

ACLUnews

SUMMER 2015

VOLUME LXXIX ISSUE 2

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CENTER INSERT: The Year in Review

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We have entered a new era of work around religion at the ACLU, as we continue to see religion be the center of controversies around the country. The use of religion as a basis for discrimination and attacks on the separation of church and state are on the rise, but so are attacks on religious freedom.

We continue to fight the classic church/state battles that began with the historic *Scopes* trial, when Tennessee tried to ban the teaching of evolution in 1925. That case opened doors for our organization and set the standard for so many cases that would follow.

We saw an example of the separation of church and state fight recently right here in northern California, in the Sierra Foothills. The Board of Supervisors of Calaveras County voted to adopt a resolution recognizing a nonprofit Christian ministry for “inviting [women] to test and see for themselves the many blessings that can come from living the teachings of Christ.”

The government essentially chose to endorse a religion rather than praise the work of an organization. We had to remind them that the California constitution prevents them from promoting specific religions. In March, after the ACLU of Northern California filed suit on behalf of nine residents, the board voted to repeal the resolution.

Around the country, our success in seeking equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people has led to a wave of proposed laws intended to allow discrimination, with religion as a cover. While national outrage and pressure from the business community led to the defeat or improvement of many of these proposed laws, others made it through. North Carolina passed a law that lets magistrates—government employees—choose not to perform marriages based on their



religious beliefs. Michigan passed a law that allows religiously-affiliated adoption agencies to discriminate in their placement of children, even though they receive public funds.

Here in California, we have universities using religion as an excuse to limit their employees' access to essential reproductive healthcare. Two Roman Catholic colleges that receive public funds, Loyola Marymount University and Santa Clara University, purchased health plans that covered abortion only for life-threatening pregnancies. State officials—acting with our support and advice—clarified that health plans purchased in California must cover abortion. But with an ever-growing number of health care institutions becoming Catholic-affiliated and additional religious refusals coming to our attention, our fight is far from over.

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BOARD ELECTION NOTICE

The ACLU-NC Board of Directors, in accordance with changes adopted in the bylaws in 2003 (Article VI, Section 3 and Article VI, Section 4), have an election schedule as follows:

Nominations for the Board of Directors will now be submitted by the September Board meeting; candidates and ballots will appear in the Fall issue of the *ACLU News*; elected board members will begin their three-year term in January.

As provided by the revised ACLU-NC bylaws, the ACLU-NC membership is entitled to elect its Board of Directors directly. The nominating committee is now seeking suggestions from the membership to fill at-large positions on the Board.

ACLU members may participate in the nominating process in two ways:

1. They may send suggestions for the nominating committee's consideration prior to the September Board meeting (Sept. 10, 2015). Address suggestions to: Nominating Committee, ACLU-NC, 39 Drumm Street, San Francisco, CA 94111. Include your nominee's qualifications and how the nominee may be reached.
2. They may submit a petition of nomination with the signatures of 15 current ACLU-NC members. Petitions of nomination, which should also include the nominee's qualifications, must be submitted to the Board of Directors by Sept. 30, 2015 (20 days after the September board meeting). 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*.

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AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

BENEFACTORS DINNER

Generous ACLU Freedom Circle supporters gathered at The Omni San Francisco for the annual ACLU of Northern California Benefactors Dinner to hear about our growing presence in Sacramento and the Central Valley. The evening's program featured Director of the ACLU of CA Center for Advocacy and Policy Natasha Minsker, ACLU-NC Staff Attorney Novella Coleman, and activist Ashton Lee.

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



Photos by Susana Millman

Top to bottom, left to right: Amy Weinberg and Zac Weinberg. James B. Blume, Abdi Soltani, Marsha Rosenbaum, and Anne Irwin. Natasha Minsker, Novella Coleman, and Ashton Lee.

ACLUnews

THE PUBLICATION OF THE
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Membership (\$25 and up) includes a subscription to the *ACLU News*. For membership information call (415) 621-2493 or visit www.aclunc.org

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With a Single Sentence, YOU Can Defend Freedom Now and Forever

Right now, by adding the ACLU to your will, you can leave a legacy of liberty for generations to come and defend our freedom today.

Through the Legacy Challenge, simply including a gift in your future plans can qualify the ACLU to receive a 20% cash matching donation today from our generous challenge donor.

For simple bequest language to include in your will and for information on other gifts that qualify for the Legacy Challenge, visit WWW.ACLU.ORG/LEGACY or call (415) 293-6367 ext. 367.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
LEGACY
CHALLENGE

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Yet we've also seen emerging trends like government agencies intruding on religious freedom. One of the most tangible examples is the FBI going into mosques on the grounds of fighting terror. Under that guise, the FBI conducted surveillance on Northern California's Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities. They investigated Islamic centers, assessed religious leaders and infiltrated communities using undercover agents and informants. These agents were using race and religion to decide who to investigate and then refusing to release information related to the surveillance citing its use for law enforcement purposes.

These tactics have a chilling effect on the right to worship freely. The ACLU of Northern California joined the Asian Law Caucus and the San Francisco Bay Guardian to file a Freedom of Information Act request asking the FBI to share the information so we could better understand exactly what they were "investigating." They fought us but in March, a federal judge in San Francisco ruled the FBI couldn't shield the collected information from the public and the records were finally released. Those documents were extremely helpful in exposing the FBI's biased approach to targeting communities based on religion.

These vast and varied cases prove that this problem persists. Religious freedom is a core American value, and one that we must continue to fight for generation after generation. In the 90 years since the *Scopes* case, our work in this area has taken on many different forms, but it remains a key priority. We will remain vigilant in the fight.

Abdi Soltani

Abdi Soltani
Executive Director

DESILVER SOCIETY LUNCHEON

On May 8, ACLU-NC supporters gathered in San Francisco for a conversation about today's fight for civil liberties. Susan Herman, ACLU President, and Abdi Soltani, ACLU-NC Executive Director led a discussion of the ACLU's most current work nationwide on issues of national security, surveillance, and individual rights.



Photos by Jocelyn Wong



Left: Susan Herman and Abdi Soltani. Top right: Lawrence Lerner and Narcinda Lerner. Bottom right: Abdi Soltani, Margaret Ropchan, and Tom Perez.

TSA AGREES TO STOP RACIAL PROFILING IN HAIR PAT-DOWNS

By Novella Coleman

Earlier this year, on the ACLU-NC blog, I shared my experiences and that of ACLU-NC client, Malaika Singleton, Ph.D. I described how a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agent suddenly grabbed my hair without any warning and squeezed it from top to bottom after I had passed through the advanced imaging technology body scanner at the airport. But this did not happen to me just once. I was selected for hair pat-downs during three out of four trips I took over just one year.


Unfortunately, these hair pat-downs are part of a disturbing trend of unwarranted and racially discriminatory hair searches targeting black passengers. In response, the ACLU-NC filed complaints with TSA in which we identified the serious constitutional implications of subjectively treating black women's hair as a threat to national security simply for being different—not to mention the time and resources wasted on screening people based on things that have nothing to do with airport security.

As a result, the ACLU-NC and TSA entered into an agreement to help protect against implicit and overt racial biases during airport screenings. TSA's Office of Civil Rights & Liberties agreed to conduct trainings with a special emphasis on hair pat-downs of black passengers for TSA employees. The agency conducted a series of trainings for supervisors and managers at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in late April.

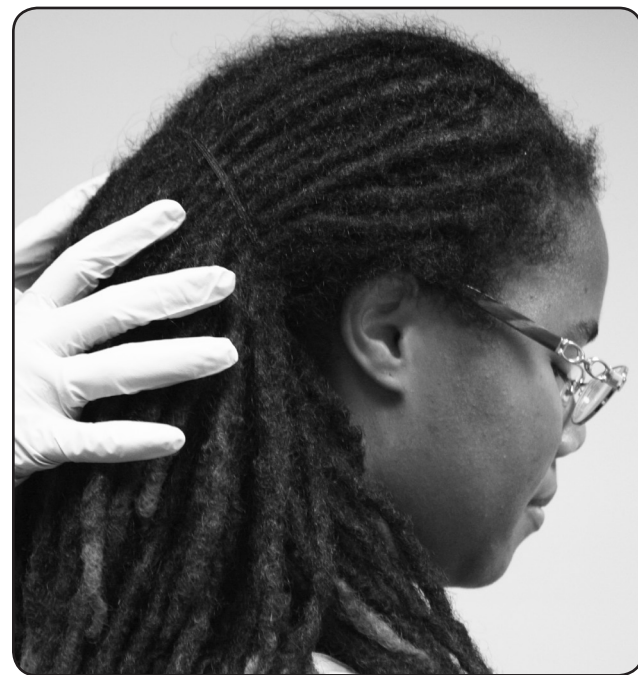
I was invited to the first series of trainings at LAX, which was meant to give officers clarity on TSA procedures for hair pat-downs and to make sure that all passengers are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of how they wear their hair. Based on the feedback provided by me and other attendees of the LAX training, the training will be modified and rolled

VICTORY!
THE TSA IS TAKING STEPS TO
PREVENT AND ADDRESS THE
UNNECESSARY AND HUMILIATING
HAIR PAT-DOWNS OF BLACK
TRAVELERS.

out to all TSA-secured airports throughout the country.

In order to ensure this discriminatory practice is eliminated, it is important that passengers file a complaint when they are subjected to discriminatory treatment by TSA agents. If you think you have been targeted for an unwarranted and racially discriminatory hair search, you can file a complaint online at www.tsa.gov or via email to TSA-CRL@tsa.dhs.gov. 

Novella Coleman is a staff attorney at the ACLU of Northern California.



Novella Coleman

LOVE WINS! SAME-SEX COUPLES NOW HAVE THE FREEDOM TO MARRY IN ALL 50 STATES

The U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark decision *Obergefell v. Hodges* recognized the freedom to marry for same-sex couples around the country. In an opinion authored by Justice Kennedy, who also wrote other winning opinions for the LGBT movement, including *United States v. Windsor* (2013), the Court held that excluding same-sex couples from marriage violated the Constitution's Equal Protection and Due Process guarantees. From the opinion:

It is now clear that the challenged laws burden the liberty of same-sex couples, and it must be further acknowledged that they abridge central precepts of equality. Here the marriage laws enforced by the respondents are in essence unequal: same-sex couples are denied all the benefits afforded to opposite-sex couples and are barred from exercising a fundamental right. Especially against a long history of disapproval of their relationships, this denial to same-sex couples of the right to marry works a grave and continuing harm. The imposition of this disability on gays and lesbians serves to disrespect and subordinate them. And the Equal Protection Clause, like the Due Process Clause, prohibits this unjustified infringement of the fundamental right to marry.

By Bethany Woolman

Reforming Criminal Justice

In 2014, California voters passed Proposition 47—a historic initiative supported by the ACLU that reduced the penalties for some low-level offenses, including simple drug possession and petty theft, from felonies to misdemeanors.

In March 2015, the ACLU-NC sent a letter urging the First District Court of Appeals to hear the Contra Costa County Public Defender's appeal of the Superior Court's ruling that denied Prop 47 resentencing relief to persons with convictions begotten from plea bargains, as opposed to trials. The court heard the case and found that plea bargain convictions are in fact eligible for misdemeanor resentencing under Prop 47.

In April, the ACLU of California filed an amicus brief in the Fourth District Court of Appeals challenging San Diego County's denial of Prop 47 resentencing relief to juveniles. The appeal is ongoing, but a victory would create precedent throughout the state and give thousands of minors in San Diego County a fresh start.

We continue to monitor and, where appropriate, engage in advocacy on Prop 47 resentencing issues around the state.

Severe Health Risks at Immigrant Detention Centers

The ACLU of Northern California has sent a letter urging U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) demanding that the agency halt transfers of immigrant detainees to a privately operated facility known as "Mesa Verde," out of grave concerns for the detainees' health.

Mesa Verde is located in a region that has high rates of a disease also known as Valley Fever, or "death dust." The disease


can be life-threatening and require a lifetime of medical treatment—and people who are Filipino, Pacific Islanders, African, and Latino are disproportionately at risk for severe cases. The public health concern is so dire that more than 2,000 inmates were moved from Central Valley prisons earlier this year.

"We are continuing to put pressure on ICE to pause all immigration detention at the facility until appropriate safety measures are put in place," said ACLU-NC Senior Staff Attorney Julia Mass.

Challenging the Brass Ceiling

In 2012, in the case *Hegar, et al. v. Hagel*, the ACLU of Northern California brought a lawsuit on behalf of four military women who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, challenging the long-standing discriminatory policy banning women from being assigned to combat units and jobs. The outdated policy didn't match the reality that women are already serving in combat positions unofficially, but aren't recognized for their service in pay and promotions.

In response, the Department of Defense announced that it was rescinding its policy. But women continue to be excluded from serving and the Pentagon is not intending to meet the January 2016 deadline for integrating women into combat positions.

"We are losing a generation of leaders while the Department of Defense drags its feet," said ACLU-NC Senior Staff Attorney Elizabeth Gill. "In the meantime, our lawsuit continues." 

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

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Earlier this year, we realized we had a problem. The ACLU had fought hard to enact positive changes in California laws. We won several of those battles—such as AB 420 addressing the concept of willful defiance and SB 1111 addressing involuntary transfers—which resulted in some of our existing Know Your Rights materials needing to be updated. It was a good problem to have, so we jumped in to update our public education materials. Below is the text of our new school discipline guide for students in public schools. Find this and more at www.aclunc.org/kyr.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: SCHOOL DISCIPLINE SUSPENSIONS, EXPULSIONS, INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

What is suspension?

Suspension is a form of school discipline which temporarily removes you from a class or from school. Your school may prohibit you from school grounds, a classroom, or place you in a supervised (“in-school”) suspension classroom separate from other students.

1. When can my school suspend me?

- ♦ Your school cannot suspend you for just anything. It can suspend you only for behavior explicitly listed in the California Education Code.
- ♦ Your school cannot suspend you for school absences or tardiness.
- ♦ A school cannot suspend students below the fourth grade from school or place them in “in-school” suspension for “willful defiance.”
- ♦ Your school may only suspend you for conduct related to a school activity or school attendance. This includes conduct at school, during school-sponsored activities, and on your way to and from school.

2. What must my school do before it suspends me?

- ♦ Your school must first try other interventions to change your behavior. Your school may only suspend you after other interventions fail, unless your behavior is serious, violent, or dangerous to others.
- ♦ Other interventions can include conferences with your parents, referrals to counselors or psychologists, or anger management programs. School districts should also document the interventions they use.

3. What are my rights during the suspension process?

- ♦ You have the right to an informal pre-suspension conference with school or district staff, unless there is an emergency situation.
- ♦ You have other rights during the process including the right to tell your side of the story and present evidence in the conference before you are suspended.

4. What are my rights after a final decision of suspension?

- ♦ Your school must send a written notice of its decision to your parents/guardians.



- ♦ Your school cannot suspend you for more than five days in a row or for more than 20 total school days in one school year.
- ♦ You may have the right to appeal your school’s final decision.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: SCHOOL EXPULSIONS

What is expulsion?

Expulsion means your school district prevents you from attending traditional schools in your school district.

1. When can my school expel me?

- ♦ Your school is required to expel you only for the following behaviors: possessing or selling firearms, threatening another person with a knife, selling a controlled substance, attempting or committing a sexual assault, possessing an explosive, or inflicting serious bodily injury.
- ♦ Your school may choose to expel you for other behavior, but only behaviors explicitly listed in the California Education Code.
- ♦ Your school may expel you only for conduct on school grounds or at a school related activity off school grounds.
- ♦ You cannot be expelled from your school for “willful defiance.”

2. What must my school do before it expels me?

- ♦ You have the right to an expulsion hearing within 30 school days of the proposed expulsion. Prior to your hearing, your district must continue to offer you an

educational program. Your school district will make its final expulsion decision at your hearing.

- ♦ Your school district must provide you written notice of your expulsion hearing date at least ten days prior to your hearing.
- ♦ You have the right to request your student records and inspect evidence to be used against you before your expulsion hearing.

3. What are my rights during and after the expulsion process?

- ♦ You have rights during your expulsion hearing, including the right to bring advocates to help tell your side of the story.
- ♦ You have rights after an expulsion hearing, including the right to a written final decision, and the right to an appeal.
- ♦ If you win your hearing, you almost always have the right to return to your school.
- ♦ You may be eligible to return to your school district after expulsion. Check with your district for its process.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS

What is an involuntary transfer?

An involuntary transfer is when a school district transfers a student to an alternative school against the wishes of the student or their parent/guardian. Schools have a lot of discretion in transfers, but there are important limits on their discretion.

What are alternative schools?

Alternative schools include county community schools, community day schools, and continuation schools. These schools may be beneficial for some students, but they often do not provide the same educational or extra-curricular opportunities as traditional schools.

For more detailed information on your rights and responsibilities during suspension, expulsion, and involuntary transfers:
www.aclunc.org/kyr

Download the full guide and find other Know Your Rights information at www.aclunc.org/kyr.

BECAUSE OF HIS ADDRESS: ONE MAN'S STORY OF RACIAL PROFILING

By Rebecca Rauber & Tessa D'Arcangelew

Each year, the ACLU of California comes together in Sacramento along with hundreds of activists from nearly every part of the state to learn about our work and lobby on critical civil liberties legislation. This yearly event, the ACLU of California Conference & Lobby Day, features staff and expert-led workshops on local advocacy for close to 300 participants, results in over 100 lobby visits with California's state legislators, and creates a community of ACLU activists learning from one another. The event also offers the opportunity for individuals to share their stories of how the issues we are working on directly impact them.

One example is Aaron Harvey, who grew up in the heart of Southeast San Diego. Solely because of his address, local government and police classified him as a gang member. He came to find out he was a documented gang member in the state's database in the worst way: leaving his apartment in Las Vegas to pick up some food, he was accosted by a host of U.S. Marshals, with guns drawn, dogs pulling at their leashes, and a helicopter hovering. They'd brought this force across state lines to bring him back to San Diego where, they told him, he was wanted for murders. As Aaron often tells the story, he laughed at them and said, "You've got the wrong guy."

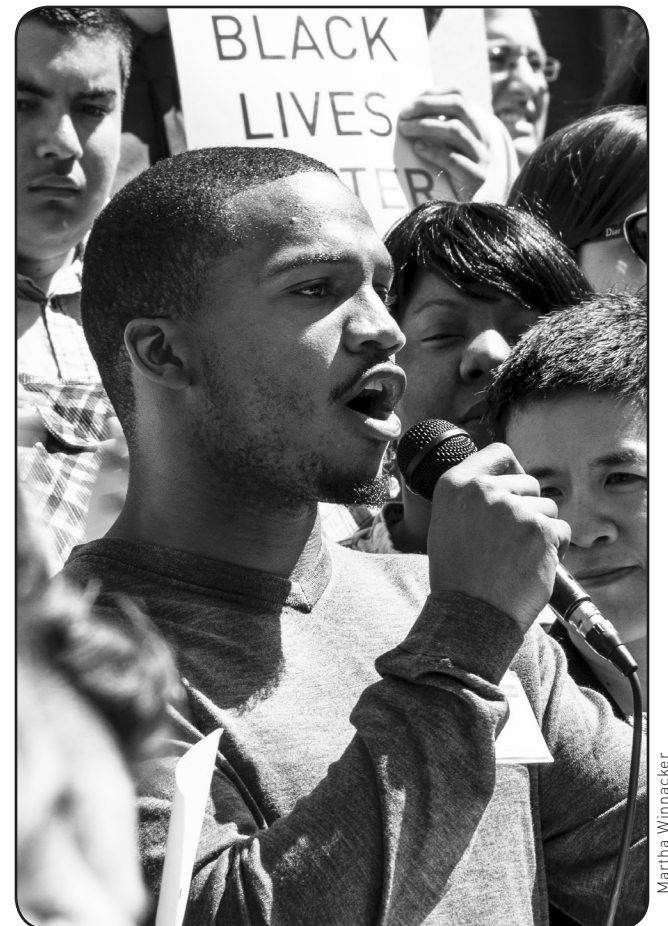
Upon his return, Aaron was never charged with murder. Instead, he was held in jail for five months under an obscure statute of the Penal Code, section 182.5, which makes it a felony for anyone to actively participate in a criminal street gang. This is being used in San Diego to criminalize entire

SOLELY BECAUSE OF HIS ADDRESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLICE CLASSIFIED ACTIVIST AARON HARVEY AS A GANG MEMBER. AT THE ACLU OF CALIFORNIA'S LOBBY DAY, HE MET WITH THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE TO TELL HIS STORY.


neighborhoods—black neighborhoods. While prosecutors acknowledge that many of the men, like Aaron, who were being held had nothing to do with a string of drive-by shootings the year before, section 182.5 allowed them to be held and face life in prison for being presumed gang members.

It's not difficult to end up in a gang database. One has to meet only two of nine criteria, which can be as simple as wearing certain colors or "frequenting gang areas"—which is unavoidable if your neighborhood is considered a gang area. Aaron left San Diego because he was tired of racial profiling, of being stopped, questioned, handcuffed, harassed, and searched by police dogs because of the color of his skin. Aaron has no criminal record and is fighting back.

With the help of the ACLU of San Diego, Aaron is challenging these injustices and attended this year's Conference and Lobby Day. During Lobby Day, he met with the governor's office to share his story of being racially profiled and advocated



Aaron Harvey

for passage of AB 953 and AB 619. AB 953 would update California's legal definition of profiling, create a uniform system for collecting and reporting data on stops, searches and seizures, and modernize law enforcement training to end this damaging practice. 

Rebecca Rauber is the Communications Director at the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties. Tessa D'Arcangelew is the Leadership Development Manager/Organizer at the ACLU of Northern California.

ACLU-NC MAILING PREFERENCES

To Our Members:

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

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

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

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

If you do not wish to receive materials from other organizations, please complete this coupon and send it to:

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

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

Member # _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

LETTER FROM SACRAMENTO

Dear Members and Supporters,

This year, one of the top priorities for the ACLU of California Center for Advocacy & Policy is statewide police reform.

The problems are numerous. On a daily basis, we see images of people of color unjustifiably killed by police. Law enforcement continue to acquire frightening technology for mass surveillance, including drones and StingRays. And a recent report from our colleagues at Drug Policy Alliance documents disturbing abuses of asset forfeiture by California police.

In our state capitol, the ACLU is responding by advocating for a broad range of measures that, collectively, could put California on a path toward socially just police reform.

To highlight a few:

■ AB 953 (Weber) – Racial and Identity Profiling: This bill addresses the daily indignities that people of color endure at the hands of police. It will prohibit racial profiling as well as profiling based on other identity characteristics, such as sexual orientation. It will require the Department of Justice to collect information on law enforcement-community interactions and will modernize officer training to account for implicit biases. The bill will also create the first statewide advisory board to advance fair and impartial policing.

■ AB 619 (Leno) – Excessive Use of Force: This bill seeks to reduce deadly and excessive uses of force by police and enhance law enforcement transparency and accountability. The bill will require law enforcement to report on all deaths in custody and all serious uses of force, and will require the Department of Justice to make that information available to the public.

■ SB 178 (Leno and Anderson) – California Electronic Privacy Act: This bill will protect the privacy of every Californian by requiring police to get a warrant before accessing electronic information. Right now, police routinely request private information from companies like AT&T, Google, and Facebook, and it's up to the companies to decide what they give over. This bill will ensure private information has the same privacy protections whether it is stored electronically or in your file cabinet.

■ SB 443 (Mitchell) – Asset Forfeiture Reform: This bill will require California police to follow California law before forfeiting people's property. Right now, local police avoid state law by using federal task forces and federal forfeiture law. This bill will curtail that practice.

Through these measures, the ACLU seeks to save lives and to safeguard fundamental rights. These reforms are long overdue if we are to restore public confidence in our justice system.



Stacy Antonopoulos

—Natasha Minsker, Director of the ACLU of California Center for Advocacy and Policy

Sign up for email action alerts at www.aclunc.org to tell your legislators to stand up for civil rights and liberties.

DRIVING CALIFORNIA FORWARD: 286,000 AND COUNTING

By Stacy Suh

It has been six months since AB 60, The Safe and Responsible Driver Act, went into effect. Since then, all eligible Californians can apply for a driver's license, regardless of immigration status. This is a huge victory that immigrants and advocates fought for over two decades.

AB 60 is an essential public safety program: all Californians benefit from safer roads when drivers are licensed, tested, and insured. In the first six months of implementation, over a million DMV visits were made for an AB 60 license, and over 393,000 people already received an AB 60 license. This new driver's license program has made a great difference in so many people's lives, with the pass-fail rate for AB 60 license applicants being comparable to that of other license applicants in California.

A driver's license is a necessity for many folks in their daily lives, whether it is to get to work, to drop off their children at school, or to take family members to doctor's appointments. It means a huge step to acknowledging that immigrants are a part of our community.


But we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that AB 60 licenses are truly accessible to all eligible Californians.

For example, the ACLU and our coalition partners throughout California are working closely with Asian-Pacific Islander (API) and African immigrant community organizations to address specific needs of those communities to improve accessibility to AB 60 licenses. We also continue

THANKS TO ACLU ACTIVISTS
ACROSS THE STATE, THE DRIVE
CA COALITION IS BRINGING
GREATER FAIRNESS AND
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1.5 MILLION IMMIGRANTS AND
THEIR FAMILIES THROUGHOUT
CALIFORNIA.

to work to ensure that the federal government respects the privacy of all Californians. In particular, we hope to limit the sharing of information submitted by AB 60 driver's license applicants with federal immigration agents.

Several ACLU of Northern California chapter board members have also been instrumental in educating community members and training additional leaders on obtaining an AB 60 license. In Fresno, Jesus Martinez from the Greater Fresno Chapter and a leader of the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative worked with the ACLU staff to provide a train-the-trainers workshop. Over 40 advocates and community leaders attended. The chapter will be integrating AB 60 Know Your Rights materials into their current workshops providing relief for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. Jess Cabrera Carmona, from the San Joaquin Chapter, hosted an AB 60 workshop with Stockton Immigrant Youth Collective.

Until then, the ACLU and advocates like Jess, Jesus, and many others will continue educating community members about the application process and work to ensure that AB 60 license are truly accessible to all eligible Californians. 

Stacy Suh is an Organizer at the ACLU of Northern California.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEER CHAPTER CHAIRS

By Tessa D'Arcangelew

ACLU-NC Chapters are active in local advocacy campaigns and extend the reach of the organization through community education and building local relationships. And they do all of this as volunteers. Chapter Chairs provide the leadership and organization that drives home our civil liberties victories in communities throughout Northern California. We have sixteen chapters across Northern California, from Tulare to Humboldt.

Meet Taylor Carey from the Northern Sierra Chapter

"As long as I can remember, long before I even became a member, I have revered the ACLU," said Carey, Chair of the ACLU of Northern California Northern Sierra Chapter. When I learned that a new chapter was being formed in my area I thought it might be time to put my reverence into action."

Taylor is the first-ever Chapter Chair of the newly formed Northern Sierra Chapter, which covers Sierra and Nevada Counties. Taylor, a retired Deputy Attorney/Special Assistant Attorney General, is helping the new chapter to focus its energies on the rights of medical marijuana patients, stopping unwarranted dragnet surveillance, and standing up for women's equality. A polio survivor, Taylor has a life-long disability and learned early on about discrimination as a result. When his parents tried to enroll him in public school in Los Angeles, the district refused to admit children with crutches.

"It seems crazy, unbelievable in the current time, but that was what my parents had to deal with," he said, "Desperate,

they enrolled me in private school, though they annually tried to get the public schools to relent." Today, students of color are being pushed out of school at alarming rates. Racial equality is one of Taylor's primary concerns as a new chapter board member.

Of his fellow Board members, he says, "I am heartened and impressed by the determination of the members of the board and their determination to make a difference in our region."

Meet Tess Ahmad from the Sacramento Chapter

Tessnim Ahmad began her work with the ACLU as a Field Fellow in 2012. During Tess's Fellowship, she reached out to voters in Sacramento for the Yes on Prop 34 campaign, which would have replaced the death penalty with life in prison without parole. "Advocating for a huge policy change to complete strangers was new and exciting to me," she said of the experience, so when her fellowship ended, she joined the chapter and became the Chapter Chair in 2014.

Tess grew up in a small town in northern Utah. "As a Muslim of Arab descent, I looked, believed, and thought differently from my peers." And after 9/11 that feeling of being different led to fear, as Muslim Americans' civil rights were infringed upon. For Tess, the ACLU provided solace as an organization "that did not succumb to the stereotypes at a time when it was easy to do so, and instead defended the rights and dignity of everyone."

Tess works for a labor union developing community relationships, and has translated that into making the ACLU a more relevant, powerful force in Sacramento and the surrounding counties through partnering with local allies and bringing new members into the chapter. She is proud of how diverse the Sacramento Chapter is, with "representatives from a variety of social and racial backgrounds, as well as strong participation from youth."

To join a chapter board, visit <https://www.aclunc.org/chapters>

Tessa D'Arcangelew is the Leadership Development Manager/Organizer at the ACLU of Northern California.



At left: Members of the Sacramento Chapter at Conference & Lobby Day.
Above: A Northern Sierra Chapter board meeting.

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ASK THE EXPERTS!

Meet the ACLU-NC's new board chair Beverly Tucker

Beverly Tucker is a longtime supporter of the ACLU, serving on the board since September 2010 and previously from 1987 until 1990. We're honored to have Beverly's leadership expertise and deep knowledge of policy change in both the organizational and governmental spheres.

Beverly has worked as a staff attorney for the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, staff counsel for the United Auto Workers, and deputy attorney general in the Civil Rights Enforcement Section of the Office of the California Attorney General. She served as chief counsel and associate executive director of California Teachers Association from 1988 until 2007, when she retired.

You grew up in Detroit—what did you learn as a young activist there?

At the time, Detroit was a booming and vibrant city. But it was also one of the most segregated cities in the United States. Housing discrimination was rampant. The department stores downtown wouldn't hire black people. Brutal police violence was an everyday occurrence. That was the context in which I was becoming an activist, and at the time, I was a revolutionary.

But by the time I went off to college, the terrible things happening in the Soviet Union were becoming public knowledge. I decided that we weren't going to overthrow the American government and create a whole new society. The constitution, with amendments, is a good document. Now I believe that we can work on making this country live up to its best principles. Our society has tremendous promise and potential, but a lot of people have not yet benefited from its promise and potential.

Gigi Pandian



How do you feel about some of the more prominent social movements today?

I'm so excited about the Black Lives Matter movement. I'm also glad to see the increasing concern about income inequality—lack of social mobility threatens the future of this country in ways we can't even imagine. For any social movement to be successful, you have to have different strategies and tactics at different times. While protests are a crucial part of social change, they are not the primary tactic of the ACLU. But the energy and political pressure generated by protests can be leveraged into real policy change—and that's something the ACLU excels at.

What's it like to witness policy change in action?

I was in Sacramento recently to lobby on AB 1012—a bill the ACLU of California is sponsoring that prohibits school districts from assigning students to "fake classes" that have no instruction or educational content. I was amazed to see hundreds of ordinary people walking

through the halls of the capitol, going into committee rooms, and lining up to testify about legislation. That's the kind of collective action that can counter the influence of money in politics. This year at the ACLU of California Conference & Lobby Day, we had over 300 people in the capitol advocating for a bill to address racial profiling. I'm so proud to be a part of the ACLU because we make a difference—in the halls of justice, in the chambers of the legislature—by banding together and making our voices heard.

What have you enjoyed so far about being Board Chair?

Meeting so many young people who are working for social change! When I was a young person, there were demonstrations all the time—for civil rights, women's rights, anti-war activism, LGBT activism, anti-apartheid—you name it. But by the time I was on the ACLU

board in the late eighties, I feared that that youthful energy was dying down. But there has definitely been a resurgence. We have a number of brilliant young people on our board, and I've been so impressed with the young folks I've met at ACLU chapter meetings and Conference & Lobby Day. They bring a different energy and enthusiasm and new ways of approaching the issues. I want to continue working to get more young people engaged with the ACLU. The organization will surely have a bright future if we do.

What are you reading?

Most recently, *Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America* by Jill Leovy. Leovy is a reporter for the LA Times who documents every murder in Los Angeles. She has come to the conclusion that Los Angeles suffers from both over-policing—random stops, arrests without cause, militarization—and under-policing—a failure to prioritize and solve homicides. I've found it fascinating in part because it confirms my own experiences, living in Oakland, of police priorities skewing towards the War on Drugs rather than partnering with communities to solve the most serious crimes. I recommend that everyone read it.

Rumor has it you like to garden.

I do. When I was a baby gardener I didn't know any better and planted a lot of roses—they're very high maintenance. Now I'm transitioning to native plants, Japanese maples, olive trees, and a whole variety of fruit trees. There's also a raised vegetable bed with organic tomatoes, green beans, peppers, lemongrass, and Swiss chard. And bamboo instead of hedges. I'm actually building structures in the garden out of bamboo poles—they're excellent to work with because bamboo is so strong and sustainable. I just love working out in the sunshine. I put on my headphones and listen to music—it's very meditative.

This interview was conducted and compiled by Bethany Woolman.



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