



Connecticut

END  
OF  
YEAR

NEWSLETTER

2023

Dear Partners,

I want to begin by expressing our deep gratitude for your unwavering dedication and support of civil rights and liberties, both in Connecticut and across the nation.

In these times, the importance of safeguarding our rights cannot be overstated. From the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* last year to the rolling back of affirmative action this year, it's evident that our civil rights and liberties are facing challenges like never before.

Elected officials across the country are pursuing anti-civil liberties agendas, from voter suppression to anti-trans bills targeting our young people and the disturbing practice of discriminatory gerrymandering. We're also witnessing troubling classroom censorship and book bans. As we approach the 2024 elections, candidates are leaning into oppressive platforms that place politics over people.

Amidst all these challenges, you, the ACLU, and community partners continue to stand up as we strive to protect the civil rights and liberties that define our nation's ideals.

While we have made significant strides, there is still much work to be done, not only here in Connecticut but also across the country. Enclosed you will find a list of our priorities, which highlights some of the important work we're engaged in. What's crucial to understand is that many of our policy and legal goals require long-term efforts and commitments to achieve bold, transformative change.

**As you consider your end-of-year philanthropy, I humbly ask that you keep the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut in your plans to ensure that we can act quickly and decisively whenever and wherever people's rights are in jeopardy.**

Your support plays a dual role – it enables us to push for change to make Connecticut an equitable place where everyone's rights are respected, while simultaneously fueling the fight for civil rights and liberties in states across the country. Together, we can make a meaningful positive impact. Thank you for your partnership.

With Gratitude,

**David McGuire**

*Executive Director, ACLU of Connecticut*



# 2024 PRIORITIES

The year ahead will be critical for our country and our state. Here is your preview of how the ACLU of Connecticut will be advocating for liberty, justice, and equity in 2024.



## Defending our Democracy

Our Democracy is more fragile than ever, and the threats to voting rights are at a critical point. Over 400 anti-voter measures have been introduced in the U.S. since 2021, and the U.S. Supreme Court has gutted the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA). In this climate, it's more important than ever for states to step up to protect access to the ballot box. We made big progress in 2023, and we are just getting started. In Connecticut, we are committed to making voting more accessible by supporting the effort to pass a ballot measure that would allow the legislature to create no-excuse absentee voting as an option for any eligible voter, and by continuing our fight to ensure incarcerated people retain their right to vote, all while promoting the equitable rollout of early voting. Nationally, the ACLU is investing in key battleground states across the country to fight voter suppression, promote access to the ballot, protect against partisan gerrymandering, and so much more. The ACLU strives to ensure that ALL citizens may vote without intimidation, coercion, or unnecessary barriers and works to strengthen the integrity of our election systems.

### 2023 HIGHLIGHT

*With our coalition partners, we led the effort to pass the Connecticut Voting Rights Act (CTVRA), which makes democracy more accessible, especially for Black and Latinx voters, by strengthening protections against voting discrimination. The CTVRA is the most comprehensive state-level voting rights act in the country and sets a new standard for voting access everywhere, and it will be in effect for the 2024 election.*



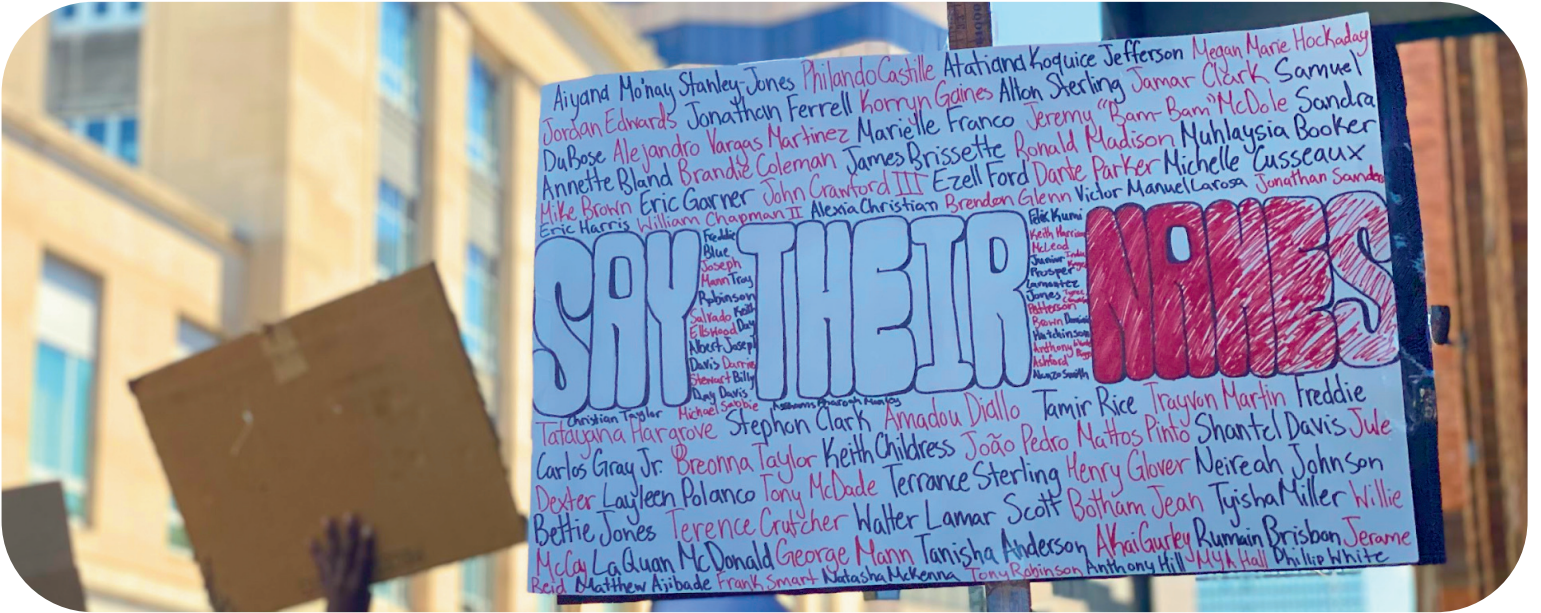


## Advocating for Racial Justice

Deep-seated systemic racism and inequities that disadvantage communities of color are still woven into the fabric of our institutions today – from education and housing to the criminal legal system. We must eliminate racism and advance racial justice, and we support and advocate for changes that actively combat racism and work toward a racially just and equitable country. From fighting for legislation to combat racial profiling, to litigating cases to challenging discriminatory laws, to pushing for changes to create real equity in opportunity and justice, we seek to preserve and extend constitutionally guaranteed rights to people who have historically been denied their rights on the basis of race. The ACLU strives to create a world where “we the people” truly means all of us – this means dismantling systemic racism and working to repair centuries of harm inflicted on communities of color.

### 2023 HIGHLIGHT

Last year, the “Individual Freedom Act,” colloquially known as the Stop WOKE Act, went into effect in Florida. The law limits the ways concepts related to systemic racism and sex discrimination can be discussed in teaching or conducting training in workplaces or schools. The ACLU of Florida and national ACLU filed a lawsuit against HB 7, resulting in an injunction against it, and they continue to fight this law in court.





## Eliminating the Harms of the Criminal Legal System

Our country's expansive criminal legal system hurts everyone's abilities to thrive, and it disproportionately hurts people of color, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, and low-income people. The ACLU of CT is addressing the front end (policing and prosecutors) and back end (the carceral system and its collateral consequences) of the criminal legal system by educating people about the human and financial costs of policing and incarceration, fighting to end prison debt, advocating to eliminate barriers to reentry and collateral consequences of living with a record of arrest or conviction, and seeking harm reduction by advocating for humane prison conditions. The ACLU is doing similar work across the country, and ultimately seeks to end mass incarceration and eliminate racial disparities within our criminal legal system.

### 2023 HIGHLIGHT

*For years, we have been fighting for outside oversight and accountability for State's Attorneys – and this year a new law went into effect that holds State's Attorneys accountable to data-driven, regular, independent reviews of the patterns and practices of their Judicial Districts. This law helps ensure that State's Attorneys don't treat someone differently just because of their race, zip code, or how much money they have.*

## Increasing Transparency and Accountability in Policing

For decades, billions of dollars have been spent locking up Black and Brown people instead of investing in Black and Brown communities. Through litigation, legislative advocacy, and education, we seek changes to counterproductive policies that have disproportionately harmed communities of color in our state, and to educate people about their rights when interacting with police. Connecticut, like the rest of the country, must hold police accountable for racist, harmful, and unconstitutional actions. We seek to reallocate funds from policing to community-based programs and services; expose systemic racism caused and perpetuated by police; increase access to open records; create consequences for police who commit violence; and reduce the power, role, and scope of policing in Connecticut and across the country. Through this work, the ACLU strives to ensure that everyone, including Black and Brown people, are safe, healthy, and thriving.



### 2023 HIGHLIGHT

*An investigation by the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project revealed that for years, Connecticut State Police submitted at least 25,966 false and inaccurate traffic stop records, with the end result that police overreported fake traffic stops of white people and disproportionately underreported real traffic stops of people of color. We are advocating for an independent outside investigation, decertification of the police involved, meaningful oversight of state police moving forward, and the passage of legislation to end secondary stops\*.*

#### \*What is a secondary stop?

*Police often make traffic stops for minor non-safety-related reasons like missing a front license plate or overly dark tints. We seek to end these "secondary stops" reducing unnecessary interactions and the potential for disproportionate harsh treatment of Black and Brown drivers, sometimes resulting in deadly consequences.*

Learn more about the recent  
Connecticut State Police Scandal

SCAN QR CODE



(<https://bit.ly/3SraM4m>)

## Advocating for Reproductive Freedom

Nationwide, we are facing the most serious assault on access to abortion in decades, which poses an acute threat to public health and personal freedom. In collaboration with our partners, the ACLU is:

- fighting back against attacks on abortion rights in courts across the country;
- ensuring accessible and affordable reproductive care for everyone, including contraception, birth control, and maternal health;
- advancing our reproductive rights through state ballot initiatives, legislative advocacy, and more.



2023 HIGHLIGHT

*Since Roe v Wade has been overturned, the ACLU has utilized our powerful litigation capacity to help mitigate the harm caused by this decision, seizing every opportunity to block abortion bans. We have gone to court in 11 states and Guam seeking to both block overturn abortion bans. Currently, our litigation is protecting access to care in 4 states and in Guam, and this year we supported bills in Connecticut to advance reproductive freedom and maternal health.*



## Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality

Hundreds of anti-LGBTQ+ bills, especially targeting youth and transgender people, have been introduced in state legislatures across the country. Drag bans, trans sports bans, and LGBTQ+ book bans are on the rise, and Connecticut is no exception. In Connecticut and across the country, the ACLU is:

- fighting back against attacks on LGBTQ+ people, especially trans youth, in the courts and state legislatures;
- protecting the rights and safety of transgender people and ensuring their access to healthcare;
- ensuring LGBTQ+ people aren't discriminated against or denied services because of someone else's religious belief.

2023 HIGHLIGHT

*A federal court has ruled in favor of our client, Veronica-May Clark, in her lawsuit challenging the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC)'s failure to treat her gender dysphoria for years. In September, the court ruled that DOC employees were "deliberately indifferent to Ms. Clark's serious medical needs" in violation of the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment.*

## Protecting Free Speech & Privacy

Free speech and privacy belong to all, but the United States has often failed to protect the rights of people who have not typically held the reins of political power. Now, the free speech rights of people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, religious minorities, immigrants, and even students and teachers are under threat – and Connecticut is no exception. We are:

- safeguarding our right to protest, combatting censorship, and promoting free speech;
- fighting back against censorship in classrooms and libraries, and protecting students' right to learn;
- ensuring that civil liberties are protected as technology advances, especially in the areas of artificial intelligence, government surveillance, and data privacy;
- educating students, teachers, parents, and others in Connecticut to know your rights if someone tries to ban a book in your school or library – something that is on the rise in our state.



### 2023 HIGHLIGHT

When Stamford resident Michael Friend had his phone and protest sign confiscated and was arrested for exercising his freedom of speech, the ACLU Foundation of CT sued on his behalf. In February, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals sided with Friend in his claims that the police violated Friend's First Amendment rights to free speech and information, and Fourth Amendment right against malicious prosecution.

Attempted book bans are on the rise in Connecticut. Here's how you can push back.

SCAN QR CODE TO  
LEARN MORE



(<https://bit.ly/3QlzqAv>)



## Defending Immigrants' Rights

There are more than 43 million immigrants in the United States, and around 14 percent of people in Connecticut are immigrants. Immigrant communities are frequently targets of discrimination, and undocumented immigrants are particularly susceptible to abuse by the government. Nationwide, we are:

- challenging constitutional abuses that arise from immigration enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels
- exposing and challenging the brutal and inhumane conditions of confinement in immigration detention centers
- ensuring due process during immigration proceedings and deportations
- fighting for the rights of people fleeing persecution to seek asylum in the U.S.

### 2023 HIGHLIGHT

Along with our partners, the ACLU is suing Florida over SB 264 that restricts Chinese nationals from acquiring property in the state of Florida under the guise of protecting national security. This is just the latest iteration of anti-Asian discrimination and violates both the Constitution and the Fair Housing Act.

## ADVANCING OTHER CRITICAL INITIATIVES

In addition, we will continue our long-standing commitment to issues such as: protecting disability rights, advancing economic justice, ensuring housing equity, protecting women's rights, fighting for educational equity and the freedom to learn, ensuring an open and transparent government, protecting incarcerated people's rights, combatting police brutality, shielding privacy as technology advances, and much more.



# MAKE A DONATION TODAY

Mail back the included donation envelope with your credit card information or a check.

**Make a gift online at [www.ACLUCT.org/Donate](http://www.ACLUCT.org/Donate)**



**DONATE TODAY**

(<https://bit.ly/40mWZ0w>)



### Other ways to support:

- Make a gift from your IRA
- Make a gift of Appreciated Stock
- Join the DeSilver Society: Leave a Gift in your Will

However you choose to make your gift in support of the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut, we are most appreciative. If you have any questions about implementing your gift or to discuss any of these giving options above, please contact [Logan Marshall](mailto:Logan.Marshall@acluct.org) at [860.841.7536](tel:860.841.7536) or [lmmarshall@acluct.org](mailto:lmmarshall@acluct.org)

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 DIGITAL ISSUE

(<https://bit.ly/3Mrg2B6>)

## How can you help?

**DONATE. TAKE ACTION. FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**



We are comprised of three nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations: the ACLU of Connecticut, a 501(c)(4) organization which does legislative and organizing advocacy work; the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut, a 501(c)(3) which does litigation and public education work; and the ACLU of Connecticut Rise PAC, a 527 organization which builds the necessary relationships, public awareness, public narratives, and pressure felt by politicians. Full funding for our work is vital to achieving wins like the ones highlighted above.