

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

THANK YOU



Celebrating

75 YEARS

of

1948
The Connecticut
Civil Liberties Union
forms

1967
Advocates for civilian
review board of police
departments

1988
Gains victory in McKinney
v. Fairfield, fair housing
for people with AIDS

1965
Successfully overturns the
state's birth control ban in
Griswold v. Connecticut

1978
Advocates against
illegal wiretapping
in New Haven

1999
Settles in Rivera v. Rowland
challenging insufficient funding
of public defender system

Founded in 1949,

the ACLU of Connecticut has embarked on a resilient journey dedicated to a more fair, free, and equitable Connecticut. Since then, thanks to our partner organizations, community activists, and supporters like you, we have played a pivotal role in the expansion of civil rights and liberties in Connecticut. This anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the organization's commitment to an equitable, democratic, and anti-racist Connecticut in which all persons are treated with dignity in a thriving society.

Throughout the last 75 years, we have fought for the rights of all people on an array of many issues – from 1965, when our legal teamwork successfully overturned the state's birth control ban, to 2012 when our advocacy efforts, alongside others, secured the legislative repeal of the death penalty in Connecticut, and in 2023 we helped pass early voting and the most comprehensive state-level voting rights act. These victories, each building upon the other, showcase the power of our integrated advocacy approach, leveraging litigation, lobbying, and education to forge lasting change. We will continue to show up whenever people's rights are in jeopardy, holding the line for democracy while seizing every opportunity to create proactive change.

As you read our 2023 Annual Report, [we hope you feel proud as an important partner to an institution as central to our democracy as the ACLU](#). We look back at the last 75 years with gratitude for the support that made these achievements possible and forward with eagerness for continued collaboration in shaping a Connecticut where the flame of justice burns brightly for generations to come. Thank you for standing with us on this transformative journey.

In solidarity,



M. Adler
Margie Adler
Board President



J. W. A.
David McGuire
Executive Director



Liberty and Justice for All

2005

Successfully lifts a Patriot Act gag order on librarians

2012

The death penalty is abolished in Connecticut

2022

ACLU of CT Rise PAC launches

2008

Connecticut legalizes same sex marriage

2016

Smart Justice Program launches

LEGAL HIGHLIGHTS

Eliminating Prison Debt in Connecticut – Beatty v. Lamont

Representing clients Teresa Beatty, Natasha Tosado, and Doug Johnson, the ACLU Foundation of CT filed Beatty v. Lamont to argue that Connecticut's prison debt laws are unconstitutional. Under Connecticut's cruel prison debt law, the State charges people hundreds of dollars for each day they are incarcerated after they've been released, and this consequential debt follows them for decades. The legal team looks forward to bringing victory home for their clients in 2024.

A Win for Transgender Rights – Clark v. Quiros

A federal court ruled in favor of the ACLU Foundation of CT's client Veronica-May Clark (an incarcerated transgender woman) in her lawsuit, challenging the Connecticut Department of Correction's failure to provide medically necessary care for years. The ruling is the first time that a court in our federal circuit has held prison officials to account for refusing to treat gender dysphoria with the full range of medically necessary interventions.

Thanks to cooperating firm Hurwitz Sagarin Slossberg & Knuff, co-counsel David Slossberg, Erica Nolan, and Kristen Zaehring. Thanks to cooperating firm Finn Dixon & Herling, co-counsel Dan Noble, Matt Danzer, and Kelsey Powderly.

Protecting Free Speech – Friend v. Gasparino

In February of last year, our regional federal appellate court held that the ACLU Foundation of CT's client Mike Friend's free speech rights were violated when he was arrested for warning motorists that police were giving out tickets up the street. The ruling in Mr. Friend's favor makes clear that the First Amendment broadly protects a person's ability to speak about what they see the police doing in public.

The ACLU Foundation of CT had many other legal actions and litigation on dozens of issues including: **Voting rights, LGBTQ rights, immigrants' rights, women's rights, government transparency, free speech, police accountability, and more.**

For our full legal docket, scan our QR code or go to www.acluct.org/cases



ADVANCING VOTING RIGHTS

Defending Democracy in Connecticut with the Connecticut Voting Rights Act

This year, we worked to pass the most comprehensive state-level voting rights act in the country: An Act Concerning State Voting Rights in Recognition of John R. Lewis or the CTVRA. Setting a new standard for voting rights across the country, the CTVRA...

- Launches a **“preclearance” program** requiring local governments with a record of discrimination to prove that certain changes in voting laws won’t harm voters of color before the laws can go into effect
- Provides new legal tools to **fight discriminatory voting** rules
- Expands **language assistance** for voters
- Strengthens **protections against voter intimidation, deception, or obstruction**;
- Establishes a secure central hub for election data and demographic information, **increasing transparency** and voters’ ability to fight for accessible elections; and
- Instructs judges to review state and local laws and rules in a pro-democracy manner to **optimize accessibility** to a citizen’s right to vote



THE ROAD TO EARLY VOTING

Nov 2014

Voters reject a ballot question that would (1) expand early voting & (2) improve access to absentee ballots

Spring 2020

Again, CT Legislature unsuccessful at adopting a resolution by a majority large enough to place early voting on 2021 ballot

Fall 2022

ACLU Rise PAC conducts outreach & education on need for early voting.

Spring 2019

CT legislature fails to meet the 75% threshold to adopt the resolution that would allow early voting on the 2020 ballot.

June 2021

CT legislature passes resolution that asked voters to approve an early voting amendment to the State constitution

VOTE EARLY IN 2024!

The new law establishes Connecticut’s early voting system by requiring:

- **For general elections: 14 days of early voting, including weekends, beginning in the 30 days before Election Day.**
- Early voting locations will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the last Tuesday and Thursday before the election.
- Each municipality will have at least 1 designated early-voting polling location. Municipalities of more than 20,000 people will have the option to establish additional early voting locations.
- For non-presidential primary elections: 7 days of early voting before a primary.
- For special elections and presidential primaries: 4 days of early voting before a special election or presidential primary.

It takes many years to make wins like this come to fruition. Follow the work it took to make early voting a reality in Connecticut:

Staff Highlight

Jess Zaccagnino joined us in 2021 as Policy Counsel. In her role, Jess executes the ACLU-CT's legislative agenda, engaging with administrative agencies and local government bodies, and working with fellow advocacy organizations to advance shared goals specifically through legislative policy research, analysis, drafting, and advocacy. We thank Jess and all of our hardworking staff for the countless hours of work and dedication they commit every day to demand meaningful change in our state.

Jess Zaccagnino
Policy Counsel



Testified on
200 Bills



Wrote over
800 pages
of testimony



Engaged in
909 hours
of lobbying



The ACLU of Connecticut Rise PAC was instrumental in the passage of early voting.



Spring 2023

ACLU of CT works with legislators to shape an equitable & accessible early voting process

Jan 2024

Early voting becomes available for CT voters

Nov 2022

CT voters overwhelmingly approve amendment permitting the legislature to pass law allowing early voting.

June 2023

Legislature passes comprehensive & accessible early voting for all Connecticut voters.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADVOCACY WINS

Increasing Transparency and Accountability in the Criminal Legal System

State Attorneys hold people's lives in their hands and, yet, they are among the least accountable actors in the criminal legal system. After three years, Smart Justice pushed an Act Concerning Prosecutorial Accountability over the finish line, providing more oversight, transparency, and accountability for prosecutors.

Protecting Kids from Police Deception

After years of effort, the legislature passed a first-step bill to ban police from using deceptive interrogation tactics against people under 18 years old. This bill bans...

- Depriving a child of food, sleep, or other health needs
- Using or threatening to use force against a child
- Threatening a child with punishments
- Threatening to arrest and charge another person who has not committed a crime
- Lying about evidence of guilt, leniency, and the law
- Telling a child about evidence and inducing them to make the evidence part of their statement

Opportunity for Justice-Impacted People

In solidarity with Stop Solitary CT, the Yale Transitions Clinic, and more, we worked to pass legislation that (1) ensures everyone leaving prison in Connecticut has a state ID, which is critical for accessing jobs and housing, and (2) allows parole hearings for people who were under 21 years at the time they were sentenced.

Advocating for Reproductive Freedom

This year, we were proudly in solidarity with Pro-Choice CT, Planned Parenthood Votes! CT, and others. With our colleagues, we supported bills advancing reproductive freedom and maternal health, such as one that protects abortion providers in our state from lawsuits by other states and another that protects people's sensitive health information from abuse and exploitation.

For a full list of our legislative wins in 2023 scan our QR code



or visit bit.ly/48DXjLv

Thank you to the Innocence Project and many others for working with us to protect children in our state from deceptive police interrogation tactics.

INNOCENCE PROJECT



ACLU OF CT INTRODUCES NEW OFFICE IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY

The ACLU of Connecticut opened a satellite office in Fairfield County to deepen our roots in the community and further our ongoing commitment to sustained work in the area. It's clear that Fairfield County has both a dynamic and diverse population with a vibrant political landscape that serves as a crucial center of influence in Connecticut. Therefore, setting up an office with staff dedicated to the area positions us to build on these foundations and continue making meaningful change. We look forward to forging and strengthening relationships in this county, setting the stage for larger and bolder changes for our state.



Fairfield County Staff



Erycka Ortiz
Field Organizer



Amber Vlangas
Donor Relations Officer



Read more about our expansion and Fairfield County Office by scanning our QR code



or visiting bit.ly/3Upsmqy

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

The ACLU-CT consists of two entities: the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut and the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut. Contributions to the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut support advocacy and lobbying on civil liberties issues and are not tax deductible. Contributions to the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut support our litigation, outreach work, and other non-lobbying efforts; donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

ACLU Foundation of Connecticut Finances 501(c)3

EXPENSE	FY23
Litigation	\$392,028
Outreach & Advocacy	\$263,794
Administration	\$125,193
Management	\$113,153
Fundraising	\$395,263
TOTAL	\$1,289,431

REVENUE

Foundation Donations	\$1,312,924
Bequests	\$59,065
TOTAL	\$1,371,989

ACLU of Connecticut Finances 501(c)4

EXPENSE	FY23
Legislative	\$429,447
Outreach & Advocacy	\$263,972
Administration	\$108,557
Management	\$103,128
Fundraising	\$45,876
Rise PAC*	\$150,650
TOTAL	\$1,101,630

REVENUE

Union & Membership Donations	\$866,804
Grants	\$150,000
Bequests	\$4,375
TOTAL	\$1,021,179

*The ACLU of Connecticut Rise PAC is an independent organization registered under state law as an ongoing independent expenditure committee, and federal law as a 527e1 organization. The ACLU of Connecticut Rise PAC does not endorse or oppose any candidates for office or political party platforms and does not provide financial or in-kind contributions to political candidates, political parties, or other PACs.



DIGITAL ANNUAL REPORT

This annual report represents highlights of our work thanks in part to your incredible partnership. You can find a digital version of this report with links to more information by scanning our QR code or visiting us online at bit.ly/3u3cWxd



Mission

The American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut defends, promotes, and expands the civil rights and civil liberties of all people in Connecticut through litigation, community organizing and legislative advocacy, and civic education and engagement. We are an inclusive, nonpartisan, and statewide organization within the nationwide American Civil Liberties Union network, powered by our supporters, partners, staff, interns, cooperating attorneys, and our board of directors.

Vision & Values

The ACLU of Connecticut envisions an equitable, democratic, and anti-racist Connecticut in which all persons are treated with dignity in a thriving society.

We believe in, and aspire to incorporate into our actions, the following six core values:



Anti-racism

eliminating racism and promoting racial justice



Equity

understanding power dynamics and creating opportunities for all to thrive



Dignity

upholding the innate dignity of all human beings



Inclusivity

sharing and building power with historically excluded people



Diversity

valuing the perspective of those with lived experiences different from ours



Partners in justice

elevating the voices of directly impacted people while working in partnership with, rather than on behalf of, the communities we serve

Cover Art by Rachel Moon