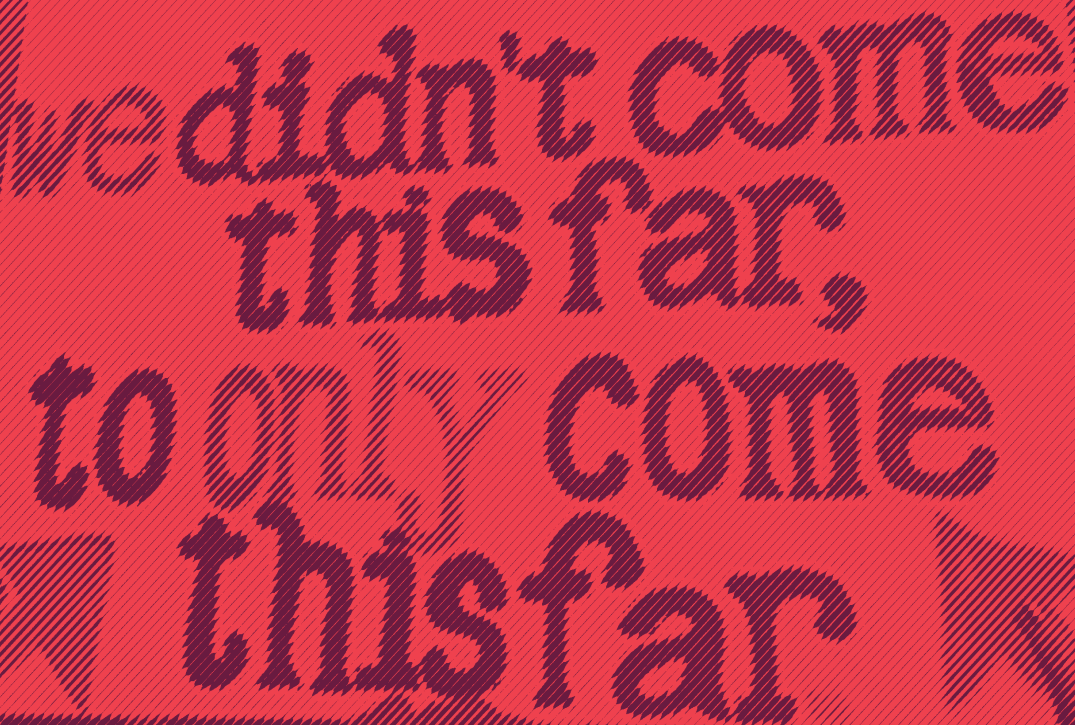


2017: A Year of Resistance



we didn't come
this far,
to only come
this far

ACLU Illinois



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a difference a year makes. A year ago, in the wake of the election of Donald Trump as President, the ACLU was preparing to push back and protect our most basic constitutional protections from new policies coming from Washington, D.C. In Illinois, we promised to use state law and the legislative process to protect constitutional rights – no matter what happened in the Trump White House.

The threats from Washington have been as bad as we feared. The Trump Administration shows no respect for the text - or the spirit - of the Constitution and is working overtime to restrict voting rights; eviscerate women's reproductive rights; roll back the rights of transgender persons; and discriminate against Dreamers, Muslims, and refugees.

As we careen from day-to-day responses to the President's latest comment or Tweet, the ACLU has been cautious not to lose sight of the big picture. We will not veer away from our traditional role of respecting and advancing basic rights. And we have been joined in this work by you – and by countless others – who share our vision of an America and an Illinois that respects basic freedoms and human rights.

Together, we the people are creating the vision of a state and a nation we want for ourselves, and for future generations.

This unity is reflected in many ways and through many metrics. We saw it on display at public events and rallies – from the Women's March, to those who went to O'Hare Airport to oppose the first Muslim ban, to the countless rallies seeking to protect health care for the most vulnerable across Illinois. And many of you have decided to join the ACLU for the first time – with the number of our members and

supporters expanding from fewer than 15,000 to more than 70,000 in the past year.

Together, we have much work to do. But we already see that we can be successful when we work together. Just this past year, we saw great successes in Illinois – expanding access to reproductive health care – including abortion care – for all women, protecting the rights of people from having their property seized by police, modernizing the ability of those who are transgender to change the marker on their Illinois birth certificate without costly, unnecessary surgery, and keeping funding going for the most vulnerable Illinoisans even when there was no approved budget.

Two important lessons were reinforced this past year. First, democracy is not a spectator sport. Each of us needs to participate. And, this is not a sprint - building an inclusive, fair society will take us working together, collectively, for many years. The ACLU of Illinois stands ready to do our part to drive this movement forward and to work with everyone seeking change and reform.

We welcome many of you to this effort, we salute those of you who have been long-time members, and we promise that we are committed to seeking justice for all.

Colleen K. Connell



Women's and Reproductive Rights

Reproductive rights are currently under attack at every level of government across the nation. This is why the ACLU's work to advance affirmative abortion and other health policies is critical.

FIGHTING PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION

The ACLU of Illinois filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of Officer Jennifer Panattoni, a 14- year veteran of the Frankfort Police Department who was denied reasonable accommodations and pushed onto involuntary leave because she was pregnant. Despite repeated requests for temporary adjustments to her duties and equipment - protections guaranteed by federal and state law - the department refused Officer Panattoni at every turn, forcing her to wear uniforms and body armor that did not fit properly while working patrol.

The ACLU of Illinois also filed a lawsuit on behalf of Chicago Fire Department paramedic Sarah

Spriesch, who was forced off the job when she was seven weeks pregnant. When she returned after childbirth, CFD illegally refused to accommodate her need to express breast milk, causing her pain and humiliation.

RELIGIOUS REFUSALS

The ACLU is challenging the use of religion to discriminate in the provision of health care, especially reproductive health care for women. Last year, we worked tirelessly to pass and enact a change to Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act so that patients in Illinois have access to all the information they need to make health care decisions that are best for the patient and their family – even when the health care provider has a religious objection.

HB 40

In 2017, we scored a major victory when Governor Rauner signed House Bill 40 into law. The measure ensures that women who receive insurance coverage through Medicaid can get coverage for their health care needs, including abortion care. This was no overnight success - the ACLU of Illinois worked for years to support and pass this legislation.

“For a low-income woman in Illinois, forced to make an impossible decision between paying rent or paying for an abortion, this is about health, economic security, and being able to live with dignity.”

- Lorie Chaiten, Director of Women's and Reproductive Rights Project

Police Practices

“ Good policing is not done by tanks, guns and bullets - it is done with human contact, community input and mutual respect between the police and the community they serve... Policies must focus on ways to make our police more effective, rather than how to make them seem “tough.”

-Karen Sheley, Director of Police Practices Project

STOP AND FRISK

The ACLU of Illinois continues to monitor and enforce its landmark agreement with the Chicago Police Department reforming the practice of investigatory street stops known as “stop and frisk” to ensure stops are justified and not based on race.



Roxanne Smith,
Communities United Member

REFORM IN THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

In 2017, the ACLU of Illinois filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking reform of the Chicago Police Department. The suit addresses long term problems in the department, including how CPD treats Chicagoans with mental illnesses or other disabilities, as well as use of force against Black and Latino residents. The goal of the suit is to have community members who are most affected by these issues involved in the reform of the department.

\$371 million was paid
by the City of Chicago
to defend and settle **907**
police misconduct lawsuits
between 2011 and 2016



Legislative Victories

Even in a deeply divided political atmosphere in Springfield, the ACLU of Illinois worked hard to foster bipartisanship among our issues and pass important legislation protecting the rights of citizens across our state.

THIS YEAR, THE ACLU OF ILLINOIS WORKED TO HELP SUCCESSFULLY PASS:

- HB 40
- Gang Conduct Act
- Vital Records Act
- Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform

“The measure being signed today is an important step toward ending ‘policing for profit’ and fixing the broken criminal justice system in Illinois. Civil asset forfeiture laws in Illinois have inflicted serious harm on the lives of many residents, exacerbating impoverishment and harming the property owner’s innocent children and family members in the process.”

-Ben Ruddell, Director of Criminal Justice Policy

“The bill signed today simply requires that someone be engaged in a crime or other gang-related activity to be arrested and prosecuted for unlawful gang conduct. This reflects not just good policy, but aligns with our basic constitutional notions that police simply cannot arrest someone because the police do not like who they are or where they are located.”

-Khadine Bennett, Director of Advocacy and Intergovernmental Affairs



CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE REFORM

Governor Rauner came to the ACLU of Illinois offices to sign House Bill 303 into law. The new law reforms asset forfeiture statutes to increase fairness to property owners, expand transparency in the forfeiture process, and remove financial incentives that encourage police and prosecutors to seize citizens’ property.

Pictured - State Legislators (left to right): Rep. Greg Harris; Rep. Will Guzzardi; Sen. Don Harmon; Kelly Evans, staff to Sen. Toi Hutchinson; Rep. Sara Feigenholtz; Khadine Bennett; Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie; Ben Ruddell

LGBTQ Rights

Since the Supreme Court's decision making marriage equality the law of the land and the change of Presidential administrations, we have seen a resurgence of animus towards the LGBTQ community. Opponents of LGBTQ equality have attempted to undermine marriage equality by seeking exemptions from existing laws that prohibit businesses from discriminating against LGBTQ people, including same-sex couples looking for vendors for their weddings. This year, the ACLU of Illinois litigated and advocated for inclusive policies that strengthen the rights of LGBTQ Illinoisans, especially people who are transgender and intersex. We have fought to end barriers to LGBTQ people's ability to live their lives openly and authentically - without discrimination - through easier access to accurate identity documents and the use of public facilities.

WATHEN V. TIMBER CREEK BED & BREAKFAST

Our representation of a downstate couple who were discriminated against by a Paxton Bed & Breakfast owner came to a successful end. The owner rejected the couple's request for the B&B to host their civil union ceremony and sent the couple biblical passages to describe their relationship as "vile." The owner later justified the denial on religious grounds, an argument that was rejected by the Illinois Human Rights Commission. An appeal by the B&B was dismissed this last year.

VITAL RECORDS ACT AMENDED

Thanks to years of advocacy efforts, the Illinois legislature passed and Governor Rauner signed House Bill 1785, which modernized Illinois' Vital Records Act allowing transgender and intersex people to change the gender marker on Illinois birth certificates. This modernization makes our state a little better place for transgender and intersex people by bringing an end to the significant barriers to obtaining accurate identity documents and heightened risks of discrimination caused by the previous law. It also brings our law into alignment with current medical understanding.

TRANSGENDER STUDENTS IN ILLINOIS

The ACLU of Illinois continues to advocate on behalf of transgender students whose schools discriminate against them by refusing to affirm their gender by, for example, denying them the use of gender-appropriate restrooms and locker rooms. In November the ACLU filed a lawsuit against suburban School District 211, challenging discrimination against Nova Maday, a transgender girl who has been denied the use of the girls' locker room to dress for gym by requiring her to dress in a separate facility, and then by requiring her to dress in a private area in the locker room, even though no other student's locker room usage is restricted in this way.



Nova Maday

Freedom of Speech

Even in 2017, basic freedoms - flowing from the Bill of Rights - remain under attack. The ACLU of Illinois is working to protect these rights to ensure that everyone has the freedom to express themselves fully on critical issues. Defending the right to expression has been more important this year as millions of people – including thousands here in Illinois – have engaged in protests and political activities on the streets, in large auditoriums, and in their homes. We continue to work to ensure that these political activities go forward without interference from government.



“It’s very clear that this law is unconstitutional. We want to make sure that in the future, Illinois law enforcement officers know that they cannot arrest people under this statute.”

-Rebecca Glenberg, Senior Staff Attorney

MELLOTT VS. SPRAGUE

We scored a major victory this year in our case representing Bryton Mellott, a 22-year-old Urbana resident who was unlawfully arrested and jailed on July 4, 2016 for burning an American flag and posting photos of the event to Facebook. Despite clear Supreme Court rulings finding desecration of the flag to be protected free speech, Urbana police arrested and detained Mr. Mellott for five hours after he burned a flag to express his concern about racial discrimination and other injustices. In June, a federal court in Urbana ruled that the Illinois law – under which Mr. Mellott was erroneously arrested – is unconstitutional.

On a number of occasions this year, the ACLU has been called upon to ensure that those protesting and expressing views against the Trump Administration and others have access to public space for those protests. We continue to be devoted to the notion that all voices must be heard in our public discussions on matters of policy.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WHEN PROTESTING

- The First Amendment prohibits most restrictions based on the content of speech
- You have a right to speak out or protest in public locations such as sidewalks and parks
- You may need a permit for a march or parade, or certain areas
- You can picket or hand out flyers on sidewalks as long as traffic, entrances, or pathways are not blocked
- You have a right to photograph and videotape in public spaces



Immigration

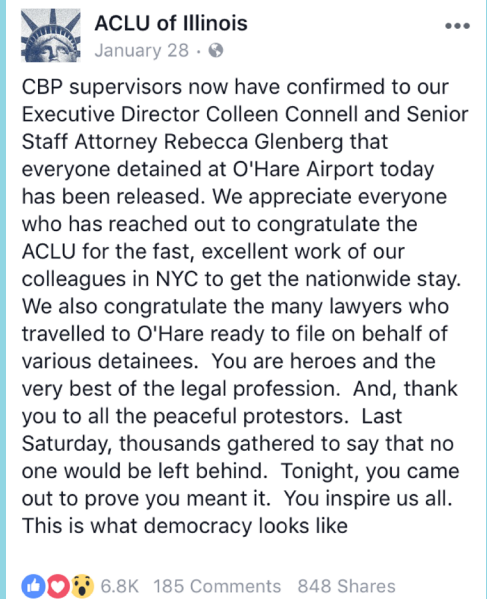
Frightening rhetoric and chaotic policies emanating from the Trump Administration have created fear, havoc and uncertainty for newcomers and refugees in Illinois and across the nation. Trump's campaign claims that only the "worst" and most "dangerous" would be targeted have given way to long-time residents being singled out for deportation.

As we work with our ACLU colleagues on federal policy, we have partnered with local immigration advocates and communities to push for reasonable policies at the state and local level that mitigate some of the fear created by the Trump Administration's actions.

Muslim Ban

Within a week of taking office, the Trump Administration announced a ban on people from a number of majority-Muslim nations entering the United States. The haphazard roll-out of the ban created chaos across the nation and drew thousands of protestors to airports in a number of major cities including Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

The ACLU of Illinois was present at O'Hare, specifically seeking release of an elderly couple – with green cards – who were stopped after returning from a family wedding in Iran.



PROTECTING OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

The ACLU of Illinois organized and led a group of advocates to call on the Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice to bar enforcement of immigration law by federal officials within courthouses across the state. We took this action after a number of media reports broke across the country about ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents using routine court appearances as an excuse to detain newcomers.

DOJ THREATS

When the Department of Justice threatened to strip grant funds from the City of Chicago unless the City agreed to assist the federal government in its aggressive program of detaining and deporting

immigrants, the ACLU filed an amicus brief in the case opposing the policy. In 2017, a federal judge found in favor of the City, blocking the DOJ from holding back these funds.

ILLINOIS TRUST ACT

The ACLU applauds the immigrant advocacy community for a momentous achievement this year: the enactment of the Illinois TRUST Act, which prevents law enforcement statewide from arresting or detaining any person on the basis of immigration status. We are proud to support their work.

We have been collecting stories of **DACA RECIPIENTS** in Illinois.

Read their stories here:
www.aclu-il.org/daca-illinois

Youth in State Custody

Our work defending the most vulnerable in our state centers on children in state custody. After more than two decades enforcing a state consent decree, we continue to see a child welfare system (the Department of Children and Family Services) that fails too many children and lacks clear strategies for addressing the needs of many children. And we have seen new challenges this year in our efforts to protect youth in the custody of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). In both of these instances, we have been forced this year (again) to ask a federal court to ensure funding for these vulnerable clients as Springfield failed to produce a budget.

YOUTH IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

As a result of our litigation on behalf of youth detained by the state, a federal judge approved an end to the unfettered use of solitary confinement. The action recognized the growing body of science about the harm that such confinement does to youth, especially those with mental illness. This year, we saw the resistance to that policy change when a group of staff at a downstate youth facility in Harrisburg began to ask the local prosecutor to use the criminal justice system to address internal discipline matters. We stood up for the children – some of whom were being sentenced to six years in adult prison for minor misbehaviors – and are demanding an end to this practice.

“**We encourage the Committee and its members to take a systemic look at the problems within DCFS, with an eye towards demanding better outcomes for children across Illinois who come into contact with the agency. The pace of reform has been too slow at DCFS.**”

- ACLU Testimony to Senate Human Services Committee on DCFS

CHILDREN IN DCFS

After years of improvement in the care of children under DCFS care, recent years have seen backsliding in terms of the availability and development of services for children and a revolving door of leadership at the Department. The ACLU forced DCFS last year to agree to a new implementation plan, overseen by court-appointed experts, designed to bring marked improvements to the level of care provided to youth in DCFS care. With three directors or acting directors in the past year alone, this progress by the Department has been slow. The ACLU continues to pressure the Department for further, sustainable reforms.



Cooperating Counsel Heidi Dalenberg

The ACLU Lunch

In March nearly 2,000 of our supporters joined the ACLU for our Annual Lunch. On all accounts this Lunch was our most successful yet. The most important thing coming out of the event was the sense of purpose from all those who attended.



Alex McCray accepts the John R. Hammell Award, given to our transgender student clients.

“It is not figuratively this idea that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. It is literally and practically that our liberties, our freedoms, our democracy is threatened by any individual whose rights are threatened.”



Keynote speaker Jelani Cobb

Join us on March 23
for our 2018 Lunch!
aclu-il.org/lunch

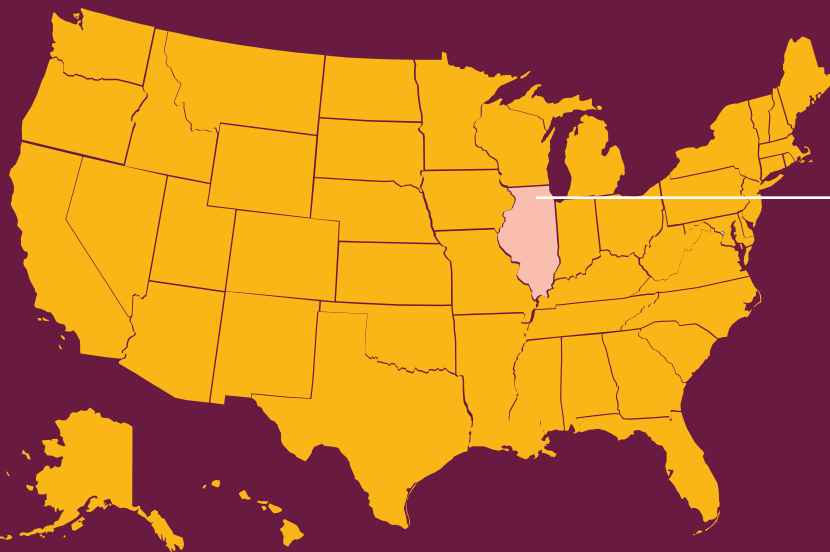


Executive Director Colleen Connell energizes the sold-out crowd.

Photos: Chris Neseman

2017 ACLU Recap

The ACLU of Illinois is part of a strong national network - with 55 offices around the country. You can find an ACLU office in all 50 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico.



In 2017 the Illinois office has added **7 new positions** to expand our ability to protect civil liberties.

There are now more than **1.6 million** card carrying members throughout the country. In Illinois there are more than **70,000** members and supporters.

50+
lawsuits

Since the election the ACLU has sued the Trump Administration more than 50 times for their unconstitutional actions.



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2017 has been a year filled with many challenges. But every victory, every holding of the line, could not have been accomplished without the commitment and tireless work of our supporters. Thank you for standing up and standing strong in this fight to protect our civil liberties.

Thank you for supporting the ACLU of Illinois.

“As long as we have
enough people willing
to fight for their rights
we’ll be called a
democracy.”

- ACLU founder Roger Baldwin

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