

CHAMPIONING THE FIRST AMENDMENT

In these tumultuous times, the First Amendment is contested turf, its powerful guarantees of freedom ignored or subverted by government.

We’ve sought to put out a number of First Amendment fires. The Trump administration has attacked free expression, recently subpoenaing Twitter to unmask an anonymous critic of federal immigration policies. Twitter sued, opposing the request, and after we announced our intention to intervene, the government backed down.

In state legislatures, we’re fighting almost 30 bills that target the right to protest, for example, recently defeating a North Dakota bill to let drivers run over traffic-blocking protestors with impunity.

On the public education front, we’ve taken our message to Times Square, posting the First Amendment—in English, Arabic, and Spanish—on a 22-story-tall electronic billboard, announcing that the Constitution applies to everyone.



SPRING 2017 IMPACT REPORT



ON THE FRONT LINES

Our battle ahead is to protect rights and build public support across a range of issues, in the face of a government disinformation campaign. We are up to that challenge.

POLICE PRACTICES

When Sessions’ Justice Department tried to scuttle court-ordered police reforms in Baltimore—reforms even the police chief wanted—we raised the alarm, spotlighting the department’s specious claim that monitoring the police reduces public safety.

We also launched a new front in our ongoing campaign against racially biased policing, filing suit against the Milwaukee Police Department where out-of-control stop-and-frisk practices have resulted in black residents—who make up 34 percent of Milwaukee’s population—being targeted in 72 percent of police stops.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The ACLU brought national attention—including a *New York Times* editorial—to the Trump State Department’s unprecedented failure to show up to human rights hearings sponsored by the Organization of American States, which examined potentially egregious U.S. violations of international law. Our photo of empty chairs went viral—as did our message that the government’s conduct “mirrors the behavior of authoritarian regimes.”

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

On the state front, our litigation stopped Kentucky from closing the state’s one remaining abortion clinic. Kentucky has one of the highest poverty rates in the country, meaning many women lack the funds to travel out of state. This fight is ongoing.

VOTING RIGHTS

We also prepared to launch a new voting rights campaign. Our initial focus will be on Florida, where we could ultimately restore the vote to 1.6 million residents who have previously served time.

Questions? Please contact Caroline Pronovost, Office of Major Gifts, at (212) 519-7869 or cpronovost@aclu.org.

LEADING THE RESISTANCE

In the months since Donald Trump took office, he and his extremist allies have sought to challenge America’s promise of tolerance and inclusion. With you at our side, the ACLU has stood in their way, not only blocking some of the president’s worst initiatives but also gathering forces for the conflicts ahead.

A history of principled perseverance has positioned us for this moment. Indeed, our nearly 100 years of experience has made us experts at turning challenges into opportunities. And that’s what we’re doing now, thanks to the support of so many.

On the LGBT front, where President Trump has reneged on his promise to preserve progress, we’ve turned these setbacks and threats into opportunities to mobilize resistance. And with ACLU client Gavin Grimm

as the face of the resistance, we are putting transgender rights on the national stage.

In the realm of immigrants’ rights, the virulently xenophobic initiatives of the Trump administration have spurred the ACLU to new activism. Building on the outpouring of recent support nationwide, we’ve launched the People Power and Freedom Cities campaigns to focus that fervor for resistance into grassroots impact and to help immigrants in trouble.

We’re also spotlighting the First Amendment, using attacks on religion and free expression as ways to educate the public. At the same time, we’re deploying our network of affiliates to resist federal privacy incursions with state-level reforms.

And we’re defending core freedoms, calling out police abuse within communities of color, keeping abortion clinics open, and protecting each citizen’s right to vote. Together, we are moving forward.



ADVANCING LGBT RIGHTS

Named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people of 2017, transgender high school student Gavin Grimm has, with our support, turned his ACLU case into a teachable moment for America, and with his bravery, inspired resistance.



When his Virginia school board wouldn't let Gavin continue using the boys' room—consistent with his gender identity—the then-15-year-old spoke out. He sued and with our help, won a historic 4th Circuit decision, which leaned on an equally historic Obama-era guidance. That guidance made clear that Title IX supports the rights of trans students. In February, the Trump administration revoked the guidance.

The Supreme Court, scheduled to hear Gavin's case, dismissed it. Instead, the court asked the 4th Circuit to reconsider whether federal law still protects Gavin in the absence of the guidance. We say it does, and the appeals court, which vacated its earlier decision, will hear Gavin's case as early as September.

In April, two 4th Circuit judges publicly declared Gavin a hero, who "takes his place among other modern-day human rights leaders to ensure that, one day, equality will prevail." Gavin has become the face of a movement, rallying supporters at the White House, testifying before Congress, and penning a *New York Times* op-ed, "The Fight for Transgender Rights Is Bigger Than Me." That movement is persevering against emboldened states like North Carolina. Despite our best efforts, the state passed a sham repeal of HB2, its anti-trans law. We are fighting North Carolina in court.

Meanwhile, at least 20 states have introduced anti-trans bills—threats we seek to turn into high-profile opportunities for public education, just as we're doing with Gavin's case.

CONFRONTING XENOPHOBIA

When the federal government is targeting Muslims and migrants—and upending American values of tolerance and inclusion—it's not enough to challenge the government in court. It's time for people to make their voices heard. Now with over 1.6 million members, we have dramatically increased our ability to mobilize activists.

We've used that new power to inspire multitudes to act and have distributed "Know Your Rights" materials far and wide. Indeed, our English/Spanish graphic, "What to Do if ICE Agents Show Up at Your Door," was retweeted over 35,000 times.

In March, we rolled out PeoplePower.org, a grassroots mobilization platform designed to harness the passion of our burgeoning supporter base by giving them the tools to organize in their local communities. A live resistance training in Miami—featuring leading ACLU leaders, attorneys and lobbyists plus *Top Chef* host Padma Lakshmi—brought together a 2,000-plus crowd, with online viewers simultaneously attending more than 2,300 house parties in all 50 states. We used People Power to launch a Freedom Cities campaign, a blueprint for local activists to protect undocumented immigrants in their communities.

This could not be more important. In Portland, Oregon, Francisco Rodriguez—in the United States since he was 5 and an elementary school teaching assistant, church volunteer, and Dreamer with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status—was swept up in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid in March, shipped to Tacoma, and held in detention. A vast outpouring of support from ACLU activists and others—a rally, phone calls to ICE, and social media posts—secured Francisco's release on bond.

In a move that imperils public safety, ICE agents across the country have begun to stake out and arrest people at courthouses.

Meanwhile, we've continued litigation against the Muslim Ban and its successor, Muslim Ban 2.0, building on the momentum driven by our dramatic public success in a Brooklyn, New York, federal court, where we secured the first injunction. We have since filed another lawsuit in Maryland, raising religious freedom issues. And the court continued to enjoin the ban, citing Trump's own tweets as evidence of his intent to discriminate.



We will need to keep the pressure on, as new ICE enforcement strategies test the limits of presidential power. In a move that imperils public safety, ICE agents across the country have begun to stake out and arrest people at courthouses. We are amplifying objections from officials and investigating workarounds.

We continue to be heartened by support from both the public and a wide swath of officials. Over 600 cities and counties have sought to limit police cooperation with ICE.

Demonstrating the power of ACLU perseverance, one of those places is Maricopa County, Arizona. Longstanding ACLU litigation exposed the lawless behavior of the county's Sheriff Joe Arpaio, when he and his top deputies were found in contempt for repeatedly violating court orders to stop the racial profiling of Latinos based solely on the suspicion of illegal status—and ultimately led to his defeat in November. A federal court noted "multiple acts of misconduct, dishonesty and bad faith" as the Maricopa County sheriff's office continued to racially profile Latinos in traffic stops and workplace raids. His successor has pledged not to follow Sheriff Arpaio's notorious example.