

TRANS YOUTH JUSTICE



“There is so much pain and grief in this moment but being a part of the work to try to support people’s survival and opportunities to thrive keeps me going.”

—CHASE STRANGIO,
deputy director for transgender justice,
Jon L. Stryker and
Slobodan Randjelović
LGBTQ & HIV Project

The ACLU is fighting a record number of anti-trans bills while also building power and support for trans young people whose very existence is under assault.

Across the country, trans youth are facing coordinated attempts by politicians and others to erase historic truth, identities, and people from the public sphere. Over 200 anti-trans bills have been introduced this year so far—doubling last year’s record—and many have already passed into law. In addition to fighting these bills, the ACLU is focused on building power and support for trans young people and their families.

Our integrated advocacy response includes:

→ **Strategic litigation.** Our top priority is health care, such as our lawsuit challenging Arkansas’ ban on gender-affirming health care for transgender youth. We’re also challenging sports bans that seek to exclude trans athletes, “bathroom bills,” laws that would make it harder for trans people to get accurate state IDs, and legislation that chills discussion of gender identity in the classroom.

→ **Elevating the stories of trans youth and their families.** Through sophisticated video, print, and

digital communications campaigns and powerful media outreach, we’re telling the stories of people like Zara Banks, a Black transgender youth and a plaintiff in our Arkansas challenge. In a New York Times story featuring Zara and other plaintiffs, her mother, Jasmine Banks, said, “It’s pretty excruciating as a parent to be told by the state that it will become illegal to give your child what she needs to exist.”

→ **Collaborating with local and national allies.** In Texas, it took an around-the-clock, all-hands-on-deck effort from multiple ACLU national projects, the ACLU of Texas, Lambda Legal, and local organizers on the ground supporting trans families to block Texas’ insidious “child abuse” directive, which threatened parents with criminal penalties for seeking medically necessary treatment for their transgender children.

Ultimately, the most effective way to end these attacks on trans youth is if the public votes out politicians who pass these bigoted laws.

ACLU

IMPACT REPORT SUMMER 2022



PROTECTING OUR VOICES AND CHOICES

As a wave of overlapping assaults on our civil liberties sweep state legislatures—forcing people to carry pregnancies against their will, targeting transgender youth, and silencing classroom discussions that address our country’s racist history—the ACLU is fighting back fiercely with a coordinated nationwide response that leverages every tool at our disposal.



From Arkansas to New Hampshire to South Dakota, the ACLU is battling an unprecedented wave of legislative attacks on reproductive rights, trans youth, and inclusive education. This coordinated attempt to strip us of our rights, particularly our personal and bodily autonomy, is part of a broader anti-civil liberties agenda to consolidate power in the wake of the 2020 presidential election. These state-based bills are also about erasure: erasing historic truths, erasing the voices and choices of vulnerable communities, and erasing representation.

It is no coincidence that the architects of these bills are also pushing to suppress votes and pass gerrymandered maps to subvert the will of the people. The ACLU is equipped to dismantle these injustices from all angles—our integrated advocacy protecting the waterfront of civil liberties arms us to meet this moment head on.

Our legal team is shifting resources to litigate in state courts, where, in tandem with our affiliates and local allies, we can protect rights that go beyond those in the federal Constitution and win cases with novel

arguments that are largely insulated from Supreme Court review. We’re also engaging in long-term scenario planning, gaming out a matrix of responses on everything from redistricting to abortion bans to bills attacking trans youth.

What happens next on these and many other issues will have a profound and lasting impact on people’s lives. The ACLU is ready to prove once again that we have the range, strength, and expertise to turn back attacks on our civil liberties and create a more just and equitable United States.

[More about our impact](#) →

PREPARING FOR A NEW LEGAL LANDSCAPE

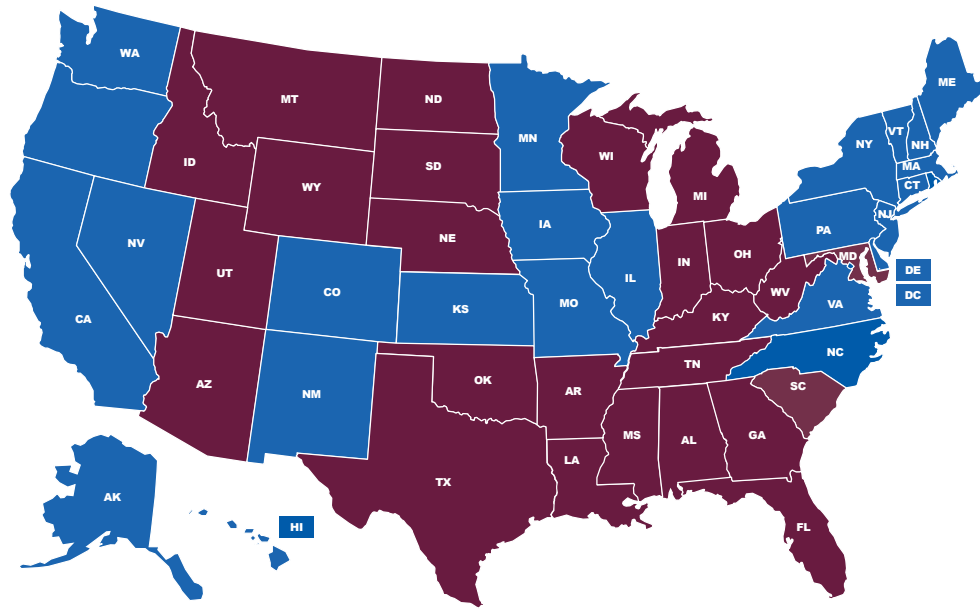
A conservative Supreme Court is poised to turn back the clock on abortion. The ACLU is bringing everything we have to the fight, including tried-and-true strategies and out-of-the-box thinking.



Mobilizing in Texas

Blair Wallace leads the Texas Abortion Access Network (TAAN), a group founded by the ACLU of Texas that is mobilizing a broad coalition of activists to stop anti-abortion efforts where they start: at the local level.

“Through TAAN, we are building grassroots power across Texas. We will not only defend against further restrictions but also empower activists to dive into action and put proactive, protective laws on the books in their hometowns.”



Source: Guttmacher Institute

26 states certain or likely to ban abortion if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns or guts *Roe v. Wade*

Indications from the Supreme Court’s leaked draft opinion on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization (JWHO)* point to an explosion of anti-abortion legislation across the country following the court’s decision. The ACLU has been working tirelessly for months to prepare for this moment.

We are collaborating closely with our colleagues at Planned Parenthood and the Center for Reproductive Rights to “divide and conquer,” deploying litigation teams on multiple fronts. Already, we’ve challenged 15-week abortion bans in Kentucky and Florida and have plans in place for the many possible legal scenarios following the court’s ruling.

Our national political advocacy team is driving people to the ballots, and they are monitoring key state supreme court races where our investments can make a real difference to abortion rights. ACLU affiliates are leading initiatives on the ground, working with and

supporting local coalitions, including the National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF).

While we expect to be in “emergency mode” for most of the coming year, we’re also mapping out long-term plans for the future to create even

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more expansive guarantees to reproductive freedom. We’ve been there before, and we won’t stop until we win. The autonomy, freedom, and lives of hundreds of thousands of people—particularly low-income people and communities of color—are hanging in the balance.

EXPANDING OUR VOTING POWER

The politicians seeking to control our bodies and our choices also want to suppress our vote. The ACLU won’t let that happen.

Ensuring that the voting and redistricting process is fair and representative of all voters is one of the most direct ways to protect civil rights and civil liberties, as unconstitutional attacks on abortion, transgender rights, voting rights, and other important rights regularly originate in state legislatures.

The ACLU’s voting rights litigation teams are active across the country, challenging voter suppression laws and exposing unfair redistricting maps. In February, we blocked implementation of an illegal redistricting plan aimed at diluting Black voting power in Maryland. And in April, we won a key victory in Montana, blocking two state laws that that ended same-day registration and blocked

organized ballot collection on rural Native American reservations.

Secretary of state races are another place where we can fight for our voices and choices. We engage in key states where we can help voters assess which candidates are likely to protect and expand voting rights and protect democracy.

Another major area of our work is in states that have historically sought to

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exclude Black voters. Our Southern Collective’s Southern Voting Project is focused on the 2022 and 2024 voting cycles in three major areas:

- **Mitigating the impacts of voter suppression** efforts by (1) working with election administrators to favor voter access rights and (2) empowering vulnerable populations with the information they need to access the ballot;
- **Ensuring fair maps** based on most recent census data, in the largest effort in the ACLU’s history to fight for district boundaries that are drawn equitably; and
- **Increasing the number of people** with prior convictions who have had their voting rights restored by creating the political conditions for rights restoration in a majority of southern states.

