



January 5, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Today, the new congressional session begins with a sea of new faces, a crop of old problems, and a renewed promise to recognize and elevate the obligations and directives of the Constitution. The House leadership of the 112th Congress has announced plans to read the Constitution on Thursday and to require a statement of constitutional authority for every new bill. The ACLU is heartened by the robust efforts to honor the Constitution, the document that you have sworn to uphold. The Constitution is the bedrock of this country and of our organization, and we look forward to working with Congress to tackle the many important constitutional issues facing the country including the protection of individual rights, due process and equal protection.

The ACLU has recently celebrated 90 years of protecting Americans' freedom, a milestone that marks our long-lasting influence and decades of experience handling groundbreaking civil liberties issues. When we were founded in 1920, the U.S. Supreme Court had yet to uphold a single free speech claim, violence against African Americans was routine, and women had won the right to vote in August of that year. Over the past nine decades, the ACLU has evolved from a small group of leaders committed to protecting Americans' civil liberties to an organization with over a half million members, thousands of staff and volunteer attorneys, and over fifty affiliate offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. We are dedicated to the goals of upholding individual liberties under the Bill of Rights, preserving the principle of equal protection under the law and strengthening consistent and comprehensive due process rights to protect against arbitrary government action.

At the Washington Legislative Office, our mission, as a non-partisan group, is to work daily with Congress and the executive branch to promote and preserve the core American values of liberty and freedom enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We can provide important

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
WASHINGTON
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
915 15th STREET, NW, 6TH FL
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
T/202.544.1681
F/202.546.0738
WWW.ACLU.ORG

LAURA W. MURPHY
DIRECTOR

NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET, 18TH FL.
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400
T/212.549.2500

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
SUSAN N. HERMAN
PRESIDENT

ANTHONY D. ROMERO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROBERT REMAR
TREASURER

resources and insight on issues ranging from national security, to sentencing disparities, to civil rights and reproductive rights, to internet and privacy rights.

As our executive director, Anthony Romero says, “[o]ne of the great misconceptions of the ACLU is that we are a liberal or ‘left’ organization . . . In fact, we are a conservative organization because our goal is to conserve core American values.” We apply the principles and values of the Constitution equitably to all persons regardless of ideology. Historically, those whose opinions are the most controversial are those whose rights are the most threatened. That is why the Constitution with its Bill of Rights remains a document that is heralded world-wide and prevents government overreaching. Once the government has the power to violate one person’s rights, it can use the power against everyone. We want to work with you to stop the erosion of civil liberties before it is too late.

We hope that you will ask for our counsel on any civil liberties issues that arise during the 112th Congress. We stand ready to be of assistance to you. Please call me or my policy associate, Kimberly Humphrey, should you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at (202) 675-2305.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura W. Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Laura W. Murphy
Director, Washington Legislative Office

cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives