



# ACLU-VT News Brief

JANUARY 2024

## 2024 Policy Priorities in the State House

The 2024 legislative session began this week, and we look forward to working with lawmakers to advance the civil rights and liberties of everyone who calls Vermont home. With your support, we're advancing bold solutions to safeguard our civil liberties and address the many challenges facing our state. Below are some of our priorities in the second half of the biennium.



### Smarter Stops

Vermont drivers are stopped at a much higher rate than the national average, with severe racial disparities impacting Black and Latinx drivers. We're calling on legislators to allow traffic stops for serious safety violations only, not for minor equipment and administrative violations. This reform would reduce discriminatory practices, improve community safety, and better define the role of police in our communities.

### Prisons

The Scott administration is advancing a proposal to replace the state's only prison for women that would be far bigger, more costly, and far more restrictive than Vermont's current or future needs dictate. We continue to oppose this proposal and advocate for policies—like bail reform, second look legislation, and drug decriminalization—to reduce our overreliance on incarceration and invest in people over prisons.

### Housing

Vermont has the second highest per capita rate of homelessness in the country. Building on our ongoing advocacy to protect the rights of unhoused people in this state, we will urge lawmakers to pursue a Housing First model for new housing policy reforms and investments, so that everyone can access housing without preconditions or restrictions.



### Harm Reduction

With Vermont communities experiencing record numbers of overdoses each year, we and partners are working with legislators to pursue commonsense strategies to save lives today. This includes developing evidence-backed overdose prevention sites, where people can receive vital medical services if necessary and be connected to treatment.

### Economic Justice

We are among the organizations supporting the Fair Share for Vermont proposal to institute an income tax surcharge on Vermont residents earning more than \$500,000 a year. When those who can most afford it pay their fair share, we can address the state's most pressing needs in housing, social services, infrastructure, education, and the environment to build a better state for all of us.

## Join the ACLU-VT Action Team

Your voice is critical in this work. The ACLU of Vermont Action Team is a group of volunteers who provide the "people power" we need to make our ambitious agenda a reality. Join us today!



Sign up at [acluvt.org/team](https://acluvt.org/team)

