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HOMELESS RIGHTS IN TULARE

By Jessie Seyfer

The small Central Valley city of Tulare is not necessarily a place that springs to mind when you think of social justice activism. But this sleepy city has been a hotbed of activism for the ACLU recently, especially on policing and homelessness.



Tulare activist Daniel Lawrence

Emery Jones

A key issue around how local police were treating the homeless residents came to the fore early last year, said Pam Whalen, the ACLU of Northern California's lead Central Valley organizer. Police were citing homeless people for violations such as loitering, and if the homeless person wished to challenge the citation, they were still required to pay the entire fine upfront, on the grounds that it would be returned to them if they won their challenge. But this requirement imposed an unjust and impossible burden on the accused individuals, who were being financially penalized before being convicted of any crime.

"The city was out of compliance with the Constitution," Whalen said.

Activist Daniel Lawrence faced this problem firsthand when he was cited for disorderly conduct, then required to pay a fee upfront to challenge the citation. "I knew I wanted to fight it. There's no way I can come up with \$100 for justice."

Whalen, Lawrence, and others moved into action, mounting a multi-pronged campaign. The ACLU of Northern California sent a letter to the Tulare City Council outlining the Constitutional concerns and demanding change, held workshops to educate the homeless community on their rights in interactions with police, reached out to local law enforcement to work together on a solution, and helped organize homeless individuals to testify at a city council meeting on the issue.

As a result, the city changed its tune.

"Over a six-month period of time, the city went back and modified their ordinance and made a hardship waiver so that folks who couldn't afford it would not have to pay," Whalen said. "That was a victory for folks."

Buoyed by this success and by the momentum of the Tulare activism, the ACLU and other groups organized a Homeless Summit. This November event allowed community members, business leaders, homeless residents, and

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AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As this newsletter reaches you, the United States Supreme Court is set to hear arguments in landmark cases related to the freedom marry for same-sex couples that the ACLU and our partners are spearheading. This follows on the heels of ACLU's 2013 victory in *Windsor v. United States* in 2013, which struck down key provisions of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

In the arguments before the court now, the U.S. Supreme Court will consider two questions:

1. Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex?
2. Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state?

What the Supreme Court decides, and how they will arrive at that decision, are things we will know before the end of the Supreme Court term on June 30.

What we also know is that it has been a long road to get here.

For the ACLU, this road began decades ago when we began our work on behalf of LGBTQ equality and filed the first freedom to marry case long before the courts and public were ready for it. For me personally, I remember working alongside the ACLU on the No on Proposition 22 campaign in 2000 (a ballot measure that restricted marriage in California to same-sex couples). I remember volunteers coming back from precinct walks drenched (it used to rain back then) but not dispirited. We lost that initiative badly, and closed the gap but lost again with Proposition 8 in 2008. But we kept marching forward and bringing more of the public with us each time.

Today, public opinion is solidly in favor of marriage for same-sex couples. But the road doesn't end here.

We have a lot of work to do to ensure religion is not used as a reason to discriminate. In many states, we will also have to secure anti-discrimination protections, so that LGBTQ people can be themselves in all aspects of their lives. In too many states—even some with marriage for same-sex couples—an employer can fire someone based on



Gigi Pandian

their sexual orientation. This means that, in some states, you can get married to a same-sex partner but if you put a picture of your spouse on your desk at work, you could lose your job.

Transgender people face discrimination in California and throughout the country. We're working to make sure that schools respect students' gender identity and gender expression. We're also working to make sure that transgender and gender nonconforming adults are treated with fairness and respect at work and in public spaces. We're talking about basic things like being able to use the bathroom that matches your gender identity.

The recent victories in the freedom to marry for same-sex couples creates momentum for LGBTQ rights. We continue marching forward to ensure full equality for LGBTQ people in all aspects of their lives.

Thank you for walking with the ACLU.

Abdi Soltani

Abdi Soltani
Executive Director

BILL OF RIGHTS DAY

On Dec. 7, ACLU members gathered to celebrate Bill of Rights Day. In addition to the usual festivities, we celebrated the 10-year anniversary of our Technology and Civil Liberties Project. Photos from the event are below.



ACLU-NC Organizer Tessa D'Arcangelew (left) with Field Fellows Jose Quezada, Lucia Perez Loera, Daniel Etler, Katherine Wang, and Andrea Ramos



Members of the Alameda County Paul Robeson Chapter, which received the Dick Criley Activism Award



ACLU-NC board members Michael Washington, Cynthia Carey-Grant, Yomi Wrong

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Quinn Delaney, recipient of the Lola Hanzel Courageous Advocacy Award



Pamela Samuelson, recipient of the Chief Justice Earl Warren Civil Liberties Award

Bill of Rights Day photos by Stephanie Jaeger

REMEMBERING AL BENDICH

By Abdi Soltani

Al Bendich, the ACLU of Northern California's staff counsel from 1957-1960 who continued to be a dear friend, teacher, and supporter of the ACLU for the rest of his life, has passed away.

During his time at the ACLU, he argued the landmark *Howl* case, defending City Lights bookstore owner Lawrence Ferlinghetti from prosecution when he published Allen Ginsberg's famous poem. His impact on *Howl* and many other cases was critical to protecting the free speech that we exercise today.

Al Bendich's ACLU work on free speech, privacy, and equality may be 50 years old, but it laid the foundation for the rights we have now. He will always be remembered for what he did for the First Amendment.

An equally deep interest he had was economic inequality. He grew up in the Great Depression, so he carried with him a lifelong concern about poverty, inequality and the concentration of wealth and power—and the threat that poses to our democracy.

He lived through and spoke up in the McCarthy era, so he had a keen sense of the ways the government can intrude on people's privacy and abuse its power to suppress ideas and free association.

He was at the front end of a new generation of advocacy concerning the intersection of race, poverty, and privacy, bringing a novel case to limit the power of police to raid and search the homes of people who were on public assistance.

At a time when so many in our country are engaged in protest, when economic inequality is at a peak, when our



Stephanie Jaeger

privacy is intruded upon at a scale unimaginable even by Joseph McCarthy, and when the abuse of power by police is so front and center, the work and life of Al Bendich is part of our legacy.

Al was a quintessential ACLU leader because he held all these principles and values equally and saw how they fit together. He was helping us think through these very issues.

He knew how busy we are at the ACLU every day with timely and urgent work, but he encouraged us to take time to think and reflect. We had talked about him returning to the ACLU office after his retirement. What I loved about Al was that he did not reduce difficult questions facing our country and world to simple slogans, and neither should we. So that was our vision—that after a 57-year “sabbatical” as staff counsel granted to him by our first director, Ernest Besig, and extended by Ernie's successors—that I would greet him back at the office as friend, teacher and advisor to serve not as staff counsel, but as counsel to our staff.

Al inspires us to think more deeply. And he inspires the next generation of our work to advance the constitution and the country that he loved and made better, more free, and more equal.

Thank you for your counsel, Mr. Al Bendich. 

Read more about Al Bendich at www.aclunc.org.

Abdi Soltani is the Executive Director of the ACLU of Northern California. Inspired by the conversations Abdi had with Al, the ACLU-NC will be launching a series of public conversations about campaign finance and its impact on democracy. Stay tuned for more.

A NIGHT FOR IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

The night before President Obama issued an executive order to provide administrative relief from deportation for 4 million undocumented immigrants, the ACLU of Northern California joined our Freedom Circle supporters in Palo Alto to discuss the impact and challenges of our immigrants' rights work. See page 4 for more information on our current immigrants' rights work.



Left to right: Sara Matlin, Kimberly Hallinan, Narcinda Lerner, Alisa Thomas, Lawrence Lerner, Frank Ching, Rhiannon Sutphen, Cori Stell, Charley Kearns



Left to right: Julia Harumi Mass, Kiran Savage-Sangwan, Daniel Galindo, Jeanine Crider, Paul Crider, Kathleen Bennett




Photos by Allison Garcia

If you would like information about the Freedom Circle, please contact Elisa Perez-Selsky at giving@aclunc.org.

REMEMBERING ALICE FIALKIN

Alice Fialkin, who was a longtime and cherished volunteer member of the ACLU of Northern California, passed away on Jan. 22, 2015 after complications from cancer. Alice participated in various boards and committees, including serving on the Board of Directors and the Defenders of the Bill of Rights Committee. In 2008, Alice began volunteering as an ACLU-NC Civil Liberties Counselor. Her role was integral to the work of the organization, including being the front-line voice for members of the general public as well as discovering potential cases for litigation and advocacy efforts. Alice assisted hundreds of individuals all over Northern California who were in need of legal help, community services, or an empathetic ear. Although her job was often a difficult one, Alice approached her work with great enthusiasm, patience, and compassion. She always maintained a pleasant and cheerful disposition, even under the most trying of circumstances.

Alice loved to travel, participated in several marathons, and was an avid bird watcher. She was also wholly dedicated to her work and was a fierce advocate for civil rights and civil liberties. She was a strong leader and community activist within the Bay Area. Prior to retirement, Alice worked as a San Francisco MUNI employee for 33 years and served as president of the Transport Workers Union Local 200 for 10 years.

The ACLU of Northern California is grateful for Alice's many years of service within the organization. Her tenacity and generous dedication will be greatly missed. 

YOUR RIGHTS WITH AN AB 60 DRIVER'S LICENSE

Since the mid-'90s, when lawmakers eliminated the right of undocumented people to have a driver's license, the ACLU has worked to restore that right.

When Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 60: The Safe and Responsible Driver Act, he ushered with it a new era of immigrant integration and road safety. The law, which went into effect in January 2015, allows all eligible Californians to apply for a driver's license, regardless of immigration status. But these new licenses will look slightly different than others. On the front they read: "federal limits apply." On the back they read: "not acceptable for official federal purposes." For this reason, the ACLU is working to ensure that AB 60 license holders know their rights when they come into contact with state and local law enforcement (such as California Highway Patrol, Sheriff, or police officers).


AB 60 represents an important step toward getting more drivers licensed, tested, and insured. Its largest and most immediate impact will be in the day-to-day lives of an estimated 1.4 million Californians. It means our friends, siblings, parents, and neighbors will be able to drive without fear of having their cars impounded, being ticketed, or left stranded by the side of the road for not having a license.

If you or someone you know has an AB 60 license, here are some key points:

- AB 60 licenses are valid California driver's licenses.
- Local and state law enforcement must accept AB 60 licenses as they would any other state-issued license or identification (i.e., for citations, whether the holder is driving or not).
- Law enforcement is prohibited from using an AB 60 license to consider someone's immigration status as the basis for a criminal investigation, arrest, or detention.
- State or local agencies or officials, or any program that receives state funds, are prohibited from discriminating against someone because they hold or present an AB 60 license.

There are, however, certain instances when one should use caution:

- An AB 60 license holder might put him or herself at risk if they show their driver's license to law enforcement in another state, depending on the laws and policies of that state.
- People shouldn't try to use their AB 60 license to enter restricted areas in federal facilities.
- It's recommended that people don't use an AB 60 license to pass through TSA at an airport, and instead use another form of identification, like a passport.
- People shouldn't try using their license to prove their identity with federal law enforcement officers, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol.

It is also important to remember that anything someone says can be used against them when talking to or in front of law enforcement, so we recommend people don't discuss their immigration status, citizenship, when they came to the U.S., or where they're from. 

If you think you or someone you know have been discriminated against by law enforcement because of an AB 60 license, please call (415) 621-2488 or visit <https://www.aclunc.org/our-work/get-help> to report it. Read more about AB 60 at drivecalifornia.org.

FIGHTING FOR A MORE JUST AND HUMANE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM


Since our founding in 1920, when the ACLU challenged mass deportation of radical leftists in the Palmer Raids, we have stood for the principle of fair treatment and due process for all people. In recent years, the ACLU has fought an uphill battle to protect and advance the fundamental rights of immigrants struggling with our country's dysfunctional immigration system. And time and again, we have come to the conclusion that our immigration system is broken.

For example, the Department of Homeland Security has unlawfully dragged its feet with certain asylum cases, all the while forcing the asylum seekers to languish in immigration detention. This senseless detention comes at a great fiscal cost to taxpayers and at an even greater human cost to detained immigrants and their families.

Under current law, the process should be straightforward: when someone is put in removal proceedings, but expresses fear of returning to his or her country of origin, the government must conduct a screening interview to determine whether they can proceed with their claims before an immigration judge. This is done through a "reasonable fear interview" conducted by an asylum officer and must happen within 10 days. However, the government routinely delays these interviews for months

and, in some cases, for over a year beyond the required 10-day period. The solution to the problem is simple: the government should follow its own rules. But since it has not, the ACLU filed a lawsuit against the government last year.

A federal immigration judge denied the government's motion to dismiss our lawsuit and granted our plaintiffs' nationwide class certification. In the order, the court also found that "the agency appears to have ignored the regulatory deadline altogether" and that "regardless of the stated reasons for adjusting its deadlines, however... the agency

was not free to disregard that regulation." Although the case continues, we are hopeful that it will ultimately bring us one step closer to a more just and humane process for immigrants and their families. 


THE SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEM IS SIMPLE:
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD
FOLLOW ITS OWN RULES.

JULIA HARUMI MASS HONORED FOR WORK TO STOP IMMIGRANT SHACKLING

Each year, *California Lawyer* magazine awards a select few attorneys for its Attorneys of the Year Award. This year, ACLU-NC senior staff attorney Julia Harumi Mass will be celebrated for her work on the unjust blanket policy of shackling all immigrants appearing in immigration court in San Francisco.

Until recently, all detained immigrants appearing in civil immigration court in San Francisco were forced to give critical testimony while restrained by shackles and chains at the wrists, waist, and ankles. They were also forced to endure hours of shackling while being transported to and from the courthouse.

The practice not only stripped them of their dignity, but aggravated previous injuries and was traumatic for immigrants who had suffered from torture and domestic violence in the past.

The ACLU and our partners filed a class action lawsuit against the federal government, and in 2014 the District Court approved a settlement agreement that would end the blanket policy of shackling all immigrants appearing in San Francisco's immigration court. 

Read more about the ACLU-NC's work to advance immigrants' rights at www.aclunc.org/issue/immigrants-rights.

HOMELESS RIGHTS IN TULARE


CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

social services providers to come together and discuss concerns and possible solutions to Tulare's homelessness issues.

"We had homeless people who gave testimony, we had someone come from the downtown association [of businesses]," Whalen said. "From there, we came up with a broad outline of things we wanted to do. Since then we've been meeting on a monthly basis."

Given the increased activism around homelessness and other issues—(see sidebar, at right, on the ACLU's DA and Sheriff's race activities)—the ACLU decided to establish an official chapter in Tulare in the fall. The recognition of Tulare is heartening, Whalen said.

"I'm really proud of ACLU for being willing to come to the Valley," she said. "People in the Valley really don't have access to very many resources and a little bit of help goes a really long way."

The ACLU won a landmark \$2.35 million class-action settlement between a class of hundreds of homeless Fresno residents and the City of Fresno in 2009. 

Daniel Lawrence's Testimony

Daniel Lawrence, 30, is a Tulare resident who has been homeless off and on for several years. Currently living in an apartment, he is a student at College of the Sequoias and hopes to become a lawyer. Lawrence was cited for disorderly conduct and fought the now-changed ordinance that required cited individuals to pay their entire fine upfront if they wished to challenge their citation. He is now very active in justice issues and sits on the board of the ACLU's Tulare chapter. This is an excerpt of his testimony at the ACLU-organized Tulare Homeless Summit on Nov. 15, 2014:

"There are a lot of problems that the homeless face here in Tulare. There are no safe places to sleep. You have to sleep somewhere and once you sleep in a public place you're breaking the law.... I was born and raised in this town, and to be treated as though I'm not




Daniel Lawrence


welcome in my own town because I'm homeless... I was really outraged by that. So that's one of the reasons why I wanted to bring the homeless together. To stand up for ourselves, speak on our own behalf. I have no intention of stopping.... I'm committed to improving things here in Tulare for the homeless. So that way everyone has a safe place to sleep.... You may think personal possessions may not be very important to homeless people. But some people are mentally ill such as myself and have to take medication, and [when their possessions are taken away] people end up getting their medications stolen. They need a safe place to store that so they have that available to them. Also showers, clean clothes. It's not only good for people's health, but also if a person wants to get off the streets and get a job.... The stigma associated with homelessness is wrong and I'm living proof of that. I'm not a dangerous person. If anything, I'm scared of people because I have social anxiety.

SPOTLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND SHERIFF'S RACES

The District Attorney and Sheriff are two powerful elected officials. Last year, the ACLU of Northern California organized a highly successful District Attorney and Sheriff election public education event in Tulare County, as part of its ongoing statewide work to help communities understand key issues around these very powerful positions.

The Tulare County candidates' forum was held in April 2014 and attracted about 150 attendees and all candidates—the most so far of the ACLU's Tulare candidate forums.

"It was standing room only," said Pam Whalen, the ACLU of Northern California's lead Central Valley organizer. "Oftentimes there's not really a lot of attention on the sheriff's race especially. Both positions are very, very powerful. Oftentimes the races are not even contested. I think it definitely affected the conversation." 

I'm proud to call the homeless people here in Tulare family. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be here.... I prefer the term house-less. I never felt homeless because Tulare is my home. That's why I decided to stay here and fight. Hopefully we can all work together and provide a better future for the entire community. Thank you." 

LEGAL UPDATES

By Bethany Woolman

People v. Buza

The ACLU of Northern California has long been fighting against a state policy that requires every person arrested for a felony—including crimes such as simple drug possession or joyriding—to provide a DNA sample that will be stored in a criminal database accessible to local, state, and national law enforcement agencies.

The ACLU-NC filed a major federal class-action lawsuit in 2009 that challenged this same law in federal court. In 2013, the ACLU-NC filed an amicus brief in *People v. Buza*, arguing that mandatory DNA collection of this kind violates the California Constitution.

In a ruling in *Buza*, the California Court of Appeal agreed, ruling that the policy "intrudes too quickly and too deeply into the privacy interests of arrestees." The California Supreme Court has decided to review the case.

Fort Bragg Unified School District Free Speech Victory

In December, the ACLU of Northern California sent a letter to the Fort Bragg Unified School District after the District forbade student athletes from wearing "I Can't Breathe" T-shirts to a basketball tournament.

The students decided to wear the shirts during warm-ups to show support for the Black Lives Matter movement. In addition to banning the shirts, the District prohibited students from protesting this violation of free speech. "In our constitutional democracy, the government cannot lawfully silence its critics," said Senior Staff Attorney Michael Risher.

Hours after receiving the ACLU's letter, the District announced that the ban had been lifted.

Note from the Managing Editor: The day of this victory, two Pitzer College students were visiting me on a job shadow. The students got to experience an exciting day of civil liberties work in action, but we had to explain that it's not every day we secure a victory within hours!

City and County of San Francisco v. Sheehan

The ACLU of Northern California is urging San Francisco to drop its appeal of a court decision affirming that law enforcement must be reasonably responsive to the needs of disabled people.

Teresa Sheehan, who has a psychiatric disability, was shot five times by police in 2008. Luckily, she survived. Her lawsuit argued that the Americans with Disabilities Act applies


to law enforcement—just as it applies to every interaction between government and people with disabilities.

Her case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court. "City Attorney Dennis Herrera could still choose to withdraw his office's appeal," said ACLU Disability Rights Attorney Susan Mizner.

ACLU Responds to Excessive Force Used on Protestors

In December, the ACLU of Northern California filed Public Records Act requests with the California Highway Patrol, the Berkeley Police Department, and the Oakland Police Department after their aggressive response to Black Lives Matter protests across the Bay Area.

Police response showed disturbing signs of a familiar pattern—the use of excessive force against demonstrators, particularly the use of dangerous weapons such as beanbag projectiles and "flash bang" grenades.

"We want to determine whether the police tactics were lawful and constitutional, and whether the policies regarding the use of force against demonstrators reflect constitutional limits and best practices," said ACLU-NC Legal Director Alan Schlosser. 

Read more about the ACLU-NC's legal docket at www.aclunc.org.

EXPANDING ADVOCACY

By Bethany Woolman

The ACLU is expanding its advocacy work in California through its Sacramento-based legislative office, now known as the **ACLU of California Center for Advocacy and Policy**. The new Center, launched in December, acts as the political hub for the ACLU of California, leveraging the relationships and expertise of the ACLU affiliates. It builds on the strong foundation of the former Legislative Office, expanding the ACLU of California's political impact in the Legislature, in the Executive branch, with voters, and with other politically engaged organizations and constituencies.

The new center evolved from deep collaboration between the ACLU's California affiliates. And collaboration has long been a core principle among the affiliates: we are stronger when we work together and present a unified voice for civil liberties and civil rights in California.

"The ACLU's Center for Advocacy and Policy is amplifying our legislative and policy advocacy efforts in the state's capitol," said Center Director Natasha Minsker, who began her new role in December. "Our goal is to make civil rights a reality for all Californians."

Minsker transitioned to the position of Center Director after a long and successful tenure at the ACLU of Northern California, where she previously served as Associate Director. Before taking on the role of Associate Director, Natasha led the ACLU's statewide Death Penalty Project and served as Campaign Director for the Yes on 34-SAFE California Campaign, a ballot initiative that sought to replace the state's broken death penalty.

Minsker is focused on overall management of the center, and is also directly involved in legislative advocacy. Because strategic outreach is so important, Minsker is also coordinating ballot initiative work, developing strategic partnerships, and deepening relationships with statewide elected officials and candidates.

Also joining the new Center for Advocacy and Policy is Legislative Director Kevin Baker.

"While the ACLU's robust legislative agenda will continue to include the protection and advancement of civil liberties and rights of all Californians, the ACLU's legislative office will place special emphasis this year on privacy issues as well as police practices and racial justice issues," said Baker.

Baker joins the ACLU after serving as Deputy Chief Counsel for the California Assembly's Committee on the Judiciary, where he worked on policy issues related to civil rights, constitutional law, immigrants' rights, and privacy, among other issues. Baker also previously served as the National Employment Litigation and Policy Director of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

In addition to Minsker and Baker, Center for Advocacy and Policy staff


includes lobbyists and advocates focusing on immigrants' rights, reproductive justice, LGBT rights, national security, racial justice, economic justice, gender equality, the First Amendment, education equity, technology and civil liberties, public safety, and voting rights.

There are other transitions to announce in the Sacramento office. Longtime Legislative Director Francisco Lobaco has announced his imminent retirement, though he will continue working with the ACLU of California through the 2015 legislative session. Additionally, Valerie Small-Navarro, who served as a Legislative Advocate for almost two decades, retired at the end of the 2014 legislative session. Throughout her tenure at the ACLU, Valerie's dedication impacted a wide range of civil liberties issues, ranging from digital privacy to immigrants' rights. The ACLU is so thankful for their passion and expertise.

Legislative advocacy has been the core function of the ACLU's office in Sacramento for decades. The largest percentage of the time and resources of the center will continue to be directed towards legislation. But a new thrust of the work is to hold state agencies accountable.

The new center is aiming to develop relationships with a broad range of staff in critical agencies like the Department of Education, the Board of State and Community Corrections, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the DMV—to identify and advance civil liberties issues.

As it grows, the Center for Advocacy and Policy hopes to serve as a resource for the non-profit sector, connecting communities statewide with the democratic process. It will aim to provide strategic support to local community groups and smaller organizations—for example, by helping them understand and navigate the legislative process, providing meeting space, and amplifying their message. The ACLU is in a position to use its strength to ensure that the voices of those directly impacted will be heard in the political process.

The new center will take the ACLU of California affiliates' collaboration and policy advocacy to the next level, ensuring that the ACLU is one of the most effective advocacy organizations in the state for many years to come. 

ACLU of Northern California

The ACLU of California sponsors dozens of bills each year to protect and advance civil liberties and civil rights for everyone in our state. These are just a few of the bills we're supporting in 2015. Your voice is crucial in passing these and other important legislation.

Sign up for email action alerts to let your legislator that you want them to support ACLU of California-sponsored bills: www.aclunc.org/email.

RACIAL JUSTICE

AB 953 and **AB 619** are two important state bills that are addressing the issues of racial profiling and police use of force. These bills would modernize California's definition of racial profiling, and improve public access to data on profiling and use of force by law enforcement.

These reforms are critical because biased policing and racial profiling are not only wrong, but also ultimately undermine community trust and public safety. California's current law on racial profiling is weak and out of date. It's time to update our definition, like the federal government has done, and put some teeth into the law.

AB 953 aims to curb the harmful and unjust practice of racial profiling, and increase transparency and accountability with law enforcement agencies. AB 619 seeks to improve transparency and accountability within law enforcement by increasing public access to invaluable data on law enforcement use of force.



ACY IN SACRAMENTO

The **ACLU of California** is a collaboration of the three ACLU affiliates in California: Northern, Southern, and San Diego.

The Sacramento-based **Center for Advocacy and Policy** is one of many programs jointly run for statewide impact.



THE STAFF OF THE ACLU OF CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR ADVOCACY AND POLICY

Left to Right:

Becca Cramer, Legislative Coordinator
Francisco Lobaco, Legislative Advocate
Chauncey Smith, Racial Justice Advocate
Kevin Baker, Legislative Director
Natasha Minsker, Center Director
Katherine Williams, Legislative Advocate
Mica Doctoroff, Legislative Advocate
Raúl Macías, Voting Rights Attorney
Steve Meinrath, Advocate

TECHNOLOGY & CIVIL LIBERTIES

The California Electronic Communications Privacy Act (**SB 178**) protects Californians against warrantless government access to our digital information. It's an important update to California privacy law that safeguards information stored on mobile devices or online services, sensitive emails, text messages, photos, contacts, passwords, and location information. Law enforcement needs a search warrant to enter your house or get documents from your filing cabinet. Your electronic information stored with Internet companies should have the same protections. The ACLU of CA joined forces on this bill with top tech companies like Apple, Google, and Facebook, because Californians should not have to choose between using new technology and keeping their personal lives private, and because technology companies shouldn't be burdened with privacy laws stuck in the digital dark ages. (Read more about SB 178 on page 8.)

EDUCATION EQUITY

Thousands of high school students across California are tracked into so-called fake classes, where they are given meaningless credits for sitting at home, in the office, or taking a course they've already passed. **AB 1012** would limit the current practice of schools offering classes without educational content and would establish a process for supporting school districts that rely on instruction-free classes. No school should warehouse students in fake classes just because it lacks the resources or capacity to deliver academic offerings needed to educate and engage all of our students. This is a common problem especially in schools that serve students of color.



EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY FOR CALIFORNIA'S PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

By Angelica Salceda

The ACLU-NC's vision for reproductive justice means access to contraception, abortion, and comprehensive sexual health education. It also means supporting women and their families. Our newest report takes a look at the barriers to education opportunity that pregnant and parenting students in California face. When schools stigmatize or shame teens who are pregnant or who are parents, and when they prevent these students from taking college-prep courses, it's a fundamental issue of sex discrimination and education inequity.

Pregnant and parenting students have a right to the same educational opportunities as other students. Federal and state law protects these students from discrimination and harassment, and prohibits their exclusion from classes or extracurricular activities.

But students' real-life experiences do not reflect these protections. And unfortunately, there is a widespread lack of awareness among students and school administrators of the rights of pregnant and parenting students.

The ACLU is working to bring these rights to the attention of policymakers and school administrators, and to ensure that this unique population of students has the necessary resources and programs to succeed in school and as parents. Our new report, *Breaking Down Educational Barriers for California's Pregnant and Parenting Students*, found that pregnant and parenting students face an array of institutional barriers that obstruct their path to educational success—despite their desire to succeed and graduate.

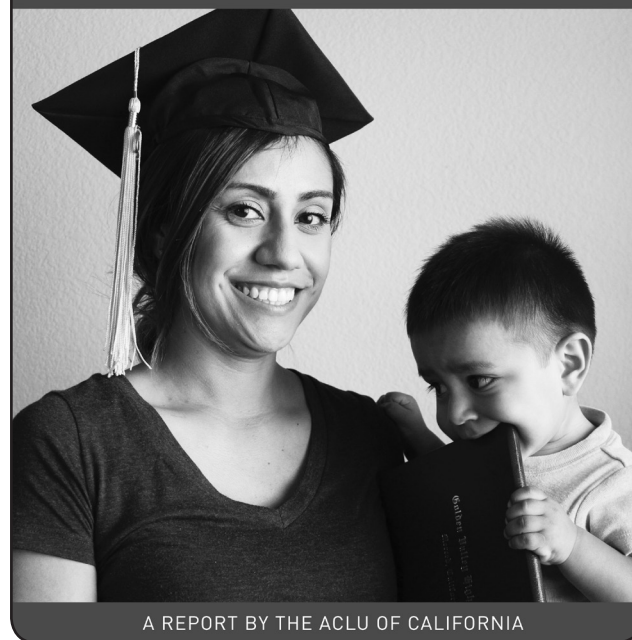
For instance, students interviewed during the course of our research reported being pressured—and in some cases, required—to transfer into continuation school because they were pregnant. Gaining access to college prep classes proved particularly difficult. Students reported being shamed and judged by school staff who seemed to have given up on them. Overly punitive absence policies were also a major barrier to success. One student was only

given five days to recover from her cesarean section. Other students reported being refused the opportunity to make up work when they missed school for medical reasons related to their pregnancy.

The report provides both state and local-level recommendations to address the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Top recommendations include ensuring that lactating students have access to a private, secure room to breastfeed or pump milk. The report also recommends that schools should provide full access to college-track courses. The ACLU of California and California Latinas for Reproductive Justice are working with Assemblymember Cristina Garcia on legislation that will require high schools to provide lactation accommodations.


An intentional focus on the rights and needs of pregnant and parenting students can break down barriers to success. Providing specific programming is the most effective way to improve educational outcomes for this population. And the way schools implement these policies can mean the difference between a student who doesn't graduate high school and a student who goes on to college.

BREAKING DOWN EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS FOR CALIFORNIA'S PREGNANT & PARENTING STUDENTS



A REPORT BY THE ACLU OF CALIFORNIA

Angelica Salceda

In the end, it's simple: pregnant and parenting students can thrive when they have the support they need and that the law requires. 

Read the report and find out more about the rights of pregnant and parenting students online at www.aclunc.org/issues/reproductive-justice.


Angelica Salceda is the Reproductive Justice Fellow at the ACLU of Northern California.

UPDATING DIGITAL PRIVACY LAW IN CALIFORNIA

The ACLU of California has organized a powerful coalition with top tech companies like Apple, Google, Facebook, and Twitter to sponsor the California Electronic Communications Privacy Act (CalECPA) this year. The bill, SB 178, will be one of our top legislative priorities because police should have to get a warrant before getting access to our digital data.

WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN USING TECHNOLOGY AND KEEPING OUR PERSONAL LIFE PRIVATE.

In the wake of the Edward Snowden's revelations, Americans are increasingly concerned about warrantless government access to their digital information. But it's not just the NSA. Local law enforcement is taking advantage of outdated privacy laws to turn our mobile phones into tracking devices and getting access to our email, text messages and digital documents.

They shouldn't be able to spy on us without a warrant. And we shouldn't have to choose between using technology and keeping our personal life private. 

Read more online at www.aclunc.org/calcpa.

MAKING SMART DECISIONS ABOUT SURVEILLANCE


"There ain't no such thing as a free lunch." That saying has never been truer in an era where technology always seems to promise something for nothing. Dig deeper, and you'll always find there's a hidden cost—one you might not be happy to pay.

When a city starts talking about getting surveillance drones or cameras, that should be our signal to make sure that policymakers ask and answer the right questions. Why surveillance? What are the costs and risks? Is the entire community engaged in evaluating the proposal? Are policies in place to safeguard rights if it moves forward? It's essential to have a robust public debate and carefully examine all of the costs before launching a surveillance program that may infringe upon rights, eat away at a budget for years, and even erode trust in law enforcement and make the community less safe.

Up and down the state, basic transparency, oversight, and accountability for invasive surveillance technology has become the exception, not the rule. And there are few resources to help communities make thoughtful and legal

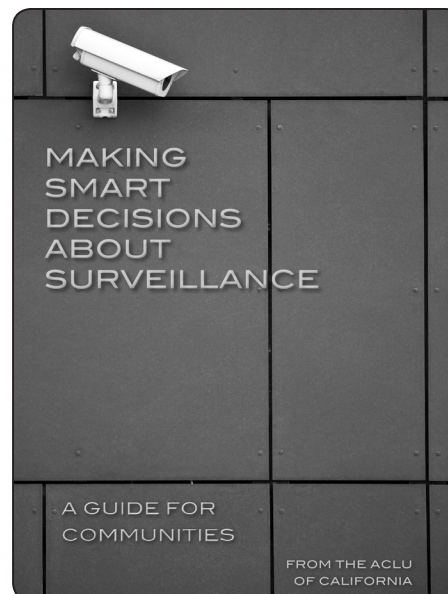
decisions about surveillance.

That's where *Making Smart Decisions about Surveillance: A Guide for Communities* comes in. This new ACLU of California guide highlights smart approaches and missteps to avoid. It also includes information about preparing a Surveillance Impact Report and a model Surveillance & Community Safety Ordinance to ensure that proper democratic process is followed every time.

Policymakers and ACLU chapter leaders in Santa Cruz, Santa Clara County, San Francisco, and Oakland are already working to enact surveillance ordinances and there's a toolkit to help you work on these issues too. By working together, we can make sure our communities are making informed decisions about surveillance that recognize and address the costs, risks, and alternatives. 

Read the guide online at www.aclunc.org/smartaboutsurance

Concerned about surveillance technologies coming to your community? Contact Tessa D'Arcangelew at tdarcangelew@aclunc.org to get involved.



CREATING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS: IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOOL SUCCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

By Anna Salem

In early February, I joined thousands of activists from across the country for the largest LGBTQ conference of the year, Creating Change. It was not your average conference. There were powerful protests and conversations that are demonstrative of the unknown future and tension within the LGBT movement. With marriage equality in sight, many LGBT activists are asking, “What is the next fight?”

While the ACLU has been heavily involved as a leader in many of the state and national struggles for marriage equality, we have also maintained strong LGBT advocacy outside the marriage context. In California, much of that work has focused on the rights of transgender youth, including the ACLU’s work to pass and implement the School Success and Opportunity Act (AB 1266).


AB 1266 is one of the first laws in the country that makes it explicit in the state Education Code that transgender students must be given the same opportunities as other students. In particular, the law says that transgender students can use bathrooms and join school activities that match their gender identity. The law went into effect in 2014, but unfortunately, many districts have been slow to fully implement the law. The good news is that they are looking for guidance on how to do so.

AB 1266 PROVIDES A STEPPING STONE FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF TRANSGENDER YOUTH.

To help with implementation, the ACLU has teamed up with students, families, and community partners across the state to work with districts on creating welcoming and inclusive schools for transgender youth. Two of my co-presenters at Creating Change, Ashton Lee and Pat Cordova-Goff, are students who fought for the passage of the law and have witnessed its benefits. Ashton and Pat are incredible activists who have used their personal stories to highlight the need for AB 1266. Both are transgender students from conservative areas who, unfortunately, did not have the support of their schools. The ACLU-NC wrote a letter to and met with Ashton’s school on his behalf, ensuring Ashton’s access to the boy’s restroom and locker room and the school’s consistent use of his chosen name and gender pronoun.

When AB 1266 was passed, Ashton and Pat worked with their districts on implementation and were able to partici-

pate more fully in school. Eventually, Pat was able to play softball and Ashton was able to join clubs as his full self. Their stories demonstrate the possibilities and benefits of ending practices and policies that push transgender and gender nonconforming students out of school.

Ashton and Pat’s experiences are not uncommon. There are many students across California who are not being given the same opportunities as other students, but AB 1266 provides a stepping stone for improving the lives of transgender youth. The ACLU-NC is committed to continuing AB 1266 implementation throughout the state to ensure that all students are respected and given a chance to succeed in school, and advancing the rights of transgender people in school and throughout their lives. 

If you are interested in working with the ACLU-NC on implementing AB 1266 in your local district contact me at asalem@aclunc.org.

Read more online about the ACLU’s work to support youth and adults who are transgender and gender nonconforming at www.aclunc.org/issue/lgbt-equality.

Anna Salem is an Organizer at the ACLU of Northern California.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The definitions below are commonly accepted, but individuals may use words differently in some contexts; it is crucial to respect the language a person uses to identify themselves.

GENDER: Complex relationship between physical traits and one’s internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither, as well as one’s outward presentations and behaviors.

SEX: The biological attributes and characteristics that are used to assign individuals as “female” or “male.” There are a variety of naturally occurring conditions that belie this assumed physical dichotomy.

GENDER NONCONFORMING: A person whose behaviors or gender expression falls outside what is considered typical for their assigned sex at birth.

TRANSGENDER: A term for people whose sex assigned at birth is different from their gender identity.

CISGENDER: A term for people whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

GENDER IDENTITY: A personal, deeply-felt sense of being male, female, a blend of both, or neither.

Our sexual orientation and our gender identity are separate, distinct parts of our overall identity.

GENDER EXPRESSION: How a person expresses their gender through outward presentation and behavior. This includes, for example, a person’s name, clothing, hair style, body language, and mannerisms.

TRANSITION: The process through which some transgender people begin to live as the gender with which they identify, rather than the one assigned at birth.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS FOR TRANSGENDER STUDENTS AT SCHOOL

Last year, transgender students won major victories across in California and nationally. The School Success and Opportunity Act (AB 1266) became law, reaffirming transgender students’ rights to participate equally in school and be themselves. The U.S. Department of Education released guidelines making it clear that transgender students are protected from discrimination under Title IX. While these are significant advances, we must continue to work to educate our communities and ensure schools are providing transgender students with the same opportunities as other students. The ACLU of California’s new Know Your Rights guide is designed to help inform transgender students and their families of their rights.

Respect for Your Gender Identity

You have the right to assert your gender identity at school, regardless of your gender presentation. You do not need any medical diagnosis or treatment to have your identity recognized by your school. However, we recommend talking to and working with your school if possible, especially if you transition while in school.

The Right to be You

You have the right to be out about your gender identity at school.

Discrimination and Harassment of Transgender Students

All students have the right to be treated equally and to be free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination, regardless of gender identity or gender expression.

Privacy and Outing Students

You have the right to keep your gender identity private, which means that school staff cannot out you without your permission to other students or other school staff. Schools should also not out you to your parents or guardians, but be aware that schools have done this in the past.

Names and Pronouns

You have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond with your gender identity. This is true even if your name and gender are not legally changed. Your school should use your chosen name and pronouns

on everything possible—your student ID, class attendance rosters, yearbook, and more. Your legal name should only appear on your official file.


Restrooms and Locker Rooms

Your school must allow you to use restrooms and locker rooms that align with your gender identity. If you desire more privacy and prefer to use a more private restroom or changing area, your school should accommodate that. Your school cannot force you to use a private restroom (such as in the nurse’s office) if that is not what you prefer.

Sports

Your school must allow you to participate in PE classes and sports that are consistent with your gender identity.

Dress Code and Uniform Policies

You have the right to wear clothing that expresses your gender identity. If your school has a policy that says what boys and girls may wear to school or for special events, then your school must allow you to wear the clothing that corresponds to your gender identity. It’s even better if school dress codes are gender-neutral and do not tell students what to wear based on stereotypes about what some people think boys or girls should wear. 

Read more at www.aclunc.org/kyr.

If you think your rights have been violated or to get help, contact our civil liberties hotline at (415) 621-2488 or online at www.aclunc.org/get-help.

RACIAL INJUSTICE AND BROKEN SYSTEMS

By Abdi Soltani

The ACLU of California and coalition partners are co-sponsors of AB 953, a bill that would help end racial profiling by police in California, and achieve greater transparency and accountability with law enforcement agencies. The proposed law would strengthen the definition of racial profiling, similar to changes recently adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice, and increase the openness, accountability, and legitimacy of policing. This bill comes in the wake of a new poll that found 55 percent of Californians agree that “blacks and other minorities do not receive equal treatment in the criminal justice system.” Among African-American Californians, an overwhelming 85 percent concurred; a solid majority of Latinos, 57 percent, were also in agreement. Currently, California lacks a uniform procedure for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on stops, frisks and other interactions between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Here’s why this is such an important step.

Two core values embedded in our Constitution are due process and equal protection under the law. But the harsh reality is that, far too often, our criminal justice system fails to uphold these values. From police departments to district attorneys, from racial profiling to police use of force, we need fundamental change.

Families and communities across the nation are outraged, grieving, and taking to the streets. Our hearts go out to the families of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, two unarmed black men killed by police. And to the families of Walter Scott, Eric Harris, Tamir Rice, Oscar Grant, Alex Nieto, Andy Lopez, and too many more black and brown men and boys who have been killed by the police.

The ACLU of Northern California stands in solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter activists and with communities calling for an end to racial injustices.

Young black activists have reinvigorated conversations to help expose institutional racism and are making important calls for change. We must have these critical conversations in our communities, in our organizations and in our homes. And we must change laws, policies, and practices in our policing and criminal justice systems.

The killings of Brown, Garner, and others were not isolated incidents. They fit into a long history of racial bias in policing, excessive use of police force, and unfair targeting of black communities. A criminal justice system riddled with unchecked bias impairs the fair administration of justice.


THE ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH #BLACKLIVESMATTER ACTIVISTS AND WITH COMMUNITIES CALLING FOR AN END TO RACIAL INJUSTICES.

And sometimes it means there is no justice at all. The lack of accountability for police officers who kill unarmed black and brown men highlights just how broken the system truly is.

Systemic racism in policing and criminal justice plays out in a number of ways that destroy lives and weaken communities. For example:

- Racial profiling means that people of color are more likely to be stopped by police.

- Unjust drug sentencing laws mean that black and brown men in particular have been locked up at alarming rates, as ACLU-NC staff alum Michelle Alexander details in the book *The New Jim Crow*.
- One in three black men in the U.S. are likely to be imprisoned at some point in their life.
- The U.S. incarcerates black men at a higher rate than South Africa during Apartheid.
- Black and Latino kids are more likely to be arrested by school police (yes, police on high school and middle school campuses) for things that land their white peers in the principal’s office.

Racial profiling has to stop. Excessive use of police force against communities of color and protesters has to stop. The lack of police accountability has to stop. Racially unjust mass incarceration has to stop. Together, we can work toward racial equality and for a world in which no one is targeted for who they are. 

Abdi Soltani is the Executive Director of the ACLU of Northern California.

#BLACKLIVESMATTER: WHAT THE ACLU IS DOING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The ACLU of California is co-sponsoring AB 953, a bill that would curb racial profiling.

The NYCLU introduced a similar bill, and released a report on Stop and Frisk. The office has also been active in the Eric Garner death’s non-indictment: it filed a motion and argued before a Staten Island judge for the release of the Grand Jury records.

The ACLU of Missouri has filed lawsuits on behalf of a Ferguson protester, a Ferguson Grand Juror with a gag order, and a reporter arrested in Ferguson.

It is necessary to highlight the specific ways black lives are impacted by discrimination and to stand in solidarity with this movement. As Alicia Garza, the co-founder of #BlackLivesMatter, says, “If we are committed to a world where all lives matter, we are called to support the very movement that inspired and activated so many more. That means supporting and acknowledging Black lives.”



ACLU of Northern California staff at a Lawyer “Die-In” in San Francisco on Jan. 16, 2015, calling for an end to the use of excessive force, police brutality, and racial profiling in communities of color.

Martha Winnacker

JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND EQUALITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

By Tessa D'Arcangelew

In January, members of the ACLU of Northern California came together at events across our region to elect chapter board members for 2015. ACLU-NC chapters play a critical role in promoting justice, fairness, equality, and freedom for all people living in California by helping to achieve victories in legislation, and then implementing them locally.

During the election event for the Santa Clara Valley Chapter, James Lee, a professor at San Jose State University said, "I get so much information and help from the ACLU for my students, I thought it was time I give back." Along with the rest of his chapter, Lee will serve his community by advancing and protecting civil liberties through local advocacy and monitoring of governing bodies, providing community education workshops, and participating in state and federal campaigns to help pass important legislation.

In total, over 200 people were elected to serve on local chapter boards across our region.

An example of the ACLU-NC staff and chapter activists working together is the success of AB 60, which allows undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license. The work didn't stop with passing the law. Chapter board members are now working with staff and local community partners to ensure new drivers obtain a license with the same civil liberties protections as anyone else. In addition, chapters are working to ensure that people seeking a license know what to expect through community education workshops. (See page 4 for more information.)

Often, the impact we can have on civil liberties is stronger at the local level before it leads to a state or federal victory. Last year, the ACLU produced Making Smart Decisions About Surveillance, a guide for communities that can be used to push back against government surveillance by


requiring a proper public process and debate about invasive technologies, rather than decisions made in secret (see page 8 of this newsletter). The guide includes a model ordinance instituting robust transparency, oversight, and accountability policies, which chapter activists can organize to pass in their city or community.

Many chapter activists have already been working closely with staff based in San Francisco and Sacramento to reach out to community members and lay the groundwork to ensure victories on several fronts. Jess Cabrera Carmona, founder of San Joaquin Immigrant Youth Collective, is already scheduling AB 60 driver's license workshops, just

weeks after her election to the San Joaquin Chapter board. With these important civil liberties initiatives and more, we are looking forward to a very robust year for our chapter board activists.

Anyone is welcome to apply to serve on a chapter board. The ACLU of Northern California has 18 chapters throughout our region in communities as far north as Humboldt and as far south as Tulare, with many in between.

Angeles Roy, who has managed political campaigns, applied to serve on the San Francisco chapter board "to put the skills gained through [her professional] experiences to the service of the community." Like Roy, nearly one-third of all the 2015 chapter board applicants are brand new to working with the ACLU as a chapter board member, and some are even brand new to advocacy.

Through our leadership and advocacy training, along with courage, dedication, and focus, we are making access to justice, equality, and freedom a reality for all Californians. 

If you have questions, contact Tessa D'Arcangelew at tdarcangelew@aclunc.org or (415) 621-2493 x355.


Tessa D'Arcangelew is an Organizer at the ACLU of Northern California.

THE ACLU OF NORTHERN
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IN BETWEEN.

WELCOME NORTHERN SIERRA, SAN FRANCISCO, AND TULARE CHAPTERS

We are excited to welcome new chapters into the ACLU of Northern California: the newly established Sierra Nevada and Tulare chapters, and the return of the San Francisco chapter. In these communities, concerned individuals wanting to make a difference came together because, in the words of new board member Don Russell from the Northern Sierra Chapter, "somebody's got to look after civil liberties." We couldn't agree more.

At the Sierra Nevada chapter election, a survey was conducted, and the community identified free speech, drug policy reforms, and over-militarization of the police as their key concerns. In San Francisco, the room was packed with ACLU supporters who learned about the intersection of our work with people with disabilities and the homeless, and the new horizon of civil liberties.

Members of the new Tulare Chapter board have been working together with the ACLU for several years to fight for the rights of homeless people, especially after sit-lie laws were passed that made it illegal for homeless people to get the most basic of human needs, like sleep. Several of the board members have lived experiences watching their rights taken away, and from overcoming great obstacles have learned how to help others. Patricia Gilmore joined because she "wants our democracy back." 

YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

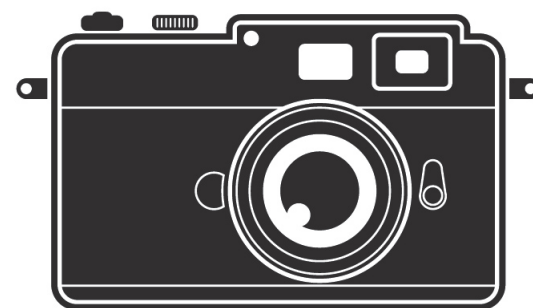
Join your local chapter board
to advance and protect civil liberties
at the local level.

To apply to serve on your
local chapter board, please visit
www.aclunc.org/chapterboardapplication.

For a complete listing of chapters, visit
www.aclunc.org/chapters.

Get involved online.
Sign up for our email list at
www.aclunc.org/email.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS



Want to lend your talents to the ACLU
once or twice a year, to take photographs
like the ones in this newsletter?

We have events throughout Northern
California, and the greatest current need
is in the Central Valley.

For details, email
PHOTOS@ACLUNC.ORG

ASK THE EXPERTS!

Meet the ACLU-NC's new Associate Director Christine Sun

Christine Sun is our new Associate Director and Director of the Legal-Policy Department. Prior to joining the ACLU-NC, Christine was a Senior Staff Attorney at the national ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, where she was one of the attorneys who litigated the historic constitutional challenge to Arizona's notorious S.B. 1070 (the "show me your papers" law). Prior to that, she was Deputy Legal Director at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, directing economic justice and LGBT work, and Senior Counsel for the national ACLU's LGBT and HIV Project, where she led the ACLU's work on behalf of LGBT people in the Deep South. We're honored that she brings her distinguished legal advocacy experience and commitment to civil rights work to the ACLU-NC.

Christine also served as a law clerk for civil rights legend Federal Judge Robert L. Carter, one of the attorneys who argued *Brown v. Board of Education*, and as an associate at Kecker & Van Nest in San Francisco.

What led you down the path of becoming a civil rights lawyer?

I've had a long history with the ACLU. When I was in college at UC Berkeley I was an intern with the ACLU-NC Friedman Project, which at the time was led by Marcia Gallo. I remember sitting in on meetings with Marci, and with Alan Schlosser, Maggie Crosby, and Ann Brick and thinking how great the work they were doing was, and how I one day wanted to be one of them. Before I was a staff attorney for the national ACLU's LGBT and HIV Project, I worked as an attorney here at the ACLU-NC and at the ACLU of Southern California. So taking on this new role is really coming full circle for me.

You've had a long career as a civil rights lawyer—tell us what inspires you?

As a civil rights lawyer, I'm most inspired by the people we represent. Winning a case is great but there's nothing that I love more than sitting around a kitchen table with our clients, hearing their stories. So, whenever I'm feeling frustrated at some court ruling or by opposing counsel, I try to remember the folks we do this work for and with. So many people I've represented have risked so much to try to make change. I think of Constance McMillen, a client in Mississippi who wanted to take her girlfriend to the prom, but her school wouldn't let her. I also think of all the clients we helped in Arizona who were stopped by sheriffs and police officers solely because of the color of their skin.

What work are you most excited about doing here at the ACLU-NC?

I'm most excited about doing more work around racial justice and economic justice. Many of our California police departments have practices that are not all that different from the practices that led to the tragedy in Ferguson. And although California as a state is currently



Christine Sun

experiencing economic recovery, the recovery has exacerbated economic inequality. From our under-funded schools to courts to criminal defense and environment regulatory systems, many poor Californians are punished simply for being poor. This is especially true in the Central Valley, which is home to some of the poorest communities in the country.

Why is economic justice core to the ACLU-NC's mission?

Economic inequality threatens to undermine the civil liberties and civil rights progress that the ACLU and our

sister organizations and advocates have fought so hard for, especially in our broken criminal justice system. The fact of the matter is that if you can't afford to pay for exorbitant court fees or for the bail set by the judge, your right to due process seems pretty hollow.


What lessons did you learn from being a civil rights lawyer in the Deep South?

Some might assume that working on civil rights in places like Alabama and Mississippi was dispiriting. In fact, it was quite the opposite. Everywhere I went, no matter how small the town, there were folks who were deeply committed to social justice, even at great personal risk. This was incredibly moving and I gained a deeper optimism about our ability to advocate for change. Now that I'm back in California, I'm reminded that some of the challenges that passionate activists are taking on in the Deep South are quite similar to the challenges activists are taking on in many parts of our state, especially in the Central Valley.

What are you reading?

I recently read *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, which is utterly captivating. I have long admired Bryan and the Equal Justice Initiative, the organization he founded in Montgomery, Alabama. The work he and his colleagues at EJI do on behalf of indigent criminal defendants and prisoners is truly awe-inspiring and I would encourage anyone interested in social justice to read his books.

Rumor has it that you're a foodie. What have you been cooking lately?

I love unwinding through cooking, especially baking. I'm passionate about my work, but I've learned that I work best when I take time to hike, bike, and bake. I'm really into breads right now, and just last week I made something *Bon Appetit* magazine calls *babkallah*—a delicious hybrid of *babka* and *challah*. 



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