

In The Courts

ACLU-CT Files Suit Challenging Campaign Finance Law

On July 6, the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut filed a lawsuit in federal court in Hartford challenging the state's new campaign finance law, saying that several provisions of the law violate the freedoms of speech and association under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The suit names Jeffrey Garfield, Executive Director of the state Elections Enforcement Commission, and State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal as defendants and seeks to block them from enforcing those provisions.

"For more than 17 years, the ACLU has supported public financing for political campaigns as a means of facilitating the candidacy of individuals from diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds. At the same time, however, we have been concerned that election campaign reforms be achieved by means that do not sacrifice basic civil liberties," said Roger C. Vann, Executive Director of ACLU-CT. He added, "We believe that Connecticut's campaign finance law crosses that line. For the sake of political expediency, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed deeply flawed legislation that plays fast and loose with the constitutional rights of both candidates and their supporters."

The campaign law, which was passed in December of 2005 and amended this past June, establishes a system of public financing for campaigns for state Constitutional and General Assembly offices. "In order for the public financing of campaigns to be fair, funds must be equally available in equal amounts to all qualified candidates who are able to objectively demonstrate support for their candidacies, said Renee C. Redman, ACLUF-CT Legal Director and co-counsel in the

lawsuit. "Connecticut's law doesn't meet that standard because it effectively excludes minor party candidates from receiving public financing. Minor party candidates are compelled to demonstrate support not only through onerous financial requirements but also through prior election activity. This goes far beyond an objective showing of support," added Redman.

"The Connecticut legislators who drafted this law in the dead of night knew that they were creating a system that would perpetuate two classes of political parties that are separate and unequal," said plaintiff S. Michael Derosa, co-chair of the Green Party of Connecticut and the party's current candidate for Secretary of the State. He added, "We consider this law an act of blatant discrimination against third party and independent candidacies."

The law also bars contributions by lobbyists, state contractors, and their immediate family members. Certain employees, officers and directors of current and prospective state contractors are also barred from making contributions. The lawsuit claims that these absolute restrictions violate the First Amendment.

Betty Gallo, a plaintiff in the case, heads the lobbying and government relations firm Betty Gallo & Co., and has lobbied before the state General Assembly since 1976. She feels the new campaign finance law will unfairly limit her right to actively participate in the political process as a "responsible citizen." "The way this law is written if my doctor said, 'I got a request for a campaign contribution from my representative. Is she good on the expansion of HUSKY? Should I send her

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Development Update

A Connecticut Donor Shares Why He Took On The Legacy Challenge

By Danielle S. Williams, J.D.

Recently, I sat down with ACLU-CT Board Member Paul Siegel to discuss his motivations for accepting the Legacy of Liberty Challenge.

As you will recall, in our last newsletter I shared with you information about this exciting Legacy of Liberty Challenge. Robert W. Wilson, a private investor from New York City has issued a challenge to all ACLU Foundation supporters nation-wide. He will make a cash donation of 10% of the value of future gift commitments, up to a limit of a \$10,000 cash

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ACLU-CT Board member and Legacy Challenge participant, Paul Siegel

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ACLU

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AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of CONNECTICUT

Report From The Chair

Students Win Victory in West Hartford

By Don Noel



Helping fledgling journalists stick up for their rights: What could be more fun for a retired newsman?

That's what I did one evening early in May: Speaking for the ACLU of Connecticut, I joined students from Conard and Hall High Schools in telling the West Hartford Board of Education not to adopt a new "Civil and Legal Responsibilities" policy that seemed to threaten free expression and free speech.

The trigger was a *Hall Highlights* article by two students, Ezra Silk and Ben Kudler, about the "not-so-secret drinking scene," a "ritual of post-midterm partying," at Hall High. Their article never saw the light of day; their faculty advisor and principal vetoed it.

Courant columnist Rick Green, who broke the story, said the two were just trying to bring into the open a problem that classmates were already instant-messaging each other about.

As Green noted, the article they submitted was "raw and in need of editing." But as I testified to the board, the role of editors – whether faculty advisors or not – is not to say, "You CAN'T say THAT!!!" but rather to say, "Let's make it more moderate in tone, and more effective."

When they protested and pushed their case, Green reported, Silk and Kudler were suspended from the newspaper.

No one told them of an appeal route that had been in existence for a decade and a half. Under that policy, they could have asked an assistant superintendent and the school's student representative to the Board to review the rejection. Such appeals, the policy says, "must be completed in a timely fashion so that the mechanics of due process do not accomplish a rejection de facto."

In fact, that charter of students' First Amendment rights, including guidelines spelling out what kinds of language would be offensive, hasn't been printed in the student handbook for years.

In the wake of the controversy over the rejected article, the administration, calling the existing policy "not well-written and outdated," proposed a new policy – a rather terse statement that did not include the broad charter and guidelines quoted above, saying merely that "school-sponsored speech," including student newspapers, "shall be subject to further regulation based on legitimate pedagogical concerns."

ACLU-CT's Legal Director, Renee Redman, with the help of Cooperating Attorney Martin Margulies, wrote the Board chairman citing the vague, open-ended statements in the proposed new policy that "fairly invited unconstitutional applications by well-meaning administrators. . . ." They cited a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit warning that a "legitimate pedagogical purpose" standard "does not apply when the school discriminates against student speech on the basis of the student's viewpoint. . . ."

When Renee asked if I could testify at a Board hearing in anticipation of action on the proposed new policy, I was delighted to participate.

I had plenty of company: A dozen students, parents, teachers and civil libertarians addressed the board, all of us urging that a good policy should not be watered down, but rather should be made better-known. Chairman John M. Darcey, to his credit, waived the usual 20-minute limit on remarks to the Board, allowing twice that long for students and others to express themselves.

An hour later, when the Board took up the administration's proposal as a "first reading," not a single member defended the change. Several explicitly urged that at most the existing policy should be "tweaked," and that West Hartford "err on the side of fewer restrictions."

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Session Ends With 'Small' Victories, Unfinished Business

By Betty Gallo

The 2006 legislative session was not marked by big battles or high profile victories but we did have a few smaller victories. We were successful in stopping some legislation that would have infringed on our civil liberties. On the other hand, the General Assembly failed to pass two important measures that would have translated into meaningful protection for vulnerable Connecticut citizens. The Public Health Committee never voted on legislation to require all Connecticut hospitals to provide emergency contraception in emergency rooms, SB 445: An Act Concerning Emergency Health Care For Sexual Assault Victims. And though we were able to get HB 5597: An Act Concerning Discrimination, anti-discrimination legislation based on gender identity and expression, out of the Judiciary Committee on a vote of 28-8, the bill was never called for a vote in the House. We did some important education around these issues and expect that we will be able to pass legislation in these areas next year.

Freedom of Speech

Campaign Finance

Parts of last year's campaign finance legislation posed a threat to freedom of speech. ACLU of CT supports the public financing of political campaigns but questioned the constitutionality of the total ban on lobbyists' and contractors' contributions and solicitations; and, the access to public financing for minor and petitioning party candidates. We were also concerned about the severability clause in last session's bill. ACLU of CT was worried that under that severability clause, a potential ACLU of CT lawsuit might derail the new campaign finance law. We met with legislative leadership to urge them to address these issues. We also coordinated with the major advocates for campaign finance informing them of our concerns and worked with them to get legislation to change the severability clause.

There were several bills introduced on campaign finance and Renee Redman, Legal Director of ACLU-CT, testified before the Government Administration and Elections Committee to our concerns. Up to the final days of the session it looked like there might not be any legislation passed this session amending last year's campaign finance bill. But on the last day of the session, an agreement was worked out between all four caucuses and SB 66: An Act Concerning The Severability Of The Provisions Of The Campaign Finance Reform (Public Act 06-137) passed both houses. There was little discussion of the bill's provisions. It passed the Senate on a unanimous vote and the House on a vote of 122-23. The Governor signed the bill on June 6th.

The bill changed the severability clause to eliminate provisions of the law that would have caused the state's campaign finance rules to revert to the system that was in place before the passage of the new law if the court imposed an injunction on any aspect of the public financing system for 72 hours. The measure eliminates the 72-hour trigger

and makes the campaign financing law inoperative only if a court (1) holds any of the program's provisions unconstitutional and (2) permanently bars expenditures from the fund. If a court declares the act inoperative, existing law and the bill both specify that the laws in effect prior to the act's passage become effective.

Freedom of the Press

Reporter Shield

This bill, HB5212: An Act Concerning Freedom Of The Press (Public Act 06-140) was championed by Rep. James Spallone (D-Essex) and a number of newspaper publishers. ACLU of CT supported the legislation but, at the hearing, requested an amendment to the bill protecting a criminal defendant's rights under the 6th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 29 of the Connecticut Constitution. Such an amendment was added to the bill in the House. The House passed the bill and sent it to the Senate where it was amended and passed on unanimous vote. The House then took the bill up again on the last day of the session and passed it on a vote of a 136-11. The Governor signed the bill on June 6th.

The bill as it passed prohibits judicial, executive, legislative, and other bodies with the power to issue subpoenas or compulsory process from compelling the news media to testify about, produce, or disclose (1) information obtained or received in confidence in gathering, receiving, or processing information for potential communication to the public; (2) the identity of the information's source; or (3) information tending to identify the source.

With some exceptions, the bill also protects from a subpoena, non-confidential information the media possess as a result of gathering, receiving, or processing information for potential communication to the public and the identity of its source. The exception is for information (1) necessary to a pending investigation, prosecution, or civil action; (2) not otherwise available; and (3) of interest to the public. In criminal prosecutions, the bill also provides that it cannot be construed to deny or infringe an accused's constitutional rights under the (1) 6th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and (2) Article 29 of the amendments to the Connecticut Constitution. Both of these constitutional provisions give the accused the right to have compulsory process to obtain witnesses in his behalf.

Privacy

Traffic Cameras

We worked to kill legislation that would have enabled local municipalities to install cameras to photograph motorists who violate traffic light and speeding laws. The legislation also allowed towns to keep part of the revenue

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Connecticut Marriage Equality Case Heads for Appeal

Kerrigan and Mock v. Department of Public Health, the marriage lawsuit brought by Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders with co-counsel American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut, hit a bump July 12 when Judge Patty Jenkins Pittman ruled the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage does not constitute a violation of Connecticut's constitution. Also co-counseling on the case are Ken Bartschi and Karen Dowd of Horton, Shields and Knox, and Maureen Murphy of Murphy, Murphy, Ferrara and Nugent.

"Of course we're disappointed, but always saw this as simply a first step on a long road," said Bennett Klein, the GLAD senior attorney who argued before Judge Pittman in March 2006. "Connecticut's Supreme Court justices will make up their own minds."

The judge premised her decision on her belief that there are no meaningful differences between marriage, available to heterosexuals, and civil unions, available to gay men and lesbians. "That reasoning ignores social reality," said Klein. "How many married couples would trade their marriage for a civil union?"

Experience shows that trial court decisions are not predictive in marriage equality cases: the landmark *Goodridge* case in Massachusetts was lost at the trial court; while in other states, trial court wins have been reversed on appeal.

The decision came within a week of a high-profile decision by the New York Court of Appeals, rejecting four marriage equality lawsuits in that state. The court's opinion has been widely critiqued for its shoddy legal reasoning and antiquated views of child-rearing.

GLAD is preparing an appeal, as well as working with the American Civil Liberties Union and Love Makes a Family to build support in Connecticut's legal community, while educating the public about how marriage discrimination harms the state's same-sex couples and their families.

What the *New York Times* said in editorializing about the New York case applies here in Connecticut as well: "Those who favor gay marriage need to quickly move past this week's disappointment and get energized."

Further information about the case is available at <http://www.glad.org/marriage>.

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money?" I can't answer that question. If my neighbor said, 'This Senator is doing a fundraiser next week. How is he on infertility coverage or same sex marriage?' I can't answer that question. I can no longer serve as a campaign manager for a state race. And I can't even give a \$25 contribution to a friend running for office," Gallo said.

In addition to Derosa and Gallo, the ACLU is representing

the Green Party of Connecticut; Dr. Joanne P. Philips, the wife of Don Philips who is a communicator lobbyist for the Connecticut Bar Association; the Libertarian Party of Connecticut; and the ACLU of Connecticut.

Redman and National ACLU Senior Staff Attorney Mark Lopez are co-counsel in the case.

The ACLU is seeking permanent injunctive relief prohibiting the implementation of the challenged provisions.

A Connecticut Donor Shares Why He Took the Legacy Challenge

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match *per* donor. The Challenge ends December 31, 2006.

Williams: How long have you been involved with the ACLU?

Siegel: I first became aware of the ACLU as an important organization back in graduate school during the late 1970's. One of my professors was a Board member of the ACLU of Illinois and, as part of his teachings, he would share war stories about the ACLU. The stories were quite fascinating as this was during the time of Skokie. In general this was an important time with critical issues.

Williams: When did you start contributing to the ACLU?

Siegel: About seven years after I first learned about the organization (and once I had philanthropic income to share.)

Williams: Okay, so you've been contributing to the ACLU for twenty years. So why did you decide now to include the ACLU in your estate plans?

Siegel: Actually, the ACLU as been named as a back-up beneficiary for a number of years in various beneficiary plans that I have. When I learned about the Legacy Challenge, however, I decided to increase my gift to the ACLU so that my bequest would in fact qualify for the Challenge. Updating my will was an effortless thing to do, really.

Williams: The ACLU was established in 1920 and, clearly has great staying power. Some could suggest that there are organizations other than the ACLU in greater need of your bequest gift. That said, why did you include the ACLU in your estate plans?

Siegel: Hmm, good question. Does my gift make a difference? My gift is not one of the bigger gifts that the ACLU will receive. In the aggregate, however, my gift will make a

From The Desk Of The Legal Director

We began two legal proceedings during the last couple of months: one at the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) and the other in federal court.

In May, we filed a Complaint with the DPUC asking for an investigation into the alleged disclosure by AT&T and Verizon of customer telephone records to the National Security Agency. The DPUC was one of the few such agencies in the country who began a proceeding. The Connecticut Attorney General's Office and the Office of Consumer Counsel have joined in our request and the matter is pending. We are very fortunate to have the volunteer assistance of Attorneys Andy Schatz, Wayne Boulton and Seth Klein of Schatz & Nobel, P.C. who are cooperating counsel in this matter. The proceedings can be found at <http://www.state.ct.us/dpuc/database.htm>, docket number 06-05-13.

Shortly after Independence Day, we filed a suit in federal court challenging the constitutionality of several aspects of the Connecticut campaign finance reform act that became law in December and was amended in June. The ACLU, of course, has long supported public financing of political campaigns as it can encourage more people to run for office, and increase the amount and diversity of campaign debate. So, you may ask, why are we trying to overturn the law? The answer is that provisions of this law will actually defeat those goals.

We continue to support public financing that is equally available in equal amounts to qualified candidates who are able to make an objective showing of support for their candidacy. However, we believe that the qualifying thresholds in this law go so far beyond any objective showing of support, that they will effectively prevent third party and independent candidates from receiving any public financing. The law requires that minor party and independent candidates meet two thresholds - a contribution threshold and a vote threshold.

To be eligible for public financing, all candidates must raise particular sums of money made up of contributions of no more than \$100 each. For example, gubernatorial candidates must raise \$250,000 which means that they must raise contributions from a minimum of 2,500 voters. In reality, candidates will probably have to obtain contributions from many more people because \$100 is quite a bit of money



– people will not part with that much money merely to demonstrate their support for a candidate so that he or she can receive public financing.

Moreover, even if minor party candidates are able to raise the required contributions, they will be subject to a second threshold to which major party candidates are not subject. They will not be eligible for any public financing unless the candidate from the same party for the same office won at least 10% of the vote in the prior election. Even if the prior candidate garnered between 10% and 15% of the vote, the current candidate will

receive only a fraction of the full grant. A minor party candidate will be eligible for a full grant only if the predecessor candidate won at least 20% of the vote.

These qualifying requirements are much more extensive than those in the federal presidential system and in the public financing programs of other states. By excluding minor party candidates from the public financing system, the disparity between their resources and the resources of their major-party counterparts will grow. In short, minor party candidates will be in a worse position than they are under the current system.

We also challenged the provisions of the law that completely bar lobbyists, state contractors, and their immediate family members from contributing to candidates. Not many people are aware of that fact that these bans include a huge number of individuals. For example, they include an employee of a non-profit, such as the ACLU, who spends as little as 10% of his time lobbying the legislature – and his spouse. They also include an employee of a non-profit, such as a child-care facility, who manages a program that is even partially funded by the state – and her spouse. Under this law, these individuals will not be able to contribute any amount of money to candidates of their choice. We do not believe there is any justification for such infringements on rights of free speech and association.

I wish you a very pleasant and cool summer.

Yours in liberty,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renee C. Redman".

Renee C. Redman
Legal Director

Students Win Victory in West Hartford

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As the discussion drew to a close, Board member Thomas Fiorentino, who had led the defense of students' free-speech rights, said he would be uncomfortable voting "yea" on a routine motion acknowledging that the proposal had received a "first hearing."

Assistant Superintendent Alex Nardone soon acknowledged that the administration's proposal needed a lot of work, that a second try at a "first reading" would be a

good idea, and that a "nay" vote might be appropriate.

The Board voted 6-0 to reject the first reading and send the proposal back to the drawing board. A roomful of students and parents applauded. So did I.

Two weeks later, the Board gave a successful first reading to a restatement of the old policy, with only minor changes.

Call it a victory won by West Hartford students for their freedom of expression.

Session Ends With 'Small' Victories, Unfinished Business

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realized from the operation of those cameras. Judiciary raised legislation on this issue, HB5210: AN Act Concerning Enforcement Of Speeding And Traffic Control Signal Violations. Roger Vann, ACLU of Connecticut Executive Director, testified against the bill stating our concerns about privacy. He presented research that showed that such cameras do not reduce accidents. The bill's supporters included several local mayors and police chiefs as well as the manufacturers of the cameras. We aggressively lobbied the members of Judiciary and the committee killed the bill on a vote of 21-16. We thought the issue would resurface on the floor of one of the chambers but no such amendment was ever introduced.

Adoption Records

ACLU-CT led the opposition to the release of adoption records without the birth parents' and adoptee's permission where the birth parents were given assurance at the time of the adoption of the confidentiality of those records. At the beginning of the session we were the only group lobbying this position, Though we had numerous people speak to us in private about their opposition. One of the things that made advocacy on this issue so important was that birth mothers risked giving up their privacy if they spoke out publicly about their concerns. We became their voice.

The Children's Committee raised SB4: An Act Providing Adult Adopted Persons With Access To Information In Original Birth Certificates. (Public Act 06-71. The Governor vetoed the bill on May 31st.) We successfully lobbied the members of the Children's committee to make the opening up of the records only apply when the adoptee reaches the age of 18 and only to those adoptions that took place after October 1, 2006. But then the bill was sent to the Judiciary Committee. In Judiciary, Sen. Andrew McDonald (D-Stamford) offered an amendment that would have made all birth certificates available, both retroactively and prospectively, on January 1, 2007, but would allow a birth parent to register their objection with

the Department of Public Health and block release if the objection was filed before December 15, 2006. He offered the amendment as a favor to Sen. Bill Finch (D-Bridgeport), an adoptee and a fierce supporter of the bill. We lobbied the committee against the amendment, pointing out that there was no way that birth parents would even know they had to raise an objection by January. That amendment died on a vote of 4-31. The bill only effecting adoptions that took place after October 1, 2006 passed Judiciary on a vote of 35-3.

The Senate passed this bill on a vote of 27-7. When it went to the House it was amended to allow access to the birth records to adoptees at age 21 instead of 18. The bill then passed the House on a vote of 79-64. The Senate passed the bill again but the Governor vetoed the bill. The major concern she expressed in her veto message was that this bill could affect the adoption of children already born but whose adoptions do not take place until after October 1, 2006.

Immigrants' Rights

Governor Rell introduced a bill, SB 60, implementing the national REAL I.D. Act. It included the limits on immigrant driver licenses that we have fought in the past. We met with Sen. Ciotto, Senate Chair of the Transportation Committee. He assured us that his committee would not take up the Governor's REAL I.D. bill and it died in Committee without a vote. We were very vigilant in reviewing amendments screening for any measure that would limit immigrants' access to driver's licenses. No such amendments were filed. ACLU of CT is also in touch with the Department of Motor Vehicle about the cost to Connecticut of implementing the REAL I.D. Act.

Some of the other issues that ACLU of CT worked on this session include:

Human Rights

Human Trafficking

Legal Director Renee Redman

served on the state's Human Trafficking Task Force and the ACLU closely followed the legislation implementing their recommendations. SB153: An Act Concerning The Interagency Task Force On Trafficking In Persons (Public Act 06-43; signed by the Governor on May 8th) passed. It creates a felony crime for the trafficking in persons. It applies to those who coerce others to engage in prostitution or work. It authorizes the state to charge traffickers with racketeering and to seize property related to the crime when there is a pattern of such activity. It allows people charged with prostitution to avoid conviction by proving that they were acting because of a trafficker's coercion.

The law also allows (1) the attorney general to sue employers who knowingly employ victims and (2) victims to sue traffickers for money damages. The measure appropriates \$75,000 each for training programs and witness protection services and \$25,000 for shelter and victim services. It also adds members and duties to the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons and extends the deadline for it to file its legislative report from January 1, 2006 to January 1, 2007. The bill passed both houses of the General Assembly on unanimous votes and was signed by the Governor. Also, the final budget allocated \$25,000 to the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women to combat the trafficking in women and \$100,000 to the Judicial Department for services for victims of trafficking.

Criminal Justice

Sex Offenders

Governor Rell and House Speaker James Amann (D-Milford) announced proposals to toughen the state's sex offender laws before we even went into session. Speaker Amann along with Attorney General Richard Blumenthal proposed a 10-point plan to deal with sex offenders that included such proposals as civil commitment and GPS tracking of offenders. Other

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Help Us Create An ACLU-Connecticut Speakers' Bureau

By Roger C. Vann

Would you like to share your voice with the community, expounding the principles that have guided the work of the ACLU? If so, you may be a perfect candidate for the newly minted ACLU-CT Speakers' Bureau. I encourage you to read this message and respond as soon as possible.

The Speakers' Bureau will be a band of ACLU-CT volunteers who can serve as an educational resource for schools, universities, libraries, and other community organizations around the state. The ACLU-CT will link members of the Speakers' Bureau to various speaking engagements, and will provide the volunteers with appropriately tailored educational tools and training.

The first opportunity for our Speakers' Bureau volunteers will be Monday, September 18th, when the nation's schools will celebrate Constitution Day. On that day, we hope to educate thousands of Connecticut high school students on the critical importance of the ACLU's role in defending our Constitution and democracy.

As you may already know, Constitution Day is a new federal holiday, celebrating the signing of the Constitution on September 17, 1787. A 2004 law mandates that all publicly-funded institutions provide educational programming on the history of the American Constitution on that day (or, in this year's case, the closest weekday).

To that end, we hope to have a "pilot" program involving Speakers' Bureau volunteers at various high schools in



Connecticut. The speakers will most likely be asked to provide a 45-50 minute presentation to either an assembly or a civics class.

- During Labor Day week or the following week, we will schedule training opportunities at various times and in various locales in the state.

- The volunteers will receive a suggested syllabus/outline for a Constitution Day presentation.

- They will be asked to visit schools close to their homes or work – and perhaps follow up our letter with a personal call to someone in nearby schools.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Speakers' Bureau, please take a moment to fill out the volunteer form on our website. It is our general volunteering form, so please be sure to check the box next to "public speaking" and in the general comments box, please give us some idea of your experience and comfort level with some of the recent actions that the state and national ACLU have taken, whether you have a connection with a particular school or principal, and when you could most conveniently participate in a 90-minute to two hour training and practice session. To access the volunteer form, go to: <http://www.acluct.org/takeaction/volunteer/volunteeringinquiryform.htm>

Please fill out this form as soon as possible; we will give first attention to expressions of interest received by the end of the day Tuesday, August 15. Thank you for volunteering to speak up for the ACLU!

A Connecticut Donor Shares Why He Took the Legacy Challenge

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difference. I think that people give for a lot of reasons. And I think that it boils down to giving makes us feel good. Giving makes us feel good in a very small way because we [donors] can share our vision for the world—for both today and the future. We can become architects of the kind of world that we want to live in and, we can help future generations. In the end giving centers around what makes us feel good: because we want to believe that we are helping to accomplish our vision for today and tomorrow.

Williams: What is it about the work of the ACLU that motivates you to be such a committed donor, both a lifetime and a donor for the future?

Siegel: It's a sense of needing checks and balances in society. To the extent that there will always be a nation such as this, we will always have a need for checks and balances. As we get closer and closer to the ideal society that we pride ourselves to live in it is because of organizations like the ACLU.

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legislators were talking about civil commitment, life time GPS tracking, and school zones restrictions for offenders as well. We meet with Rep. Michael Lawlor (D-East Haven), House Chair of Judiciary about the proposals. He assured us that his committee was primarily focused on the establishment of a review panel comprised of experts that would be charged with developing a rating system for sex

offenders. Such a ratings system would allow enable the state modify the web-based registry to include only the most serious offenders. The legislature passed new registry language as part of one of the budget implementers, HB5846. It did not include the serious civil liberties violations that were being considered at the beginning of the session such as civil commitment and lifelong GPS tracking.



This is a moment in our nation's history when ordinary Americans are subjected to illegal surveillance, including wire-tapping of phone calls and emails; prisoners are illegally detained in Guantanamo Bay – in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions on Torture; and the CIA has been authorized by the President to secretly kidnap people and

send them to countries that engage in torture.

It's time to stand up!

The 2006 ACLU Membership Conference, Stand Up for Freedom: Stop the Abuse of Power will be held in our nation's capital October 15-17. Join other ACLU members from around the country to discuss and learn about recent government abuses of power, and develop the tools you need to organize around this issue.

Highlights of the conference will include:

- **Hill Visits** where attendees will have the opportunity to voice their concerns about abuses of power and other issues to Members of Congress.
- **Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia** discussing and debating Constitutional issues with **ACLU President Nadine Strossen**.

· **Sessions featuring nationally known speakers** who will discuss the Administration's recent policies and practices, **as well as smaller workshops for activist training.** Learn how we can make a difference and turn your frustration into positive action!

Fall is a great time to visit Washington D.C. In addition to a compelling conference schedule, the conference will be held at the Marriott Wardman Park, located on 16 acres of beautiful gardens, just minutes from the National Zoo and the National Cathedral. The hotel is surrounded by restaurants and shops and is located just steps away from the city's Metro rail system, providing easy access to the rest of the Washington D.C.'s metropolitan areas.

Detailed registration information is available at the national ACLU Website, www.aclu.org. An "Early Bird Special" featuring discount registration rates for those first to sign-up for the conference, as well as a special rate for college students is available until September 6.

Check the Web site often for the most up-to-date information about registration, lodging, speakers, workshops and other conference events.

The government's abuses of power ignore fundamental Constitutional principles and undermine our vital system of checks and balances, weakening the hallmarks of American democracy. You cannot afford to miss this important opportunity to protect the civil liberties of all Americans. Stand up for freedom and join us at the 2006 ACLU Membership Conference this October in Washington D.C.

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