



#THISSTOPSTODAY

ACLU

**hands up
DON'T SHOOT**



ACLU

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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Sources: Page 5 margin: *The Washington Post* (2015, November 22), retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/police-shootings/>; page 7 margin: ACLU, Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice, <https://www.aclu.org/issues/mass-incarceration/racial-disparities-criminal-justice>; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (Sept. 2013), available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/NationalFindings/NSDUHresults2012.htm>; page 9 quote: *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 14, 22-3 (2015).

The American Civil Liberties Union was founded in 1920 and is our nation’s guardian of liberty. The ACLU works in the courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Historic.

That word comes closest to summing up an extraordinary year of ACLU accomplishments.

Consider just a few highlights made possible by your support:

- Aggressive ACLU advocacy before and in the aftermath of the fatal shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, brought new attention to race-based policing—and persuaded President Obama to curb the racially charged misuse of military equipment by law enforcement.
- Our U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Obergefell v. Hodges* made marriage equality the law of the land, a culmination of decades of meticulously conceived, strategic ACLU cases and advocacy around the country.
- Years of ACLU litigation and lobbying spurred the long-awaited release of the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on the CIA's torture program. That report then made possible our lawsuit against CIA-paid torture profiteers.
- Our Second Circuit win in our lawsuit, *ACLU v. Clapper*, against the National Security Agency's illegal dragnet surveillance forced Congress to enact the first reforms in decades to limit government spying.

Susan N. Herman

As you read the ACLU's annual report, we hope you share our pride in what we've achieved together. Thank you for helping us make history happen.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Transformative.

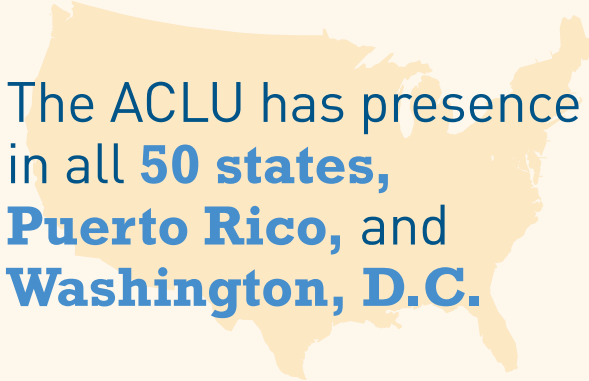
This past year has been transformative for the ACLU. With your help, we're leveraging our already-considerable strengths to amass political clout—and make significant advances despite the gridlock and dysfunction in Washington, D.C.

- With allies from across the political spectrum, we blanketed key congressional districts with advertising and op-eds, demanding an end to mass surveillance. That lobbying, bolstered by our *Clapper* win, secured landmark reform to rein in government spying.
- We launched a nationwide campaign to reduce mass incarceration, helping introduce bills in a dozen state legislatures and in Congress to bring about sentencing reform and mitigate the effects of draconian prison sentences.
- The ACLU laid waste nationwide the "religious refusal" bills that would have allowed LGBT discrimination—defeating measures in legislatures from West Virginia to Wyoming. And our steadfast support of the rights of transgender people gave birth to the Equality Act of 2015, a 21st-century civil rights mandate to extend federal protections to LGBT people.

Anthony D. Romero

In the pages of this report, you'll see how your support is transforming the ACLU into a powerhouse for the next century. Thank you for investing in our future.

ACLU BY THE NUMBERS



The ACLU has presence in all **50 states**, **Puerto Rico**, and **Washington, D.C.**



The ACLU website is a major informational resource getting over **38,000 visits** a day.



Each month, ACLU experts are typically featured in more than **150 stories** in the top five major media outlets and wire services: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and Associated Press.

No other nongovernmental organization participates in as many **U.S. Supreme Court** cases as the ACLU.

The ACLU has more than **60 federal & state lobbyists.**



The ACLU has nearly **500,000** members and supporters, **1,220,000** online activists, and more than **885,000** social media followers.

The ACLU is involved in approximately **2,000** cases at any given time.





FERGUSON: TURNING OUTRAGE INTO ACTION

The deaths of unarmed blacks at the hands of police, starting with Michael Brown's tragic shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, last year sparked outrage throughout country—providing the ACLU with poignant new leverage to press forward with issues of urgent and long-standing concern. We've seized this moment, challenging the brutal impact of race-based policing, fighting police militarization, developing new protocols to expose abuse, and defending the rights of protesters.

CHALLENGING RACE-BASED POLICING

We count on police to protect us from harm and expect them to promote fairness and justice in our communities. But race-based policing turns that expectation on its head. Such targeting terrorizes entire communities of color, making every person of color potentially guilty until proven innocent, and their every police encounter fraught with threat.

The ACLU has repeatedly documented that race-based practices taint the culture of policing nationwide. Citing ACLU investigations throughout the country, the *Huffington Post* declared "It's Not Just A Ferguson Problem." Time and again, we've spotlighted biased policing—and kickstarted the movement toward reform.

Our research into stop-and-frisk in New York City spurred both national attention to discriminatory policing and pioneering local strategies—recently, we won new police training tactics. In Boston, we documented how blacks account for 63

percent of police encounters though they make up less than a quarter of the city's population—and our follow-up lawsuit to force the release of new data has rallied community advocates. In Minneapolis, we found that blacks were almost nine times more likely than whites to be arrested for low-level offenses—and we've eliminated catch-all offenses used to target minorities like "lurking"—and secured the promise of an investigation into arrest practices. In Tampa, we're investigating how the long arm of the law reaches out to crush blacks on bikes—nearly three-quarters of citations, for crimes as trivial as "bike riding with no hands," went to blacks, who make up only about a quarter of the population.

ACLU research and advocacy is backed up by an aggressive litigation agenda. After exposing Chicago stop-and-frisk rates four times worse than New York City's notoriously discriminatory rates, we filed suit, and this summer won a landmark settlement overhauling police practices and securing independent oversight.



SO FAR IN 2015, POLICE HAVE SHOT AN UNARMED BLACK MAN ON AVERAGE EVERY 11 DAYS

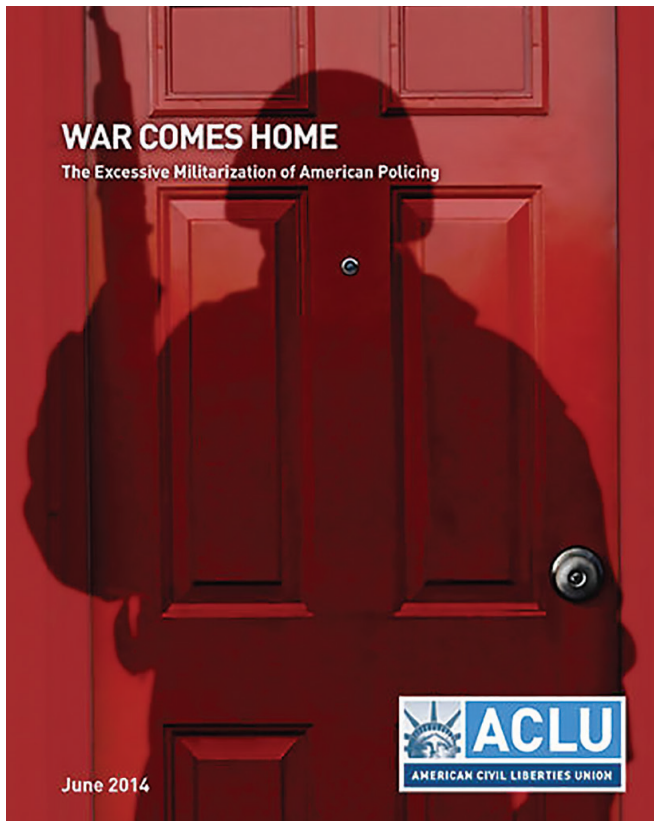


FIGHTING THE MILITARIZATION OF POLICE

Months before Michael Brown was shot, we released *War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing*, a report documenting the increased militarization of the police and their use of military-style weapons, such as M-16s, and mine-resistant armored personnel carriers, all especially targeting communities of color.

*We secured the firing of an officer who'd been caught on video pointing a rifle at protesters and declaring "I will f**king kill you."*

The events in Ferguson gave that report vibrant new life—the media used it to put this issue in a national context, and the cover even made John Oliver's popular HBO show. President Obama got the message, and in spring he banned the federal government from transferring certain military equipment and weaponry to local and state police departments.



EXPOSING POLICE ABUSE

This spring, leveraging technology to expose police abuse, we released headline-generating recommendations for the use of police body cameras that balance the concern for police accountability with the right to privacy. Our advocacy contributed to a nationwide push for reform—fourteen states and the District of Columbia have enacted “body cam” legislation.

We also created a pioneering Mobile Justice app, which allows users to record and instantly upload interactions with police to the ACLU—we review these videos and protect them from destruction. Already, the app, promoted by 19 ACLU affiliates, has been downloaded more than 260,000 times.

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Following the failure to indict police over the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York City, and the massive demonstrations that ensued, the ACLU joined forces with protesters and journalists, successfully protecting their First Amendment rights. We blanketed protests with Know Your Rights materials and legal observers. In Ferguson, we fought police attempts to ban the recording of police performing their official duties in public—and secured the firing of an officer who'd been caught on video pointing a rifle at protesters and declaring “I will f**king kill you.”

We also helped organize the historic December 2014 march in Washington, D.C.—where our huge “hands up” cutout served as the informal icon and rallying point of the demonstration. In addition, we've been vigilant against government surveillance of the Black Lives Matter movement—investigating potential spy planes above protesters in Baltimore, Maryland, and condemning federal overreach. ■



JUSTICE, NOT JAILS

The United States, founded to promote liberty, is the world's leading jailer, with over 2 million people incarcerated. Reversing that shameful distinction is an ACLU priority.

ENDING MASS INCARCERATION

Driven by the “War on Drugs,” America’s over-reliance on incarceration is an entrenched problem, years in the making. Perverse financial incentives to prosecutors and private prisons promote a “lock ‘em up” mentality—though most behind bars did not commit violent crime.

Taxpayers foot the bill. And poor communities of color overwhelmingly pay the price.

ACLU advocacy is contributing to a historic movement, as today, policy makers from across the political spectrum wake up to the moral and fiscal crisis of mass incarceration.

LAUNCHING THE CAMPAIGN FOR SMART JUSTICE

The ACLU has launched an all-out Campaign for Smart Justice, capitalizing

on our long-standing expertise, high-impact coalition-building, and deep state-by-state local knowledge.

Already, we’ve achieved powerful policy change—we were the force behind California’s pioneering Proposition 47 that decriminalized low-level offenses and shifted funds from prisons into schools and social programs. After Proposition 47 passed, we successfully sued to extend the measure to juveniles.

In Alabama, we led the coalition that spurred the passage in May 2015 of Senate Bill 67, arguably the most comprehensive, results-oriented state legislation yet—and which is predicted to reduce the state’s prison population by 20 percent within five years. In addition, we recently helped win reforms in Maine and Utah, downgrading drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor—and removing prosecutors’ financial incentive to incarcerate. ■

**BLACKS ARE
JAILED ON
DRUG CHARGES**

**10
TIMES**

**MORE OFTEN
THAN WHITES
DESPITE
SIMILAR RATES
OF DRUG USE**



ADVANCING LGBT EQUALITY

We made history this year, winning the freedom to marry nationwide with our Supreme Court victory in *Obergefell v. Hodges*—and we’ve since triumphed over backlash and secured further LGBT protections.

WINNING MARRIAGE

The whirlwind of marriage wins leading up to our *Obergefell* victory was exhilarating—and reflective of the ACLU’s all-out commitment to secure this fundamental right for same-sex couples, a battle we’ve been fighting since our first freedom-to-marry case in 1970.

Ten years ago, when marriage seemed an impossible dream for LGBT people, we made this visionary goal an ACLU priority—and we poured organizational resources into finding client couples with stories of love and commitment so powerful they could vanquish public and media resistance.

Once we won *United States v. Windsor*, our 2013 case striking down the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act, momentum was clearly ours. The number of states with the freedom to marry shot from 13 to 36, with

the ACLU helping to bring about more than half those wins.

When the Supreme Court took up the issue of marriage again, hearing arguments in April 2015, we were ready. We generated a storm of mainstream and social media attention to highlight our clients’ stories.

And we—and our client Jim Obergefell—were all over the media when we celebrated sweet victory on behalf of all LGBT couples in June 2015.

CONFRONTING BACKLASH

Obergefell generated new levels of furious backlash, with our foes seeking to claim a religious right to discriminate against LGBT people, hiding behind “religious freedom restoration acts” (RFRAs) to justify their bigotry.



But thanks largely to ACLU advocacy, opposition to RFRA has become vocal and mainstream. The turning point was in March 2015 in Indiana, when a newly passed RFRA was met with a front-page editorial in the conservative *Indianapolis Star*, which demanded in huge print, “FIX THIS NOW.”

National momentum defeated RFRA in ten states, from West Virginia to Wyoming.

The ACLU is proud to have had a central role in this movement, leading and often staffing—as we did in Indiana—state anti-RFRA campaigns.

We also accumulated legal wins—against Kentucky’s Kim Davis and other county clerks who seek to make a religious virtue of their refusal to do their jobs and against florists, bakers, innkeepers, and other merchants who claim that their religious beliefs should exempt them from anti-discrimination laws.

FORGING NEW PROTECTIONS

While we celebrate the marriage victory, discrimination against LGBT people—in employment, housing, public accommodations, education and credit—is still legal in most of America.

Twenty-eight states permit LGBT discrimination and 32 permit discrimination against transgender people.

But we are making headway. The ACLU is helping to pass model antidiscrimination laws—most recently, in Anchorage, Alaska—and our advocacy spurred the introduction in Congress of the Equality Act of 2015, a 21st-century expansion of the Civil Rights Act to extend federal protections to LGBT people.

Meanwhile, we’ve advanced the cause of transgender people in the military, working with Shane Ortega, an Army helicopter crew chief facing discharge because he’s openly transgender. Our advocacy spurred sympathetic national

“The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them.” —Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)

media coverage and persuaded the Defense Secretary to come out in favor of transgender people serving openly in the military.

Importantly, also last year, we won transgender Medicaid coverage in four states, building momentum for progress in the year ahead. ■



CRISIS AT THE BORDER

We have gone all out to stop federal attempts to detain and deport mothers and children fleeing to the United States in fear for their lives.

HALTING A HUMAN TRAVESTY

Last year, when a huge new influx of Central American migrants—especially mothers and children fleeing deadly drug gang violence—sought to cross the border to safety, the United States responded by rushing to detain and expel them, violating their human rights.



As the media documented, some of these migrants have been murdered upon their return to their home countries. We have helped contain this humanitarian crisis.

Among our efforts, we filed suit in August 2014 on behalf of hundreds of Central American mothers and children held at the Artesia detention center in New Mexico. Our lead plaintiff was a Salvadoran mother who fled her native country with her 10-month-old son after rival gangs threatened her and her child, at one point

fondling her with the barrels of their guns, and telling her she had 48 hours to leave or they would kill her.

As a result of our lawsuit and activism, the Obama administration backed down: our clients were released; and their deportation orders were reversed.

Our litigation and advocacy also helped pressure the government to stop subverting the asylum process—and thousands benefitted nationwide, as the percentage of asylum-seeking families clearing the first key hurdle in the interview process jumped from under 40 percent to 90 percent.

PROTECTING REFUGEE CHILDREN

The government's rush to detain and deport immigrants extends to refugee children traveling alone. Immigration courts around the country have been required to conduct expedited and due-process-free deportation cases against tens of thousands of unaccompanied children.

In July 2014, we filed a major case seeking to establish the right to appointed counsel for these children—highlighting the absurd travesty of requiring vulnerable youth to defend themselves against deportation—with no relative or adult advocate. One of our lead plaintiffs was three years old when we filed. In April 2015, we won the right to proceed in court—with the presiding judge acknowledging the children's claim to counsel as vital. ■

CRIMES AGAINST DEMOCRACY

From torture to warrantless collection of Americans' most intimate data, our post-9/11 government has violated democratic ideals. We're leading the charge to hold the government accountable.

DEMANDING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TORTURE

Shocking findings from the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on the CIA's torture program were finally released to the public in December 2014, thanks in part to vigorous ACLU advocacy. The report documents the CIA's deliberate plan to destroy detainees by psychologically breaking them down.

Detainees were forced to stand on broken legs, endure ice-water baths, and undergo "rectal rehydration" (a euphemism for rape) at the hands of interrogators. Even by the CIA's own detention standards, more than two dozen detainees were wrongly held.

Because the report documented the CIA's torture, we were able to file a landmark suit on behalf of survivors like Suleiman Abdullah (pictured right) in October 2015, demanding long-delayed justice. Our case seeks to bring some of those responsible to account, targeting the two psychologists who, as government contractors, were paid \$81 million to devise, implement, and oversee the torture program.

REINING IN SURVEILLANCE

Post-9/11 government spying has extended to dragnet surveillance to amass every phone call within the United States, and to search international texts and emails, all without a warrant.

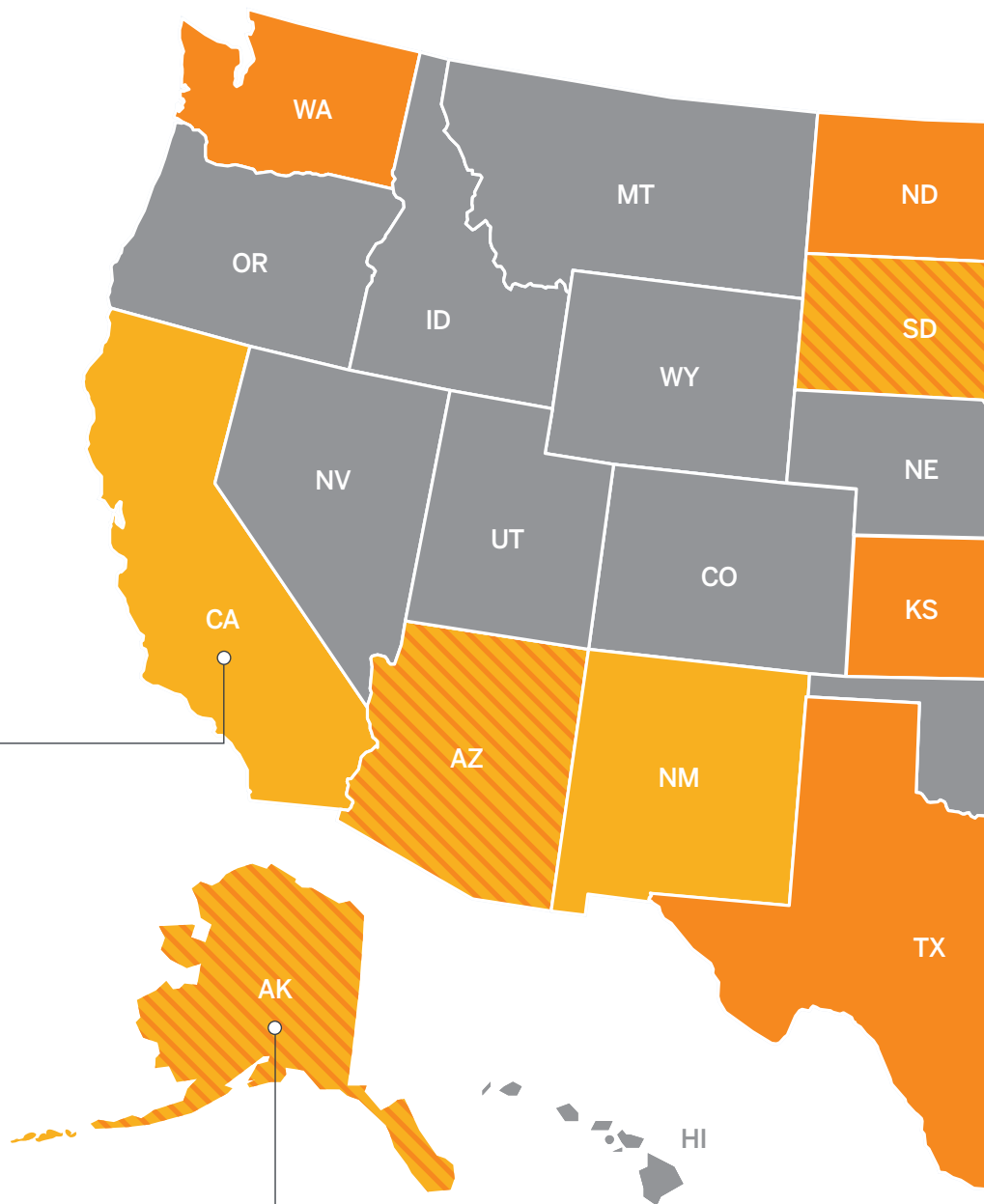
Importantly, in *ACLU v. Clapper*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit unanimously ruled for privacy—and against the government's rationale for its mass-surveillance programs. Our victory gave new clout to our allies in Congress.

Reflecting a seismic shift in public sentiment—and fierce ACLU advocacy—on June 1, 2015, Congress let the surveillance provision of the USA PATRIOT Act expire. Then Congress went further by enacting the historic USA Freedom Act, which narrows governmental authority to spy—and marks burgeoning new momentum for reform. ■



DEFENDING CORE FREEDOMS

Our opponents have launched all-out campaigns to deny access to abortion and suppress voting rights, developing tactics that have spawned countless state-by-state battles in the courts and state legislatures. The ACLU is responding full force, with high-impact, on-the-ground work throughout the country.*



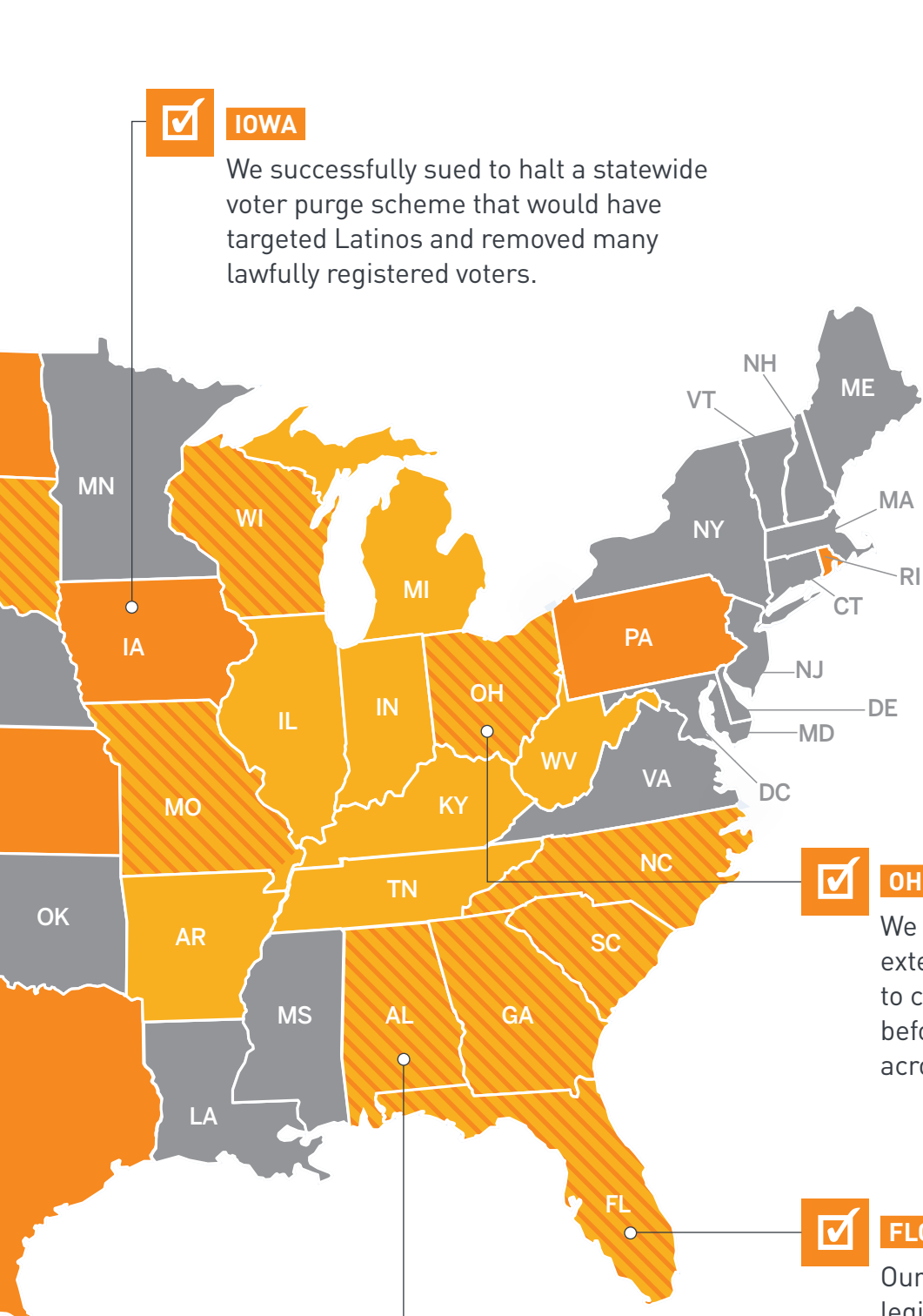
CALIFORNIA

We persuaded the state to issue an explicit mandate requiring all insurance plans to cover abortions—a model for other states.



ALASKA

Our litigation has preserved abortion access for poor women throughout the state, blocking a law that would deny Medicaid coverage for abortion.



IOWA

We successfully sued to halt a statewide voter purge scheme that would have targeted Latinos and removed many lawfully registered voters.

MAP KEY:

- Major reproductive rights work
- Major voting rights work
- ▨ Major reproductive AND voting rights work
- ♀ Reproductive rights victory
- ☑ Voting rights victory

* This map reflects the national ACLU's work. There is additional ACLU affiliate work on these issues in every state.

OHIO

We secured a settlement that extends early voting opportunities to counties that never had them before, boosting access to the vote across the state.

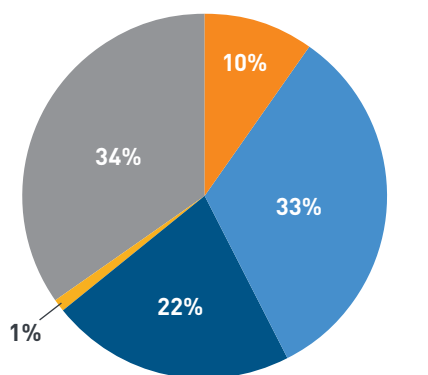
FLORIDA

Our coalition work helped enact legislation to launch a statewide online voter registration system accessible to people with disabilities by 2017—reform we'll build upon in other states.

ALABAMA

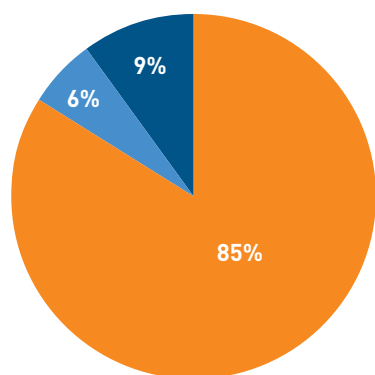
Four ongoing ACLU lawsuits preserve women's access to abortion throughout the state; without our litigation, only one clinic would remain.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



PROGRAM SERVICES

- Legislative
- Legal
- Public Education
- Civil Liberties Policy Formulation
- Affiliate Support



OUR EFFICIENCY

- Total Program Services
- Management and General
- Fundraising

Consolidated Statement of Activities for the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU Foundation, and Subsidiary for the years ended March 31, 2015 and March 31, 2014

Support and Revenue	FY2015	FY2014
Support:		
Grants and Contributions	\$114,966,772	\$75,701,073
Donated Legal Services	6,840,383	7,590,429
Bequests	14,873,107	16,233,433
Total Support	136,680,262	99,524,935
Other Revenue	812,798	899,123
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	137,493,060	100,424,058

Expenses

Program Services:		
Legislative	11,549,409	4,914,841
Legal	36,972,769	42,447,151
Public Education	24,751,747	27,355,361
Civil Liberties Policy Formulation	835,900	937,926
Affiliate Support	39,209,501	39,365,362
Total Program Services	113,319,326	115,020,641
Supporting Services		
Management and General	7,533,590	7,433,277
Fundraising	12,704,014	10,970,315
Total Supporting Services	20,237,604	18,403,592
TOTAL EXPENSES	133,556,930	133,424,233
Change in Net Assets Before Other Changes	3,936,130	(33,000,175)

Other Changes in Net Assets

Legal Expenses Awarded, Net	3,842,201	2,504,624
Net Investment Income, Gains and Losses	10,179,070	12,803,417
Changes in Value of Split-Interest Agreements	(2,376,868)	(865,909)
Recognition of Affiliates' Share of Pension Liability	34,559,117	-
Minimum Pension Liability Adjustment	(23,013,481)	16,484,416
TOTAL OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	23,190,039	30,926,548
Change in Net Assets*	27,126,169	(2,073,627)

Net Assets

Beginning	237,650,158	239,723,785
Ending	\$264,776,327	\$237,650,158

* Unspent temporarily restricted funds are carried forward and may produce deficits in the years when they are expended.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

Take a stand now to protect freedom, justice, and equality.

MAKE A GIFT TODAY

The ACLU comprises two organizations.

- Gifts to the **American Civil Liberties Union** qualify for ACLU membership and support our legislative work, including lobbying in Congress and in state legislatures. Gifts are non-tax deductible.
- Gifts to the **ACLU Foundation** support our litigation and public education. Gifts are tax deductible.

To make an online donation to the American Civil Liberties Union, go to [aclu.org/membership](https://www.aclu.org/membership).

To make an online donation to the ACLU Foundation, go to [aclu.org/donation](https://www.aclu.org/donation).

To give by mail, make a check payable to “American Civil Liberties Union” or “ACLU Foundation” and send it to:

ACLU Office of Leadership Gifts
125 Broad St., 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004

For more information about other giving options, contact Jeff Vessels, ACLU Director of Leadership Gifts, at 212-549-2503 or jvessels@aclu.org.

MAKE A GIFT THROUGH YOUR WILL

Join a special group of ACLU supporters who have made liberty, fairness, and equality their personal legacy by including the ACLU in their wills.

For more information about making a gift through your will, trust, or retirement plan, contact our Gift Planning Office at **877-867-1025** or legacy@aclu.org, or visit [aclu.org/legacy](https://www.aclu.org/legacy).

TAKE ACTION

To make your voice heard through our online action network—ACLU Action—and protect civil liberties in your community and across the country, check out ACLU Action’s grassroots campaigns and sign up today at [aclu.org/action](https://www.aclu.org/action).

Shop online at the ACLU store at [aclu.org/shop](https://www.aclu.org/shop).

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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The ACLU is a GuideStar Exchange Gold Participant and meets the highest standards of the Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance.

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

Your support enables us to protect and advance civil liberties
and social justice throughout the nation.

THANK YOU



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