has litigated cases seeking to eliminate predatory court fees and end systemic discrimination against Asian Americans in Siskiyou County.


.....
“Housing has always been important to me because I think it dictates so much of one’s life. Your zip code speaks to what school access you have, what job prospects you have, your health, how long you will live and who you interact with on a day-to-day basis.”

.....
—John Do, senior attorney at the ACLU of Northern California, who as a child slept in the living room of his family’s cramped apartment
.....

In April, Do traveled to Washington, D.C. to hear oral arguments in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, the landmark homelessness case. The night before, he joined the queue outside the U.S. Supreme Court with a sleeping bag, snacks, and a thermos of hot water for coffee, tea, and hot chocolate to ward off the spring chill. He shared his bounty with others in line, and the irony that they were essentially camping out—which the ordinance at the heart of the case prohibited—was not lost on anyone.

He wore a jacket and tie, a more casual outfit than the other attorneys seated in the gallery.

“I had to stay here overnight to hear the justices debate the possibility of criminalizing homelessness,” he said. “I’m not going to wear a suit.”

As our case against the city proceeds in court, homelessness will be a major issue in the San Francisco mayoral race. ACLU NorCal encourages our members who live in the city to ask candidates what they will do to increase affordable housing and temporary shelter. 

Lisa P. White is a communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.

RECLAIMING FREE SPEECH

BY SHILPI AGARWAL

With graduations behind us, the 2023-2024 academic year has concluded. It started just before the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, and proceeded during Israel’s months-long military response and the ongoing war in Gaza. The year culminated with nationwide student-led protests and demonstrations, which prompted varying and escalating responses by university administrators. Now is a suitable time to pause and reflect before political protests inevitably begin in the upcoming election season. Since October, this global conflict has fractured this country’s institutions and exposed the fragility of “free speech,” a broad notion that finds specific protection in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. It now bears emphasizing why free speech is so foundational to our society.

While the specific contours of the First Amendment can be debated and discussed, its core principles remain firm. The First Amendment protects speech irrespective of the content or viewpoint that it conveys; it permits the government to impose reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on assemblies and protests; and it recognizes differences among “forums” where the speech is offered. This means that things that you can say at a protest or in a public square might be prohibited at a government office building or in a public library. Meanwhile, academic institutions (both public and private), while generally committed to the value of free speech, are simultaneously obligated to create inclusive and healthy academic communities in which all students can opine and thrive.

In recent years, the First Amendment and free speech principles more broadly have been questioned across the political spectrum. This skepticism is understandable, if not always constructively channeled. Private corporations increasingly wield the First Amendment to fight government regulation of any kind. And as technology creates virtual environments characterized by an abundance rather than a scarcity of speech, many have questioned whether the law should—contrary to a utopian ideal of the “marketplace of ideas”—prevent certain things from being said.

Over the last year, this debate has forced academic institutions to reckon with their commitment to free expression in order to navigate strong and opposing reactions to what has happened in the Middle East. Amidst these reactions were rising antisemitism and Islamophobia and, eventually, the eruption of protests, encampments, and other forms of demonstration. Attempts to “manage” these conflicts have catalyzed the ouster of leaders, widespread campus arrests, violence, and graduation ceremony cancellations. Responses to these events and approaches to the proliferation of student-led demonstrations have been

.....

The right to speak out against those in power has reemerged as among the most salient tools of this moment.

Defending the rights of others to say things we find objectionable is critical—it is that same legal foundation that allows us to stand up for what we believe is right in the face of enormous institutional pressures to stay silent. Those of us who seek progress must never take this tool for granted.


.....

dramatically different. Many universities have shown restraint, allowing encampments and other forms of demonstration—even those that violated time, place, and manner restrictions—to breathe, play out, and eventually wrap up in a peaceful manner. Some schools negotiated with the demonstrators, agreeing to some demands, which reflected the power of their voices to influence the administration more directly. By contrast, other institutions moved swiftly to squelch the demonstrations, branding them as dangerous and disruptive. Some even invited outside police onto campus to initiate arrests. Many have advanced policies and procedures that run contrary to the spirit—if not the letter—of the First Amendment.



ACLU of Northern California
Legal Director, Director of Legal-Policy
Department, Shilpi Agarwal

In California, tensions about free speech have emerged on several fronts. A lawsuit brought by the Brandeis Center for Human Rights under the Law seeks to hold UC Berkeley liable because certain student groups chose to express their pro-Palestinian views on the Israel/Gaza conflict through their group bylaws. In February, protestors opposing an Israeli speaker invited by Jewish student organizations at UC Berkeley allegedly caused physical damage to the school building and the event was canceled. In April, at the private residence of a Berkeley law school professor, a guest spoke out demanding the university cease financial support of Israel’s government. In May, Cal Poly Humboldt administrators called in a large-scale law enforcement response to clear a weeklong occupation of the university administration building. And at UCLA, both the university and law enforcement failed to protect protesters at the encampment from vigilante violence, only to clear the otherwise peaceful encampment the following day.

During the turmoil that has occurred since October 7, it is a slim but nonetheless lustrous silver lining that tens of thousands of Americans are reclaiming their right to free speech and protest. Indeed, the right to speak out against those in power has reemerged as among the most salient tools of this moment. This reclaiming of our right to use our voices in creative and collective ways calls on us to recognize why defending the rights of others to say things we find objectionable is critical—it is that same legal foundation that allows us to stand up for what we believe is right in the face of enormous institutional pressures to stay silent. Those of us who seek progress must never take this tool for granted. 

Shilpi Agarwal is the legal director, director of the Legal-Policy Department at the ACLU of Northern California.

A LETTER FROM ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ABDI SOLTANI

As we go to press, the U.S. Supreme Court is issuing the final decisions of this term. The two major political parties are preparing for their conventions this summer. In some ways, this would be “business as usual” in a presidential election year. But there is nothing about this year that is “usual”. The Supreme Court decision in 2022 on abortion in Dobbs, new voter suppression laws in states, and the precedents of political violence and abuse of the election process in the 2020 election create new threats of authoritarian abuses of power. In that context, ACLU has geared up across the country on multiple fronts.

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

ACLU is working throughout the country protecting the right to vote in the face of voter suppression laws, policies or practices this election year. We are also working vigorously to enforce and apply voting rights under the Constitution, federal laws such as the Voting Rights Act and the National Voter Registration Act, and under state constitutions and laws. Our Battleground States Initiative is pursuing tailored advocacy plans in each of those states, while here in California we are working to vigorously implement a range of new laws to ensure access to voter opportunities.

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

As my colleague Shilpi Agarwal writes in her column in this issue (page 11), the past academic year was a year of significant protest on college campuses across the country. ACLU is now preparing to defend the right to protest throughout the summer and fall. Two focal points in the summer are the Republican and Democratic conventions, being held in Milwaukee in July and Chicago in August, respectively. With the fall academic year and the election both around the corner, we expect to respond to issues of First Amendment rights.

TRUMP AND BIDEN MEMOS

During an election year, we defend the right to vote and to protest. We also analyze the records and policy platforms of candidates to educate voters and to be prepared on Day 1 of the new president’s term. To that end, ACLU is releasing our findings in a series of 13 memos—seven memos on a potential second Trump administration and six on a potential second Biden administration—to be released weekly through August at aclu.org.

HOLDING THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE

ACLU holds presidents of any party accountable to the standards of our Constitution and the nation’s laws, regardless of party or whether it is an election year. And where they take steps contrary to those rights, we will speak out—and even go to court. On June 12th, ACLU and our co-counsel and clients, sued the Biden Administration for its new asylum ban. Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project, put it succinctly: “We were left with no alternative but to sue. The administration lacks unilateral authority to override Congress and bar asylum based on how one enters the country, a point the courts made crystal clear when the Trump administration unsuccessfully tried a near-identical ban.”

ADVANCING OUR ISSUES IN AN ELECTION YEAR

Beyond the presidential candidates, the ACLU will educate voters on candidate records and on ballot measures in selected races throughout the country. The new ACLU Voter Education Fund will conduct public education on state Supreme Court races in key states. ACLU will also be working to advance high-profile abortion rights ballot measures in key states, such as Arizona and Missouri, and lower-profile measures, such as to enshrine universal vote by mail in Connecticut.

THE NOVEMBER CALIFORNIA BALLOT

California voters will face a crowded ballot this November. Please look out for our Voter Guide after we complete our analysis of all those measures. There are two measures I want to highlight where ACLU of Northern California



ACLU of Northern California
Executive Director Abdi Soltani

is playing a significant leadership role in the campaigns. First, we are continuing our decades-long advocacy for marriage equality with a ballot measure in November that repeals Proposition 8 (2008) and second, we are opposing a ballot measure sponsored by California prosecutors that increases criminal penalties for low-level retail theft and simple drug possession, rolling back advances from Proposition 47 (2014). We will also issue a candidate questionnaire for the San Francisco mayoral race, as well as a “Free to Be, Free to Learn” toolkit for activists and voters to ask California school board candidates their positions on a range of civil liberties and civil rights issues. And to ensure you know your rights about attending public meetings, be sure to read about the Brown Act on page 9 of this issue.

In the meantime, please reach out if you are looking for ways to volunteer or get involved, or to renew your financial support. We are grateful to our members, donors, volunteers, and community partners for all you do.

A handwritten signature of Abdi Soltani in black ink.

Abdi Soltani, Executive Director
ACLU of Northern California

GET THE LATEST ACLU UPDATES VIA EMAIL AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA



sign up at [ACLUNC.ORG/EMAIL](https://aclunc.org/email)



@[ACLU_NORCAL](https://www.instagram.com/aclu_norcal)



[FB.COM/ACLU.NORCAL](https://www.facebook.com/aclu.norcal)



@[ACLU_NORCAL](https://www.twitter.com/aclu_norcal)