



Photot: Justin Barbin ACLU

ENSURING ‘WE THE PEOPLE’ MEANS ALL OF US

Colleen Connell, Executive Director



We knew the effort to rebuild our country would not be easy. Together, we continue to process and move on from the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump Presidency. We are only a handful of months separated from the insurrection that

overtook the Capitol Building, and yet it has felt like years since that assault.

And while we celebrate the improvements in our government and changes being sought by our elected officials, we must be as vigilant as ever to protect and safeguard our civil liberties. As we seek to return to a kind of normal, we cannot let ourselves fall back into the accepting the old status quo.

We must continue to reckon with police violence across our country and here at home. Chicago’s communities mourned and raised their voices after the senseless police killings of Adam Toledo and Anthony Alvarez. Chicago residents deserve meaningful changes to

policing to uproot patterns of excessive force and biased policing. The failure to do so is not only costing the City lives, but also taking a psychological toll on communities of color. The City must abandon the current snail’s pace of police reform and become serious about making real changes that serve all neighborhoods – and, if needed, we will see them in court.

In Springfield, the ACLU of Illinois has worked around the clock for months to move the needle forward on our initiatives, as well as fight back against misinformation and repel bad faith attacks on good laws like the SAFE-T Act and Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA).

In our nation’s capital, the ACLU fights in support of statehood for the District of Columbia. Statehood for D.C. addresses a serious flaw in our democracy — the ongoing denial of full voting rights for the residents of DC, most of whom are Black and Brown, is an egregious example of voter suppression which is sweeping our country today.

Your continued engagement is more appreciated and needed as ever. Your support helps us all do the hard work needed to rebuild.

CHANGING POLICING IN ILLINOIS

The ACLU of Illinois continues to challenge a broad range of unjust police practices across our state, in the courts, in the news, on the streets, and with our elected officials.

Since our last report, we were pleased to announce the successful resolution of the case involving our client Jaylan Butler. An innocent college student returning from a swim meet on his team's bus, Jaylan was taken to the ground and had a gun held to his head by police officers.

We filed suit for Jaylan and worked with him to seek accountability and to raise awareness of the degree to which traumatic police interactions harm individuals, even when the person harmed is able to walk away.

Jaylan was determined to ensure that his experience would not simply fly under the radar the way abusive police interactions with young Black men often do. Now, Jaylan can put this matter behind him and continue his life as a student, athlete, and young man.

For police to truly protect the communities they serve, they must work collaboratively with those communities to end broken policing practices that cause harm. In Chicago, the sad truth is that the City does not seem to care about achieving meaningful police reform, even though it is under a federal consent decree that requires systemic changes to dismantle patterns of excessive force against people of color and people with disabilities. The Chicago



[Listen to Jaylan Butler share his story on our podcast Talking Liberties](#)

Police Department (CPD) continues to miss deadline after deadline, even as one video after another is released depicting police harassment of people of color during raids on the wrong homes, violence toward protesters, and shootings during foot chases.

The City is habitually ignoring Black and Brown communities who are disproportionately impacted by violent and racist policing. These communities have been shut out of critical discussions about how to solve problems with wrong raids and foot chases. Community working groups on use of force and police in schools have offered the City meaningful and labor-intensive feedback, only to have that input rejected with little consideration.

In the meantime, Chicagoans have lost their lives to police shootings. Many more have been humiliated and traumatized, including in their own homes. But engagement with impacted communities should be the lynchpin that ensures policing changes to address communities' needs, dismantle patterns of bias and violence, and painstakingly rebuild the trust between the police and our neighborhoods. The City and CPD must actually want to meet with community members and organizations from neighborhoods most impacted by police violence, be open to their recommendations, and collaborate on solutions.

Police reform is not simply checking a box, and pushing through a new policy, every time a new, horrific incident is exposed for public view. It is hard work that begins with learning from affected communities where police have gone wrong.

In the face of this real-time police violence in the midst of calls for racial justice, we will fight harder than ever to protect constitutional rights for all of us, not just some of us. Alongside our community partners, we commit to the hard work of transformational change to advance fairness and safety for all communities.

MOVING THE NEEDLE IN SPRINGFIELD

The recent spring legislative session in Springfield saw a number of historic victories for civil liberties in our state.

Both chambers have approved House Bill 2553, the Protecting Household Privacy Act. The bill provides modest guidelines on how law enforcement can access intimate data collected by household electronic devices like virtual assistants, Ring doorbells, and smart appliances. This measure is consistent with efforts in Illinois over the past several years to strike a critical balance between emerging technologies each of us use for our personal convenience and the personal data about residents in our state captured by these devices.

In a big step forward for Illinois students, the Illinois legislature passed Senate Bill 818, the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act, which moves students across Illinois closer to getting the information and education they need to support informed decision making to lead healthy lives. The teaching of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are essential, key parts of the new standards at all grade levels. The updates are an important step to ensure that all youth in Illinois feel seen and affirmed in their classrooms and that schools are a safe place

where everyone can be themselves. And the passage of House Bill 219 is also a huge win for students across our state as legislators voted to end physical restraint and seclusion practices in schools.

House Bill 1063 – which would end criminal penalties for people living with HIV – passed both chambers with bipartisan support. Since the 1990's, people living with HIV in Illinois have faced the threat of arrest, prosecution, and incarceration simply due to their HIV status, even if they did not transmit HIV to another person. This stigmatization of HIV has kept people from being testing and receiving the care they needed. With this new legislation, HIV will be treated like any other chronic condition.

On multiple fronts, we worked to repel efforts from big companies and lobbyists to water down or repeal the Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA). A new wave of efforts to reverse the law comes after court decisions in recent years that have held large companies like Six Flags and Facebook accountable for collecting and using the biometric information of Illinois residents. At a time when other cities and states are moving to ban dangerous biometric technology like facial recognition, this is not the time to reverse course on the important privacy guidelines we have in place in Illinois.

Our advocacy work will continue throughout the year. As legislators return to Springfield this summer and into the fall, we will continue to push for legislation that holds police accountable, protects reproductive health, and eliminates felony penalties for small-scale drug possession.

Find out more about our work this legislative session at [**aclu-il.org/legislation**](https://aclu-il.org/legislation)



“THE ONLY PEOPLE IT REALLY AFFECTS ARE THE PEOPLE IT HURTS”

We worked with Human Rights Watch to release a 73-page report, “The Only People It Really Affects Are the People It Hurts: The Human Rights Impacts of Parental Notice of Abortion in Illinois.” The report conducted in-depth interviews with 37 people – including attorneys, healthcare providers, a retired judge, and others – and analyzed approximately three-and-a-half years of data and other information concerning young people who have gone through the judicial bypass process to access abortion care.



The report found that young people often seek judicial bypass because they fear physical or emotional abuse, being kicked out of the home, alienation from their families or other deterioration of family relationships or being forced to continue a pregnancy against their will. The report also documents the hardships faced by young people forced to involve unsupportive family members in

their abortion decision or navigate an unfamiliar court system to obtain a judicial bypass, and the additional stress and delays in seeking care this caused.



Find out more about the report by listening to the [Talking Liberties](#) podcast episode interviewing Margaret Wurth from Human Rights Watch

PRIDE MONTH IN REFLECTION

Pride month is a time to step back and appreciate the progress we have seen for LGBTQIA+ people in Illinois—and to identify the urgent issues and harms still facing these communities. The ACLU of Illinois will continue to fight against discrimination and all the current barriers that LGBTQIA+ communities face to living safely and securely—during Pride and year-round.

A new policy taking effect for the Chicago Police Department now ensures greater respect for transgender, intersex, and non-binary people. All people deserve to live in safety and with respect for their dignity and rights, and this updated policy is the result of a years-long effort by community members and advocates.

We continue to advocate in Illinois for LGBTQIA+ youth in state care, and work to end discriminatory denials of health care to trans and non-binary Illinoisans. In the courts, we are working to ensure that transgender prisoners receive appropriate, adequate, and timely healthcare – as well as fight against LGBTQIA+ discrimination in access to housing, especially for LGBTQIA+ people of color. And we continue to advocate to change the overly restrictive name change law in Springfield.

We recommit to keep fighting for everyone's right to be themselves.



FIGHTING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The Next Generation Society of the ACLU is a vibrant and diverse membership group for activists, professionals, artists, emerging leaders, and engaged citizens committed to supporting the essential work of the ACLU and safeguarding civil liberties for future generations. Since its founding in Chicago in 2015, the ACLU Next Generation Society has been focused on fully funding a staff attorney. This named position honors the work that the Next Generation Society does to support the ACLU through fundraising, advocacy, and engagement.

We are excited to announce that the first Next Generation Society Staff Attorney will be Elizabeth Jordan, whose work combats policing that harms and stigmatizes marginalized communities, including Black and Brown people, people with disabilities, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ communities. Her work in partnership with impacted communities supports the ACLU's advocacy to promote non-police responses that foster health and human dignity and to ensure that policing that is transparent, accountable, and equitable.

**Save the date and join us for the
Next Generation Society
Virtual Fall Fundraiser
on October 21, at 7pm.**

**Find more information about
the event and purchase tickets
to attend!**

aclu-il.org/NextGenFundraiser



SUPREME COURT TERM IN REVIEW

The ACLU of Illinois, the Chicago Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society, and Mayer Brown LLP held our annual Supreme Court Term in Review virtually on July 13. Together, we discussed important civil liberties cases from the U.S. Supreme Court's latest term – including cases on free speech rights, voting rights, and LGBTQ rights – and upcoming cases to watch. We also shared insights on trends we see from the court, how civil rights and liberties are faring on this court, and the challenges and opportunities ahead next term. If you were unable to join us or would like to re-watch the event, the closed-captioned digital recording is available at aclu-il.org/SupremeCourtReview.

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