

END  
OF  
YEAR

NEWSLETTER

2024

## WE HAVE A PLAN.

In 2024, the ACLU of Connecticut has worked for months to strategize dozens of potential electoral scenarios, and produced comprehensive plans for election safeguarding, rapid responses, and a Trump or Harris win.

These efforts enhanced our ability as a team to work strategically, thoroughly, and to be nimble and adaptable. We will meet the moment.

We are prepared to defend and advance your civil rights and liberties in the upcoming Trump administration, including efforts to:



Build on and expand the Connecticut Voting Rights Act; recommend implementation strategies for “No-Excuse” Absentee Voting



Create firewalls and safeguards to insulate cities and the state from regressive, inhumane, and unconstitutional policies disproportionately targeting immigrants and other historically marginalized people



Work with coalition partners to expand and promote policies enshrining reproductive freedom and abortion rights



Protect and advance LGBTQIA+ rights by defending gender-affirming care through advocacy and litigation



Preserve First Amendment rights to protest, peaceably assemble, and advocate for government transparency

You can read the ACLU of Connecticut’s plan for the Trump administration’s agenda at [www.acluct.org/47](http://www.acluct.org/47).

Dear Partners,

In these tumultuous times, the importance of safeguarding our rights cannot be overstated.

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.

With Gratitude,

**David McGuire**  
Executive Director  
ACLU of Connecticut



# DEFENDING DEMOCRACY & SECURING THE VOTE

This election year changed the course of the country's history, and we focused intense effort from all departments. Your continued support meant we could get out the vote in Connecticut, registering voters from all over the state and all walks of life. This election cycle was unprecedented, and – **together with supporters like you** – we were instrumental in safeguarding democratic practices and securing the vote.

**Success!** Connecticut voters passed the “No-Excuse” Absentee Voting ballot referendum to amend the state constitution to expand voting rights. The ACLU of Connecticut are pressuring the Government Administration and Elections Committee on full implementation through multiple methods, including policy guidance, monitoring, and a coalition sign-on letter.

**Success!** The ACLU Foundation of Connecticut legal team partnered with the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund to create and publicize recourse and enforcement measures of the Connecticut Voting Rights Act in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

**Success!** The policy and advocacy team **registered voters across the state**, including people held in pretrial detention in prisons throughout Connecticut that retain their legal voting rights.

**Success!** ACLU of Connecticut played a pivotal role in expanding early voting in Connecticut and undertook an enormous effort to educate the public on their right to vote early. Our first year was a huge success with **more than 850,000 people voting early in Connecticut!**

**300+**  
hours of  
engagement  
with voters

Spoke with  
**more than 6,000**  
voters about  
making a plan  
to vote!

**500,000** voters  
informed via  
door-knocking, phone  
banking & events



# UNLOCK THE VOTE

Our senior policy organizer Anderson Curtis, in conjunction with the League of Women Voters of Connecticut and the Secretary of the State's Office went to McDougall-Walker Correctional Institution in Suffield at the end of September.

While there, he spoke with people who are incarcerated and eligible to vote legally about the necessity of maintaining their enfranchisement and participation in their democracy.

Anderson registered voters and provided a real example of living with dignity and being a partner in justice.

*"When people like me and people like you take the time to vote, we tell our government what's important to us.*

*We know people can feel disenfranchised and separated from civic life – but let me be clear:*

*You matter. Your opinion and voice matters.  
What you care about matters."*

*– Anderson Curtis,  
Senior Policy Organizer*

Anderson also led a team that connected with students in classrooms and events at UConn Hartford & Eastern Connecticut State University to register students, faculty, and professors to vote and engage with the electoral process.

The policy and communications teams, including Gus Marks-Hamilton, also work with Full Citizens Coalition and Yale Law Students to enfranchise voters who are currently or formerly incarcerated.

## GETTING OUT THE VOTE

- Registered college student voters
- Registered voters who are incarcerated
- Spoke at 20+ voter registration events
- Attended 6 statewide press conferences with community partners, Gov. Lamont, Lt. Gov. Bysiewicz, & Secretary of the State Thomas





# 2024 LITIGATION

## WIN! *Clark v. Quiros*

In a **monumental win for trans rights and healthcare of incarcerated people after nearly a decade of trying to obtain healthcare**, a federal judge imposed a series of deadlines that require the Department of Correction to report efforts to provide gender-affirming healthcare for Ms. Veronica-May Clark, a transgender person who is incarcerated in Connecticut.

*“This win is an important contribution to federal case law upholding the civil rights and liberties of transgender people.” - Elana Bildner, Senior Staff Attorney*

## *Friend v. Gasparino* WIN!

A federal judge entered summary judgment in a case that granted our client, Mr. Mike Friend, an **outright victory on almost all of his claims after being arrested for exercising his right to free speech** and holding a sign reading “Cops Ahead” to display to passing drivers.

*“This case vindicates Nutmeggers’ ability to observe, protest, and publicize the activities of police, which is key to democracy.” - Dan Barrett, Legal Director*

## WIN! *Beatty v. Lamont*

In a win for Theresa Beatty, Natasha Tosado, and Douglas Johnson, **the state abandoned its demands that they each pay tens of thousands of dollars for time they spent in prison**. This was a first-of-its-kind federal court case challenging the state’s practice of charging incarcerated people for their imprisonment in “pay-to-stay” laws.

*“The state charges people based upon however much the state decides to spend on its sprawling prison system each year, which has no relation at all to what a person’s crime was.” - Dan Barrett, Legal Director*

## Other Cases On The Docket:

- *Disability Rights CT v. Department of Correction*: protecting incarcerated people against in-cell shackling, which can worsen mental health conditions
- *Richardson v. Semple*: preserving the public's access to court filings in civil rights cases
- *Soule v. CT Association of Schools*: defending CT laws guaranteeing equal participation in school activities for trans kids
- *And much more*





# LEGISLATIVE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The ACLU of Connecticut began the 2024 legislative session with a concrete vision and a formidable team. Our dedicated team used every pathway to power, achieving real results that most thought impossible in a short 14 week session.

These are the highlights from the 2024 legislative session:

## Promoting Driving Equity

In Connecticut, police are pulling over drivers for “secondary stops,” which are administrative and equipment issues that could easily be ticketed by alternative means. This session, the ACLU of Connecticut teamed up with the Center for Policing Equity to advance H.B. 5324, an Act Establishing Secondary Violations, to increase driving equity in Connecticut.

## Creating Safe & Accessible Housing Opportunities

The ACLU of Connecticut believes that housing is a basic human right. We are all safer, stronger, and better as a community when every person has access to affordable housing. This session, we worked with Smart Justice Leaders and community partners to advocate for H.B. 5242, an Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Records on Housing Opportunities, a bill dedicated to providing people with a fair chance at housing so that they can grow and thrive within their communities.

## Expanding Paid Sick Days

This session, the ACLU of Connecticut was incredibly proud to work in solidarity with Planned Parenthood Votes! CT, She Leads Justice, and other advocacy groups as we saw a landmark expansion of paid sick days that now covers virtually all workers in our state.

## Ensuring Accountability with Police Body Cameras

One of the team's longtime Smart Justice Leaders, Terri Ricks, testified in support of H.B. 5381, an Act Concerning the Use of Police Body-Worn Recording Equipment, a bill the ACLU of Connecticut supported this session.

## Ending Cash Bail

In 2024, the legislature proposed a constitutional amendment to examine the cash bail industry, indicating a willingness to explore alternatives. This was a step in the right direction, but the ACLU of Connecticut is working with a coalition as a leader to find alternatives to cash bail.

## Ensuring Equity in Artificial Intelligence Policy

The ACLU of Connecticut has and continues to provide leadership and clarity about building proactive, equitable regulatory AI policies, guardrails, and frameworks. We have provided thought leadership on the intersection of the government's use of AI and Freedom of Information (FOI) policy with the US Commission on Civil Rights and Yale Law School's Media Clinic, and to legislators and government agencies in a recent Department of Consumer Protection symposium.



Read the full summary of the  
2024 session here!

# LOOKING AHEAD

This year, we've reflected on our major successes, and strategically planned for the years ahead. The ACLU of Connecticut has identified and prioritized the issues we will impact at the legislature, in the courts, and to the public. These efforts are rooted in our values and our commitment to integrated advocacy and racial justice. Some of our priorities will include:



**Reduce the Scope & Role of the Criminal Legal System**



**Defend the Rights of Immigrants**



**Preserve First Amendment Rights**



**Protect LGBTQIA+ Rights & Freedoms**



**Ensure Access to Reproductive Healthcare & Defend Bodily Autonomy**



**Increase Government Transparency & Accountability**



**Enforce & Expand Voting Rights Protections**

## WELCOMING OUR NEWEST STAFF!



**Bethany Rae Perryman**  
*Director of Communications*

**Chelsea-Infinity Gonzalez**  
*Public Policy & Advocacy Director*



**Jaelyn Blickley**  
*Staff Attorney*





**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).



### 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

We appreciate any way you choose to make your gift in support of the ACLU Foundation of Connecticut. If you have any questions about implementing your gift or to discuss any giving options, please contact us at [860.523.9146](tel:860.523.9146) or [philanthropy@acluct.org](mailto:philanthropy@acluct.org).





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## WHAT'S INSIDE THE NEWSLETTER?

- Our Plan for a Trump Presidency
- Defending Democracy & Securing the Vote
- 2024 Litigation Wins
- Legislative Session Recap
- Ways to Support the ACLU Foundation of CT

### How can you help?

**BECOME A MEMBER. DONATE. JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**



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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.