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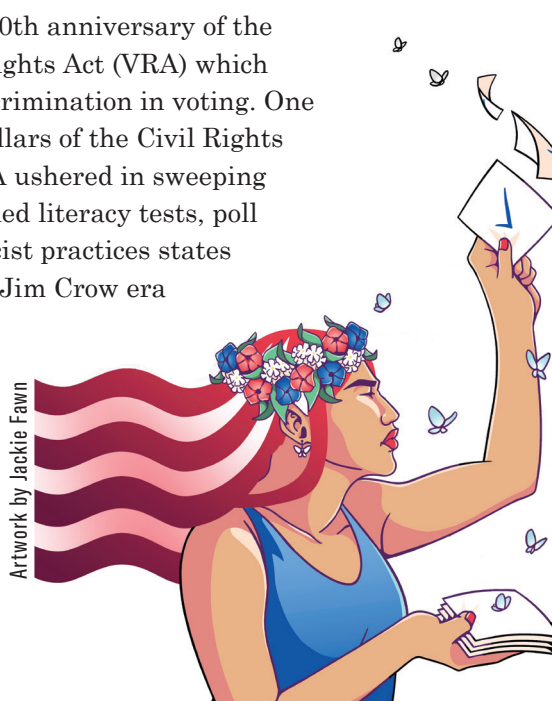
ACLU
Northern
California

CALIFORNIA REJECTS VOTER SUPPRESSION

BY LISA P. WHITE

During Donald Trump's second term, the ACLU remains committed to defending the vote, both as a fundamental right and as a vital check on the government. Throughout U.S. history, withholding the franchise has been a means of maintaining power. Whether the government denied the right to vote based on gender, race, or social status the goal was the same—to preserve politics as the exclusive domain of white men.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the landmark Voting Rights Act (VRA) which prohibits racial discrimination in voting. One of two legislative pillars of the Civil Rights Movement, the VRA ushered in sweeping reforms and abolished literacy tests, poll taxes, and other racist practices states adopted during the Jim Crow era to prevent Black Americans and other people of color from voting. Since its passage, conservative politicians, legal organizations, judges, and activists have chipped away at



the vital protections enshrined in the law. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court handed VRA opponents a sledgehammer. The court's decision in *Holder v. Shelby County* struck down a key provision requiring states with a history of racial discrimination to clear proposed changes to voting practices with the U.S. Department of Justice.

The ruling cleared the way for a wave of voter suppression tactics—including voter ID laws, voter roll purges, and limits on early voting—targeting Black people, college students, people with disabilities, and elderly voters.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

BEHIND THE SCENES: HOW THE ACLU WON A COURT ORDER BLOCKING BORDER PATROL'S RACIST ARRESTS TARGETING LATINOS

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

It was Jan. 7, 2025, in the middle of the citrus harvest season in California's Central Valley. People who earn their livings picking fruit were going about their daily routines. All of a sudden, residents of Bakersfield and the surrounding area started disappearing.

Maricela Sanchez, an investigator at the ACLU of Northern California, started seeing photos and videos in her social media feed of U.S. Border Patrol trucks stopping people by the side of the road.

She knew their presence in this area was highly unusual. So she immediately notified the

ACLU NorCal legal team. She also reached out to our ACLU affiliate in southern California. They started keeping tabs on what people on the ground were reporting about federal agents stopping and arresting people for no reason—other than their skin color.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

CORRECTED BOARD ELECTION NOTICE

In our Spring issue, we listed incorrect dates for our Board election process. The first July 1 deadline for submitting nominees to the nominating committee was correct and has since passed. But the dates pertaining to the second way to participate are corrected below, along with the website where the Board-proposed slate will be posted on September 26. We apologize for the earlier error.

We're always looking for committed members to join the Board. The nominating committee is now reviewing nominees 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, in addition to submitting nominees for the committee's consideration, members can 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 mailed to the Board at the address above, postmarked by October 15, 2025 (20 days after the September 25 Board meeting) and received no later than October 22, 2025.

The Board-proposed slate of nominees will be posted online September 26, 2025, at www.aclunc.org/about/board-of-directors. Ballots will be included in the Fall issue of the *ACLU News*.

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.

YOUR DATA PRIVACY AND THE ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Mailings to our members and the public provide opportunities to describe complicated legal and political issues in ways not covered in other media, as well as sharing strategies we plan to use for future actions. They also enable us to explain, in detail, the benefits and provisions of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, the ways we can protect our rights 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 the necessary funds to continue our litigation, public education, and legislative lobbying.

Sometimes, as part of our program to find and recruit new members, we participate in nonprofit data cooperatives and list sharing arrangements. These practices of sharing supporters' personal information with and through a data cooperative and with nonpartisan organizations are a longstanding nonprofit practice. This practice enables nonprofits to grow and maintain a stronger supporter base—while lowering costs—by targeting communications to individuals who are most likely to be interested in hearing from us. To learn more about this practice and how the ACLU of Northern California protects your information in these arrangements, please visit aclunc.org/privacy-policy.

We understand some members may not wish to receive solicitations from other organizations and gladly honor requests to be removed from the process. To opt out of this practice, please visit action.aclu.org/webform/data-choices and select the option to "opt out of sales of data." You may also submit an opt out request for targeted advertising or sales of data by emailing privacy@aclu.org.

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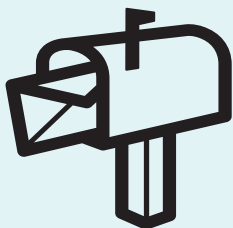
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For more information about the ACLU,
call (415) 621-2493 or visit www.aclunc.org.
Address changes: giving@aclunc.org

Adam Bailey, Chair
Abdi Soltani, Executive Director
Candice Francis, Editor-in-Chief
Gigi Harney, Managing Editor & Designer
Virginia Reinhart & Lisa P. White, Proofreaders

39 Drumm Street, San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 621-2493 | editor@aclunc.org


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*Correction to the Spring 2025 issue of the ACLU News:
The Roman numeral volume number was missing an
X, and should have been LXXXIX (volume 89).*

IN MEMORIAM: MILTON ESTES

The following is excerpted from a National ACLU Board Resolution in Honor of Dr. Milton Estes.

The ACLU mourns the passing and celebrates the life of Dr. Milton Estes, a dedicated activist, physician, and civil libertarian, who died on April 23, 2025.

Milton began practicing family medicine in Marin County, California in 1974, focusing on delivering babies at home. His practice shifted as the AIDS epidemic and its accompanying stigma surged; he was one of the few doctors who would treat HIV-positive patients. He co-founded an HIV/AIDS clinic named for his beloved partner, Tom Steel, a renowned civil rights lawyer who died in 1998. Milton also directed the San Francisco County Jail's HIV treatment program for over twenty years, caring for some of the most medically vulnerable and marginalized members of society.

On top of his medical practices, Milton worked tirelessly to better humanity on many domestic and international fronts.

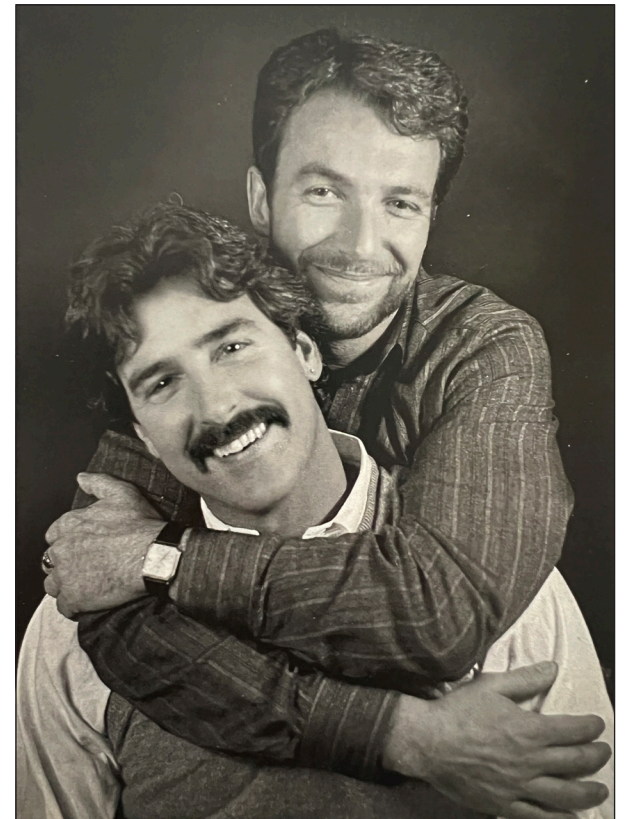
Milton volunteered for almost four decades at every level of the ACLU. He began working with the Marin Chapter in 1981 and soon became its representative to the ACLU NorCal Board. There, he shaped policy on the HIV epidemic, advised on reproductive freedom, and investigated money-as-speech issues. He was honored by the Marin

County Chapter of ACLU NorCal in 1990 with the Barney Dreyfus Civil Liberties Award for his outstanding contributions to the fight for civil liberties, and by ACLU NorCal with the 2015 Lola Hanzel Courageous Advocacy Award.


A generous supporter, Milton also cultivated funding from others. He chaired ACLU NorCal's Development Committee for many years and trained affiliate boards nationwide in fundraising. Later, he actively participated in the National ACLU's 90th anniversary campaign, Leading Freedom Forward.

In 1991, Milton became the first openly gay chair of the ACLU NorCal Board. During his four-year tenure as chair he was committed to building a more diverse and inclusive organization. After rotating off the Board, he was later reelected for six years in 2000, and again in 2016. He also served on the National ACLU Board for many years.

Everyone touched by Milton found a loving connection. As national ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero observed, "Milton's empathy, kindness and generosity were his superpowers." He wasn't just brilliant and dedicated, he was graceful and soft-spoken, a poet, an equestrian, and always the best-dressed person in the room.



Milton Estes (right) with his partner Tom Steel.


He loved life, beauty, and his family and friends. He built a stronger ACLU and a better world. We express our profound gratitude for Milton's inspiring leadership, service, and humanity. 

ACLU NORCAL HONORS ACTIVISTS MARGO GEORGE AND PETER GELBLUM

The Chief Justice Earl Warren Civil Liberties Award is the highest honor given out by the ACLU of Northern California. This year, former public defender Margo George was presented with the award. George worked as a public defender in Alameda County for more than thirty years, passionately representing some of the poorest people in the county. After retiring, she wasn't done helping vulnerable populations, becoming a full-time volunteer legislative advocate in Sacramento for the California Public Defenders Association.

As ACLU NorCal Senior Staff Attorney Mica Doctoroff said when presenting the award, George is "a tireless and trusted criminal law expert reviewing, testifying on, and helping shape hundreds of bills each year, and she's also a beloved leader and mentor to the entire criminal justice advocacy community." Many current and former public defenders attended the event in her honor, wearing "Anything for Margo" buttons.

The Lola Hanzel Courageous Advocacy Award celebrates extraordinary ACLU volunteers who have demonstrated their commitment to freedom, justice, and equality through their contributions to our work. This year's recipient is Santa Cruz County Chapter Chair Peter Gelblum, who joined the chapter fifteen years ago and has also served on the ACLU NorCal board of directors and a number of its committees.

As chair, Gelblum led the chapter's work including advocating for mental health professionals to respond to people in crisis, for the police not to be militarized, and ending Santa Cruz's predictive policing program that used a racially biased algorithm. His effectiveness in building relationships and speaking his mind has helped many causes over the years. 



ACLU NorCal Executive Director Abdi Soltani with Peter Gelblum and Margo George.

WHAT IS AN EXECUTIVE ORDER AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

AN EXPLAINER FROM THE ACLU

Since President Donald Trump took office in January 2025, he has signed over 160 executive orders. Can the president actually carry out the policy plans outlined in his executive orders? Below, Christopher Anders from the National ACLU explains the history, function, and limits of a presidential executive order.

WHAT IS AN EXECUTIVE ORDER? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM A LAW?

Article II of the Constitution vests the president with executive power over the government, including the obligation to “take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” An executive order is a written directive, signed by the president, that orders the government to take specific actions to ensure “the laws be faithfully executed.” It might mean telling the Department of Education to implement a certain rule, or declaring a new policy priority. Executive orders, however, cannot override federal laws and statutes.

Statutes have to be passed by Congress and signed by the president. Or, if vetoed, then Congress must override the veto for the bill to become law. Executive orders can’t preempt this process. Furthermore, the Constitution gives Congress control over things like taxation, spending, and certain war powers. Most things we think of when we think of laws come from Congress: what counts as a criminal offense, how much the federal government can tax our income, and declaring war or making treaties.

With an executive order, the president can’t write a new statute, but an order can tell federal agencies how to implement a statute. For example, Congress can declare a certain drug legal or illegal. But with an executive order, the president can tell the Department of Justice if prosecuting certain drug cases is a priority or not.

WHAT CAN AND CAN’T TRUMP DO THROUGH EXECUTIVE ORDER?

With an executive order, President Trump can order the federal government to take any steps that are within the scope of the constitutional authority of the executive branch, and do not violate any federal law.

The Constitution has a set of checks and balances written into it so that no one branch of the government is more powerful than the other. The president can’t use an executive order to sidestep those checks and balances, and the president can’t take over powers from other branches, such as the power vested in Congress to pass new statutes or in the courts to invalidate certain laws as unconstitutional.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE EXECUTIVE ORDERS TO TAKE EFFECT?

Some executive orders take effect as soon as the president signs the order. But many other orders do not have any impact until a government agency takes some additional steps. Very often, an executive order requires a federal agency

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With an executive order, the president can’t write a new statute, but an order can tell federal agencies how to implement a statute.
.....

to write a report, undertake an investigation, or promulgate a new regulation. Those steps can often take months, and sometimes years. The order may provide a deadline (like telling an agency it has 60 days to make a certain recommendation for action), but it doesn’t have to.

HOW CAN EXECUTIVE ORDERS BE STOPPED?

Those checks and balances provide a few ways that an executive order can be stopped:
Congress can enact a law that reverses what the president has done, provided Congress has the constitutional authority to legislate on the issue
A court can hold that an executive order is unlawful if it violates the Constitution or a federal statute
Any future president can issue a new executive order that rescinds or amends the earlier executive order.


HOW HAVE EXECUTIVE ORDERS BEEN USED HISTORICALLY?

Every single president, from George Washington to Donald Trump, has issued executive orders. Most modern presidents issue hundreds of them during their presidency. While some executive orders are pretty mundane, such as declaring a federal holiday or a day of mourning, others have been among the most important actions the United States government has ever taken.

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Some of the federal government’s worst actions came via executive order. Roosevelt used an executive order to force the relocation and internment of Japanese Americans to concentration camps. And Trump used an executive order to rescind Johnson’s historic executive order requiring government contractors to comply with civil rights obligations.
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Abraham Lincoln used an executive order—the Emancipation Proclamation—to address slavery during the Civil War. Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued an executive order to integrate the shipyards and other military contractors. Harry Truman signed an executive order to integrate the military. Lyndon Johnson used an executive order to impose civil rights obligations on all federal contractors. More recently, Joe Biden signed an executive order to require every federal agency to find ways to facilitate voter registration.
But some of the federal government’s worst actions also came via executive order. Roosevelt, for example, used an executive order to force the relocation and internment of Japanese Americans to concentration camps. And in his first week of his second presidential term, Trump used an executive order to rescind Johnson’s historic executive order requiring government contractors to comply with civil rights obligations.

WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS? IS TRUMP MISUSING THEM?

Trump, or any president, is misusing executive order authority if the president orders the government to take actions that are not authorized by the Constitution or are in violation of federal laws. That’s when the courts must step in to safeguard our rule of law. However, an executive order can be lawful and still cause harm, especially when it threatens important civil liberties or civil rights.
President Trump’s order rescinding Johnson’s order concerning civil right obligations of federal contractors, for example, doesn’t overrule any statute that governs equal protection in employment. Even so, it undermines civil rights protections and sends the signal that federal contractors won’t have the same obligation to protect their employees, and it communicates to the public that equal protection is not a priority.
Executive orders can be an effective way to carry out policy while staying within the rule of law. However, as we’ve seen with the Trump administration, they can also cause chaos, damage the democratic process, and harm our most vulnerable communities. At the ACLU, we have more than 100 years’ experience holding powerful entities, like the executive branch, to account. Already during this administration, we’ve explained how Trump’s most recent executive orders rolling back DEI efforts, attacking birthright citizenship, and targeting trans people are unlawful. We’re continuing to advocate and fight whenever President Trump uses executive orders to attack our civil liberties and civil rights. 

Christopher Anders is Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Democracy and Technology, at the National ACLU.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

A COMMENTARY FROM ACLU NEWS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CANDICE FRANCIS

After six months of relentless attacks on our rights and democracy by the Trump administration, many of us are taking stock of where our country is headed and gathering strength for the fights ahead. To that end, I want to share some of my own reflections crystallized by one of the many abhorrent policies this administration has implemented.

One evening when I was a little girl growing up in Brooklyn, New York, my Jamaican immigrant grandfather insisted that our family finish our routinely shared Sunday dinner in time to watch the TV performance of a relatively unknown singer. Miriam Makeba was a stunning South African woman who affirmed her Black pride by wearing her hair naturally without chemicals or heat that would straighten it to simulate European hair texture. She sang in Xhosa, her native language, known for the unique way some words “clicked” when spoken. I can still remember being mesmerized by the beautiful repertoire Ms. Makeba delivered that night, including the stories she sang about her homeland.

When the program was over, my grandfather used the opportunity to teach us about the conditions under which Miriam Makeba lived in South Africa. I don’t think he used the term “apartheid,” but he spoke of the injustice Black people suffered under a brutal white regime. I could tell he was incensed and wanted us to understand why it was so significant that Ms. Makeba, a Black woman from the African continent, was on American television.

As I became more knowledgeable about South Africa, I was deeply appreciative of my grandfather’s lesson but aghast at what I was learning about the system known as apartheid. Volumes are written about its pernicious history and even uglier legacy, but unless you were engaged three decades ago in the anti-apartheid movement, or you are a scholar of African history, you may not know much about South Africa and why it matters today.

Afrikaners, a subset of white South Africans,

descended from Dutch colonialists and migrated to South Africa in 1652. They developed a language and culture called Afrikaans and formed the white minority National Party that implemented “apartheid” from 1948 to 1994. Apartheid was a cruel system of racial separation deeply rooted in white supremacy. Like Jim Crow in the United States, apartheid was defined by racial violence and death, separate public facilities, denial of the right to vote and to marry interracial. It ended in 1994 after decades of internal resistance and international pressure to repeal its laws and hold multiracial elections that culminated in the election of Nelson Mandela as president.

The overall barrage of attacks and the lack of knowledge about South Africa’s racial history may explain the public’s muted response when Donald

Trump issued an executive order in February prioritizing refugee status and an offer of resettlement to dozens of Afrikaners based on completely debunked allegations that they are victims of “white genocide” and land seizure at the hands of Black South Africans. In fact, no evidence exists to support claims of genocide. White South Africans comprise only seven percent of the entire population, but white farmers own 73% of privately owned farms. White South Africans enjoy disproportionate amounts of wealth and privilege outpacing their Black counterparts on all levels.

On Donald Trump’s first day in office, in head-spinning contrast, he signed an executive order suspending the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and limiting future admissions to “only those refugees who can fully and appropriately assimilate into the United States” and anyone who “... does not

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**As an organization
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supremacy.**

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ACLU of Northern California
Communications Director Candice Francis

pose a threat to the security or welfare of the United States.” Justifying the admission of white Afrikaners under these criteria, cancelling flights for others already granted refugee status, and closing the door to others seeking refugee status, who are mainly Black, Brown, or Muslim, exposes the racist and flagrant hypocrisy of these executive orders.

Not only has the Trump administration paused refugee admissions with miniscule exceptions, they have also set a quota of 3,000 arrests per day of undocumented immigrants that has resulted in deportations and detentions without due process, false arrests, separation of families, expulsion to countries detainees have never lived in, denial of medical care, and abject fear and hysteria.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) termination dates have also been shortened for vulnerable immigrants, for example Venezuelans, Afghans, and Haitians, who could face violent repercussions upon returning to their home countries.

To further exacerbate the angst and tension swirling about, Trump issued a travel ban affecting 12 countries—all with majority Black, Brown, or Muslim inhabitants. Thirty-six more countries also comprised of people of color and/or majority followers of Islam are on a list for a future travel ban.

So...why should we care, and why do we care that you care? As an organization committed to racial justice and the rule of law, it is our obligation to put a spotlight on racism and its overzealous cousin, white supremacy. The Trump administration’s immigration policies are explicitly and implicitly fostering a belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that this nation will be better or stronger, whatever superlative fits, with more white people and fewer people of color. As Trump himself has said referring to immigrants, “They’re poisoning the blood of our country,” leaving us to ponder: How do we confront the manifest legacy of white supremacy? Where do we go from here? 

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)

LEGAL ADVOCACY UPDATES

COURT NARROWS UNCONSTITUTIONAL UCSC PHONE SEARCH WARRANT

LITIGATION

BY CARMEN KING



In March, we successfully challenged an unconstitutionally broad search warrant that gave University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) police sweeping authority to search a student's cellphone data spanning years of personal communications.

The warrant violated the California Electronic Communications Privacy Act (CalECPA), the First and Fourth Amendments, and the California Constitution. It granted police access to data dating back to when our client was in middle school, including private communications, location data, and personal photos—all without reasonable limits on time or scope.

The student had sued UCSC after the university banned her and others from campus for participating in a pro-Palestine protest in May 2024. UCSC police sought the warrant just weeks after she filed her lawsuit, raising serious concerns about retaliation for her constitutionally protected speech.

Most troubling, the warrant's scope swept in privileged attorney-client communications about her lawsuit against the school for police misconduct.

We argued that the warrant's scope was unconstitutional, emphasizing that modern phones contain extensive personal information equivalent to searching through every aspect of someone's personal and professional life. In June, our legal challenge compelled the judge to significantly narrow the timeframe of what police could search.

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' RIGHT TO WEAR TRIBAL REGALIA AT GRADUATION

ADVOCACY

BY CARMEN KING



Tribal regalia are sacred items of adornment that Indigenous people wear during ceremonies and to celebrate important milestones, like graduation. While California

law clearly protects this right, schools routinely ignore the law and deny students permission to wear their regalia.

For several years, the ACLU of Northern California has worked alongside Indigenous-led organizations to defend these rights. Last year, ACLU NorCal and California Indian Legal Services (CILS) filed a complaint with the attorney general against Clovis Unified School District for its repeated violations of the law.

We also developed resources and toolkits to educate students and parents about their rights under the law, because when people know their rights, they fight for them—and they win.

This year, we partnered with CILS to support Bella, a member of the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians, when Clovis High officials told her she could not wear regalia at graduation. But Bella was determined to fight for her right to be visible as a Native person. We helped Bella navigate Clovis High's "pre-approval" process and supported her advocacy BY putting pressure on the school district and organizing prominent elected officials to speak up for this important right. These efforts, and Bella's persistence, paid off. In May, Bella proudly wore her regalia at graduation!

CALIFORNIA'S DEATH PENALTY IS RIDDLED WITH RACIAL BIAS

LITIGATION

BY CARMEN KING



Forty years of data reveal a disturbing injustice: California's death penalty system is rife with racial bias. That's why in April 2024, the ACLU of Northern California and other civil rights groups challenged California's death penalty in the State Supreme Court for violating the Equal Protection guarantees of the California Constitution. The lawsuit is based on statewide and county-level studies demonstrating that California applies the death penalty disproportionately to people of color, revealing stark patterns of racial disparities in charging and sentencing decisions—disparities that result from a criminal legal system tainted with racial bias at nearly every stage.

In November 2024, we filed additional legal documents at the California Supreme Court's request, including an answer to whether the racial disparities we allege violate the state constitution's Cruel or Unusual Punishment Clause. The court's inquiry showed its serious interest in the legal questions raised by the

studies we filed in support of our challenge.

Our efforts have received substantial support through friend-of-the-court briefs from California judges, state legislators, prosecutors, and law school clinics, underscoring widespread recognition that racial disparities in California's administration of the death penalty are real and intolerable.

While the case is temporarily paused on procedural grounds, the evidence is undeniable, and the path forward is clear: the California Supreme Court must act to end the shameful legacy of capital punishment as a tool of racial subjugation.

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

ACLU WINS APPEAL TO DISCLOSE VALLEJO POLICE OFFICERS INVOLVED IN BADGE-BENDING SCANDAL

LITIGATION



In 2018, the ACLU of California sponsored SB 1421, The Right to Know Act, a law that compels disclosure of police officer personnel records relating to, among other things, investigations of police shootings.

In November 2022, ACLU NorCal filed a lawsuit to compel the city of Vallejo to release records of a third-party investigation of Vallejo police officers who allegedly bent their badges after shooting civilians. The ACLU's petition detailed Vallejo PD's long history of shooting and killing people, a disproportionate number of whom are people of color.

In June 2025, the Court of Appeal rightly determined that SB 1421 mandates disclosure of the records requested by the ACLU because the investigation of badge bending was related to police shootings. The Court of Appeal remanded for consideration of whether any redactions are appropriate before disclosure, making clear that the law favors release of the names of officers found to have committed misconduct.

We look forward to the disclosure of a report that is as transparent as possible so the community can finally begin to heal from this shameful and traumatic history.

We were disappointed that the city filed an appeal with the California Supreme Court in July, seeking to overturn the appellate court's unanimous decision.

THE SUPREME COURT BACKS TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, STRIPS PROTECTIONS FROM 350,000 VENEZUELAN TPS HOLDERS

LITIGATION

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND



On May 19, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a shameful order that enables the Trump administration's racist, unlawful attacks against immigrants of color.

In a two-paragraph ruling, SCOTUS lifted a stay that would have prevented Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem from proceeding with the administration's plans to cancel humanitarian protections for 350,000 Venezuelan immigrants. These individuals had been able to live and work legally in the U.S.

under the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program, which provides refuge for people who can't safely return to their home countries.

In the first Trump term, the president sought to not renew the term of the temporary protected status as it expired. This time around, for the first time in the 35-year history of the program created by Congress, an administration has attempted to revoke individuals' TPS status that was already granted. In *NTPSA v. Noem I*, the ACLU and our legal partners filed a lawsuit on behalf of the National TPS Alliance and eleven individuals challenging the federal government's unprecedented attempt to prematurely end TPS extensions for Venezuela and Haiti, and to terminate TPS for Venezuela. On March 31, a federal judge issued a stay that blocked Noem from stripping protections from Venezuelans just days before their legal status was expiring—correctly concluding that they would suffer “irreparable injury.” The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit rejected the Trump administration's request to lift the stay.


But on May 19, SCOTUS intervened in favor

of the administration and granted its emergency request. That allows Noem's TPS termination for Venezuelan nationals to go into effect while the lawsuit works its way through the courts.

The brief order did not address the merits of the case. But the decision has a devastating impact on hundreds of thousands of people who no longer be able obtain work permits and live legally in the U.S.

On May 31 a subsequent ruling from a federal judge in San Francisco granted a motion to preserve the rights of a subset of TPS holders from Venezuela to continue using work permits and maintain their TPS status, if they had applied to extend their TPS status before Noem revoked and terminated it.

That order is important, but it cannot provide relief to all the people impacted by the Supreme Court decision.

However, we will not be deterred by this setback. We will continue to evaluate our options and remain committed to defending the rights of individuals affected by this administration's illegal and racist deportation schemes. 

REFLECTIONS ON THE SUPREME COURT TERM A LETTER FROM LEGAL DIRECTOR SHILPI AGARWAL

We just wrapped up another banner term for the Supreme Court. Its decisions will have implications for our work for many years to come.

One of the Court's most notable decisions came in *Trump v. Casa*, a case challenging the constitutionality of Trump's executive order purporting to end birthright citizenship. Importantly, the Court did not address the merits of that challenge. Instead, the Court limited the ability of the district courts to order “nationwide injunctions.” The Court essentially endorsed a “patchwork” system of constitutional rights, in which certain executive actions would be enjoined in some places while allowed to proceed in others. While plaintiffs may still have other avenues by which to empower courts to order broad relief (and the ACLU has already obtained a nation-wide class in its birthright case), the Court's order certainly erects yet another barrier to challenging unlawful government action through litigation.

This was not the only decision that limits the ability of civil rights plaintiffs to access the courts. In *Medina v. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic*, the Supreme Court ruled that a provision of the Medicaid clause that allowed Medicaid recipients to receive their care at “any-qualified-provider” could not be enforced through an individual action brought under Section 1983. The Court noted that the law was promulgated under the Congress's spending power, and could therefore be enforced by the federal government itself. This decision raises questions about the fate of Section 1983, a bedrock law that allows


individuals to sue the government for violations of their rights.

The Court also decided a staggering number of cases on its shadow docket—or via emergency applications that are decided without full briefing or oral argument, and which are generally issued in the form of a short unexplained order rather than a reasoned opinion. The Trump administration repeatedly (and successfully) invoked this fasttrack path in the few months since President Trump took office. As of July 15, the Trump administration filed around 20 emergency applications with the Court—exceeding the total from the entire Biden presidency. Of those, 18 have now been decided. The Court granted the Trump Administration relief in 15 of those cases—an approximately 83% success rate. Among the decisions that the Supreme Court made on its shadow docket were: lifting the lower court injunctions on mass federal layoffs, allowing at least some deportations under the Alien Enemies Act to proceed, and staying a lower court order halting the rescission of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for certain migrant populations. The last of these is being litigated by our team; the case is ongoing before the district court in San Francisco.

Finally, one notable trend that emerged in this term is Justice Jackson's use of her pen to call out the Court for its inconsistencies and departures from norms. She dissented from several shadow docket grants, warning that this “hair-trigger use” erodes legal transparency and denies affected parties meaningful judicial



ACLU of Northern California
Legal Director Shilpi Agarwal

review. She also issued a particularly memorable footnote in *Stanley v. City of Sanford* calling out the Court for its reliance on “pure textualism.” As she notes, “Pure textualism's refusal to try to understand the text of a statute in the larger context of what Congress sought to achieve *turns the interpretive task into a potent weapon for advancing judicial policy preferences*. . . . Pure textualism is incessantly malleable—that's its primary problem—and . . . certainly somehow always flexible enough to secure the majority's desired outcome.” With this footnote, Justice Jackson has offered one of the most potent critiques and rebukes of the interpretive legal method that has dominated conservative legal thinking for decades. It will be interesting to see what effect it will have. 

BUILDING POWER, ONE ACTION AT A TIME: CAPITOL RAPID RESPONDERS MAKE THEIR MARK

BY CYERA BOONE

Since launching in early 2025, the Capitol Rapid Responders program has quickly become a driving force for grassroots advocacy in Sacramento. Designed to activate volunteers at a moment's notice, the program brings together people of all ages and backgrounds—from students to retirees—committed to advancing justice through legislative action. While ACLU NorCal involves volunteers throughout our region in in-district lobbying on state legislation, the Capitol Rapid Responders program plays a distinct role: these volunteers live in the Greater Sacramento region and show up in person at the Capitol regularly.

In March, our first in-person meet-up and orientation brought together a dynamic group of volunteers eager to learn, connect, and take action. Attendees heard directly from ACLU staff about the importance of civic engagement. We left with real momentum: ten phone banking shifts scheduled and new community connections in the works.

What followed has been nothing short of inspiring. Rapid Responders stepped up at the March 25 launch of AB 1165, the California Housing Justice Act. From rallying on the West Steps of the Capitol to participating in lobby meetings, our committed team made their presence known—and left coalition partners

talking about the strength of our group.

In April, volunteers rose to the occasion again to support AB 1388, a bill to ban non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in police misconduct cases. They made recruitment calls, turned out at the public safety hearing, and stayed late in hopes of testifying. Their dedication contributed to the momentum that carried the bill through committee—and ultimately, across the Assembly floor with 61 AYE votes.

Together, Capitol Rapid Responders have already contributed approximately 100 hours of people-powered advocacy shaping policy and showing up for justice.


What makes this program different? Unlike traditional volunteer models, Rapid Responders are built for quick-turn, real-time engagement. Whether it's rallying at the Capitol or mobilizing supporters in a matter of days, this team is nimble, responsive, and rooted in community power.

And we're just getting started. With summer recess here, we're supporting phone banks, in-district visits, and another material drop at the Capitol.

To everyone who has volunteered their time, voice, and energy: thank you. You are building something powerful.



Volunteers from the Rapid Responders team, who delivered essential information and powerful support letters at the State Capitol.

Ready to take meaningful action for justice in Sacramento? The Capitol Rapid Responders program is open to Greater Sacramento area residents. Sign up today: action.aclunc.org/a/become-a-capitol-rapid-responder. 

Cyera Boone is a senior organizer at the ACLU of Northern California.

ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS TAKE ACTION: MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY, MAKING CHANGE

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AT THE STATE CAPITOL FOR SPRING RECESS WEEK

In April, hundreds of ACLU NorCal volunteers participated in our Spring Recess Week of Action, making it possible for us to meet with seven state senators and fourteen state assemblymembers, text over 33,000 voters, and generate hundreds of commitments to call key legislators.

Each legislative session, the ACLU works on a legislative agenda to move our state forward by sponsoring bills to advance policy change on a broad range of issue areas. AB 1388 seeks to overturn the practice of police misconduct nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) that have shielded officers who have sexually harassed and assaulted people, embezzled taxpayer dollars, destroyed evidence of sex crimes against minors, and falsified police reports. The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) told the Legislature that there could be at least 10,000 misconduct records covered up by these NDAs. These officers face no civil liability, criminal charges, or other consequences.




ACLU NorCal staff and volunteers participated in protests in defense of democracy. Pictured here is ACLU NorCal Organizing Manager Tanisha Humphrey, energizing the crowd at a No Kings protest in San Francisco.

Want to participate in future actions? We're looking for Constituent Changemakers. Advocating to pass laws that protect civil rights is one way to bring about change in the lives of Californians. Advocacy is needed to make sure that impactful bills become law. Often, it

is the voice of everyday people in their communities that can push a lawmaker in the right direction. Learn more and express your interest in becoming a Constituent Changemaker at www.aclunc.org/constituent-changemaker.

BALANCING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE IN SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco's Public Defender's Office is seriously underfunded in the face of rising arrests and incarceration. The city's leaders are poised to slash funding for programs and services that help people get off the street and back on their feet while ramping up costly and ineffective arrests for low-level non-violent offenses.

ACLU NorCal organizers partnered with the People's Budget Coalition, an alliance of more than 150 nonprofits and labor groups, to build a grassroots base of support for community services. We organized rallies, spoke to supervisors, and shared stories of impacted people, demanding a budget that prioritizes food, housing, and services, rather than expanding policing and incarceration. 

DEMOCRACY DEPENDS ON ALL OF US: STORIES OF EVERYDAY PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER TO RAISE AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR THE ACLU

Week after week, we receive surprise checks from people who’ve met the current political crisis with creativity. They’ve gathered their wits and their resources and whatever they have to share. While raising funds for the ACLU, they’ve also raised spirits and strengthened community.

Carlos Alcalá, an artist and zine-maker in Sacramento, gathered works from other artists, photographers, and craftspeople, and held a yard sale fundraiser. “I’m not sure what’s next,” he shared with us, “but I’m retired, so I have time and want to make that time count. I am hopeful that we can turn things around.”

A group of classical vocalists held a benefit concert at Mission Dolores in San Francisco, singing arias, duets, and musical theater. “As professional singers, we were all feeling at a loss as to what we could do to help save our democracy,” wrote event organizers Christa Pfeiffer and Joe Meyers. “So we decided to sing.”

At his San Gregorio General Store, George Cattermole and friends hosted a fundraiser at which The Flying Salvias played their unique blend of jazz-country-folk-blues. The special guest speaker, legendary “people’s advocate” Danny Sheehan, provided a breakdown of the present moment, what’s being done, and what we can all do.

After George and his friend Pia Morabia came by with a check (and envelopes of cash!) from the proceeds of the event, we took a moment to find out more about what keeps his hope alive.

COMMUNITY MEMBER PROFILE: GEORGE CATTERMOLE

ACLU: How did you get connected to the work of the ACLU, and how long ago?

GEORGE CATTERMOLE: Around 60 years ago, when I came out to Stanford to go to school, I took a course in philosophy. I read a dialogue by Plato and in it, Socrates asks a question. He says, “How do you know that what you’re doing is right?”

And the student says, “Well, I know it because the gods say it’s right.” Then Socrates says “Well, wait a minute. Do the gods say it’s right because it’s right? Or is it right *just because the gods say it?*” Right there: the distinction between reason and faith and a basis for the separation of church and state.

Then I read John Stewart Mill, *On Liberty*. He talks about the importance of letting truth collide with error, about the importance of consenting adults, and how the government should stay out of people’s lives as long as they’re not hurting people. And then all of a sudden I was seeing ACLU’s name everywhere!

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“You need to organize.
When you do, you become big
enough to do incredible things.”
—ACLU donor George Cattermole
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Everywhere, I saw ACLU defending the right [of people] to live their lives the way they want to live them, without government interference, or the tyranny of the majority, be it moral or otherwise. We need the ACLU to protect the rights of individuals and minorities guaranteed by our Bill of Rights.

ACLU: How long have you been doing events at the San Gregorio general store?

GC: We started in the field behind the store, maybe thirty years ago or so; benefits for Greenpeace mainly, and the local schools. And then we moved it into the store.
When I first came to San Gregorio, a guy who ran a local business told me, “Don’t put your politics in your window or on your sleeve, because you’ll lose part of your customer base.” I’ve been really fortunate, because of the location of the place, and the beautiful building. But I also said,


“My business works for me. I don’t work for my business. And I want to use whatever I’ve got.”
Whatever you’ve got, you *should* be using, especially right now. This is all hands-on deck. “Anybody who isn’t outraged is not paying attention” is one of the bumper stickers I sell at the store. And it’s just so true: you’ve got to move; you’ve got to be doing *something* or it’s going to gobble you up. So I thought: What’s the most needed, right now? And I realized: we need lawyers. Law is all we’ve got right now.

ACLU: It sounds like your suggestion to others would be: figure out where the help is needed most, and then do whatever you can with what you have, right?

GC: Yes. For me, it comes back to Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s notion of insurgent art. He was an officer in World War II and was in Hiroshima a month after the bomb. He came across a cup—with a burned hand still holding it. There and then he dedicated himself against war for the rest of his life. But he figured out the only way we can win is with music and poetry. You’re not ever going to win with violence. You *can* win with what he called “insurgent art.”

You reach out to your friends and organize and communicate with them; try to plan events. What matters is to just keep trying to join in. I think of that image of a lot of little fish being chased by a big fish with its mouth open. And then below that the image is flipped, and the whole school of little fish has gathered into this huge mass and is chasing the big guy away!

I see it in the fields around San Gregorio. There are these wonderful blackbirds, and big ravens will come and try to invade their nests. And what happens? The blackbirds all get together and just dive bomb the ravens out of there.

You need to organize. When you do, you become big enough to do incredible things. 

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Interested in hosting a
benefit event for the ACLU?

Contact us at
GIVING@ACLUNC.ORG
.....



Guest speaker Danny Sheehan, attendee Pia Morabia, and fundraising event organizer George Cattermole in front of the San Gregorio General Store event space.

Photo by Karen Langland

CALIFORNIA REJECTS VOTER SUPPRESSION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In response, the ACLU has filed a raft of lawsuits across the country to preserve equal access to the ballot. The latest victory came in May, when a federal court ruled that Alabama must keep in place a congressional map that led to the election of two Black members to the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time in the state’s history. In the Supreme Court’s next term, the ACLU will reargue *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case that will determine whether a map that created two majority-Black congressional districts survives.

While other states aggressively rolled back voting rights, California bucked the trend. In fact, over the past decade, the ACLU of Northern California has worked to expand the franchise by making automated voter registration available through the Department of Motor Vehicles, pressing the state to print voting materials in multiple languages, and restoring voting rights to Californians on parole. After four years of persistent advocacy by the ACLUs of Northern and Southern California and our partners, in January the California Secretary of State designated the Division of Adult Parole Operations as a voter registration agency. Now, parole officers are required to offer people they supervise an opportunity to register to vote or update their registration when they are released from prison and each time they change their address.

However, two recent developments demonstrate that California is not immune to Trump’s corrosive attacks on the integrity of the American electoral system.

ISSA V. WEBER

After blaming his 2020 loss to Joe Biden on baseless claims of widespread voter fraud, Trump waged a scorched earth campaign to undermine public confidence in mail voting. It worked with his base. In the month before the 2024 election, just 38% of Trump supporters believed mail ballots would be counted as voters intended compared to 85% of Kamala Harris supporters, according to a Pew Research Center poll.

Despite winning, Trump has doubled down on trying to make it harder to cast a ballot. In March, he issued an executive order requiring proof of U.S. citizenship for the federal voter registration form. The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in the spring, also would require a birth certificate, U.S. passport, nationalization certificate, or other valid citizenship documentation to register to vote. If approved by the Senate and signed into law, the SAVE act could disenfranchise millions of voters, including married women who took their partners’ surnames.

Trump’s unlawful order also called for withholding funding from the 17 states, plus the District of Columbia, that count mail ballots received after Election Day. This includes

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While other states aggressively rolled back voting rights, California bucked the trend.
ACLU NorCal has worked to expand the franchise by making automated voter registration available through the Department of Motor Vehicles, pressing the state to print voting materials in many languages, and restoring voting rights to Californians on parole.
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California, which sends every active registered voter a mail ballot and counts ballots postmarked by Election Day that arrive within a seven-day grace period. More than 80% of Californians who voted in the November presidential election returned a mail ballot.

A coalition of civil rights groups, including the ACLU and the ACLU of D.C., sued Trump over the executive order on behalf of the League of Women Voters. In June, a Massachusetts federal district court blocked both the proof of citizenship and funding provisions on the grounds that the Constitution grants states, not the president, sole authority to set their election rules.

California isn’t out of the woods yet. This spring, San Diego Rep. Darrell Issa sued seeking to stop the state from counting mail ballots that arrive after Election Day. He alleges the practice conflicts with federal law and “provide(s) an unfair electoral advantage for opponents of Republican congressional incumbents.” If Issa’s challenge succeeds, hundreds of thousands of voters could be disenfranchised. On behalf of the League of Women Voters of California, the ACLU and the ACLUs of California filed a motion urging the court to dismiss the lawsuit.

Voting rights advocates believe their arguments will prevail, in part because California’s law complies with federal statutes requiring that votes are cast before or on Election Day as well as longstanding congressional approval of counting absentee ballots from Americans living abroad

that arrive after Election Day. But they worry that if Issa loses and appeals the district court’s decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit the issue may ultimately end up before the Supreme Court. That’s because the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled last year that a Mississippi statute allowing the counting of ballots received up to five days after Election Day violates federal election law.


“Rep. Issa’s lawsuit is a blatantly partisan attack on voting rights and fair elections. Taken to the extreme, his interpretation of federal law would mean that all ballots must be counted by midnight on Election Day,” said Angélica Salceda, director of ACLU NorCal’s Democracy, Speech, and Technology Project. “Discarding lawfully cast ballots because counties fail to meet an arbitrary and impossible deadline would cripple our democracy.”

BONTA V. HUNTINGTON BEACH

Fueled by spurious claims that extensive voter fraud taints U.S. elections, thirty-six states have passed voter ID laws. California, of course, does not have such a law on the books. In March 2024, voters in Huntington Beach, a conservative stronghold in Orange County, went rogue and approved a ballot measure allowing the city to require ID to vote in municipal elections beginning next year. Huntington Beach maintains that it has the authority to set its election rules because it is a charter city. In response, last fall Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill clarifying that local governments are prohibited from requiring that voters present identification. The law went into effect in January.

Attorney General Rob Bonta and Secretary of State Shirley Weber had sued Huntington Beach in April 2024, arguing that existing state law barring “mass, indiscriminate, and groundless challenging of voters solely for the purpose of preventing voters from voting” overrides the local measure. The Orange County Superior Court disagreed. The state’s appeal is pending before the California Fourth District Court of Appeal. In a joint amicus brief, the California ACLUs, Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California, Asian Law Caucus, California Black Power Network, and Disability Rights California argued that voter ID requirements have “historically been used to disenfranchise low-income voters, voters of color, voters with disabilities, and senior voters.”

The state seeks a prompt resolution so that planning for the 2026 election can proceed with clarity.

In a democracy, politicians must win or lose by competing for votes on the merits of their policy proposals, not by shrinking the electorate. These brazen attacks on voting rights must not succeed in California, or anywhere else in the United States. 

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

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Trump has doubled down on trying to make it harder to cast a ballot, including the SAVE Act that could disenfranchise millions of voters, including married women who took their partners’ surnames.
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HOW THE ACLU WON A COURT ORDER BLOCKING BORDER PATROL'S RACIST ARRESTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I was in complete shock. I was devastated, stressed out and very worried about my community," Sanchez remembers. "I'm born and raised in the Central Valley, and I have family who were agricultural workers."

Our partner, Kern County Rapid Response Network, took to Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to sound the alarm. The Network is made up of volunteers, community members, and immigration advocates who respond to and verify ICE activity in their communities.

They warned people: Be careful. Remember your right to stay silent and to decline a search. Don't open your door.

Border Patrol agents were snatching people from their cars, some of which were left abandoned by the side of the road. They grabbed farm workers from a coffee shop and arrested several others at a popular gas station.

They smashed people's car windows and slashed their tires. They threw a grandmother to the ground. Legal residents and U.S. citizens were detained. They did all this unlawfully and without warrants.

Frantic family members, meanwhile, were searching the ICE detention locator website for names of their loved ones. People thought at first that ICE was behind the raids and Border Patrol was just helping out. But none of the names of the people they were looking for were showing up in the locator.

Around midnight on the third day of the raids, Bree Bernwanger, a senior attorney at ACLU NorCal, decided to check the ICE locator again before going to bed. She typed in the name of someone who'd been arrested. Up popped, "in CBP custody," short for "Customs and Border Protection"—the parent agency for Border Patrol.

"It didn't say where, but that's when it really sunk in that whatever was going on was unlike anything we had ever seen before," said Bernwanger. "Certainly unlike anything I'd ever seen before."

She would eventually learn that Border Patrol agents from near the U.S.-Mexico border had come 300 miles to Bakersfield to conduct raids over several days. Their own records show they had arrested 78 people and transported them hundreds of miles back to their station near the border. There, they locked detainees in frigid cells without blankets, deprived them of food, and refused to allow them to speak to a lawyer.

Border Patrol agents smashed car windows and slashed tires. They grabbed farm workers from a coffee shop. They threw a grandmother to the ground. Legal residents and U.S. citizens were detained. They did all this unlawfully and without warrants.



Illustration courtesy of the National ACLU

It was a cruel tactic to strip people of their right to an immigration hearing and coerce them instead into agreeing to "voluntary departure"—a form of expulsion that bars someone from returning to the U.S. for up to 10 years and rips them away from their families.

Border Patrol officials were threatening to extend the unlawful raids up to Fresno and Sacramento. We knew we had to stop them.

What then ensued over the next frenzied seven weeks was a full-court press by a team of attorneys and investigators from the ACLU's California affiliates and immigrants' rights advocates, working with people who had been stopped and arrested, many of whom were forcibly returned to Mexico, and their family members left behind.

We decided to file a federal class action lawsuit to get an order blocking Border Patrol from further terrorizing immigrant communities in Kern County. But first we had to build a solid legal case challenging the inhumane and despicable Border Patrol operation dubbed "Operation Return to Sender."

And so began an intensive and painstaking fact-gathering process.

The ACLU team identified five Kern County residents to be plaintiffs, along with the United Farm Workers (UFW). The law firm Kecker, Van

Nest & Peters LLP, joined the effort as our pro bono partner.

On February 26, we filed a class action lawsuit against Department of Homeland Security, CBP, and U.S. Border Patrol officials over their pattern and practice of violating people's Fourth Amendment rights against arrest without probable cause, and federal law. Soon after, we moved for a preliminary injunction to stop Border Patrol's unlawful practices while the lawsuit was pending.

On April 28, U.S.

District Judge Jennifer

Thurston held the first hearing on the case in the federal courthouse in Fresno. Immigrants' rights advocates and community members packed the courtroom. UFW organizers filed in with their red UFW shirts and sat in the front row. Local public defenders, ACLU staff members, volunteers, and others turned out to show solidarity with all of those who'd been arrested and could not be there.


The government couldn't present a single fact to refute our clients' claims that federal agents had violated their constitutional rights even when pressed to do so by the judge.

The next morning, in a huge victory for civil rights, Judge Thurston issued a preliminary injunction covering the Eastern District federal court, which encompasses the entire California Central Valley. The order bars U.S. Border Patrol from stopping people in violation of the Fourth Amendment or arresting them without complying with federal law.

The order states that agents cannot stop someone unless they have a valid, specific reason to suspect that they are not citizens. The fact that a person's skin is brown is not a valid reason.

Similarly, Border Patrol must have probable cause to believe someone is likely to flee in order to arrest them without a warrant.

The judge further ruled that Border Patrol must document all future stops and warrantless arrests and provide that information to the plaintiffs in the lawsuit every 60 days.

Time will tell how the case ultimately plays out. But as Trump continues to run roughshod over civil liberties, this ruling at least makes it clear that immigration agencies are bound by the law. The ACLU in California and across the country, will continue to fight Trump's racist and unlawful mass deportations. 

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

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As Trump continues to run roughshod over civil liberties, the ACLU in California and across the country will continue to fight Trump's racist and unlawful mass deportations.
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A LETTER FROM ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ABDI SOLTANI

Here we are, seven months into the first year of Trump's second term. The ACLU, our supporters, clients, community partners, and millions of Americans are using every tool available to challenge the policies of this administration that violate civil liberties and that assert new levels of authoritarian power.

From each of us, this takes a lot of energy. As difficult as the challenges we face ahead are, the energy we all put into this fight is renewable. When any one of us acts and uses the power available to us, we replenish our collective energy to fight back. That is the renewable energy that has powered generations of Americans who have fought for equality, freedom, and justice.

The challenges we face are serious, and we should be clear-eyed about them.

What began as a wave of executive orders emanating from the White House at the outset has been followed by unlawful immigration enforcement by federal agencies on the ground in California.

Our cover story takes you behind the scenes of our Central Valley Border Patrol case against raids that were carried out just prior to inauguration through racial profiling and warrantless stops. We are challenging similar misconduct in raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Los Angeles and other parts of California as well as the detention of immigrants at courthouses.

The deployment of the National Guard without consulting Governor Newsom and over his objection, as well as the deployment of Marines in California, are new bright lines that Trump has crossed. Since the Declaration of Independence and the drafting of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, the deployment of the military internally has always been feared as a threat to domestic liberty. As it is now.

When our fellow Americans sign up to serve their country in the National Guard or the Marines, they don't sign up for unlawful domestic deployment. We commend our Governor and Attorney General—as well as millions of our fellow Americans—for their unambiguous opposition to this encroachment.

Meanwhile, challenges unfold in other arenas, as my colleague Legal Director Shilpi Agarwal writes about the “shadow docket” at the U.S. Supreme Court and Communications Director Candice Francis writes about the normalization of white supremacy. And the current majorities in the House and Senate abdicate their responsibility as a co-equal branch of government to hold the president accountable. Instead, they passed the exceedingly dangerous bill that cuts Medicaid and dramatically expands funding to ICE.



Artwork by Nimah Gobir

Candice closes her commentary with this question: Where do we go from here?

FIRST, WE GO TO STREETS

Continue to protest. Continue to monitor and document raids and abuses of power. Continue to learn and exercise your rights to do these things lawfully, while protecting yourself and your community. These are our First Amendment rights and our first line of defense.

SECOND, WE GO TO COURT

We will continue to bring cases to challenge executive orders and the conduct of federal agencies when they violate our laws or the Constitution. Examples of these include our cases on unconstitutional practices during immigration raids, the newly filed class action on birthright citizenship, and our continued litigation on transgender rights and voting rights.



ACLU of Northern California
Executive Director Abdi Soltani

THIRD, WE GO VOTE

As our front-page article highlights, the ACLU remains vigilant to protect voting rights. Make plans for how to engage in the midterm elections. As drafted in the Constitution, every House seat is up for election every two years as a rapid check on power.

FOURTH, WE ALSO GO LOCAL

For example, San Francisco just passed a damaging budget that increases funding to police and jails while cutting vital services that address poverty. In Vallejo, we continue to litigate and advocate on issues pertaining to police use of force and misconduct.

FINALLY, WE GO FORWARD WITH OUR VALUES TO UPHOLD EQUALITY, FREEDOM, AND DEMOCRACY

We protect and advance civil liberties and civil rights. Those values, our collective history, and our mutual strength provide the renewable energy for the difficult work ahead.

Abdi Soltani, Executive Director
ACLU of Northern California

**DISSENT IS
PATRIOTIC**