

As the ACLU enters its centennial year, our role in safeguarding civil liberties has never been more vital.

The ACLU was founded in 1920, in the wake of the Palmer Raids, a time when immigrants, dissidents, and labor organizers were rounded up and deported, government censorship was widely accepted, and the core values underlying our democracy were under attack — in short, a time not unlike our own.

Since then, the ACLU and our supporters have been at the front lines of every major civil liberties battle, **and we have changed the course of history — for the better.**

From free speech to racial justice, from religious freedom to marriage equality, from digital privacy to police accountability, on all of the issues that have defined our democracy, together we have fought for and won transformational change, time and again.

As the ACLU begins its next 100 years in defense of civil liberties, **it's because of you that we are stronger than ever.**

Over the past three years, through hundreds of legal actions and campaigns, from the Supreme Court to state houses to the streets, the ACLU has held the line through another era of unprecedented, all-out assaults on our democracy.

We all know how much is on the line in 2020, including the safety and dignity of immigrants and refugees, control over our reproductive health, privacy from police surveillance, along with our most fundamental right to have a say in these issues and in the direction of our democracy — our right to vote.

This will also be a critical year for Vermont — a year in which we determine whether to invest in people over prisons, whether our government is open and accountable, and whether Vermont supports healthy and thriving communities.

From our founding to the present, we have fought tirelessly to see Vermont and this country live up to our stated ideals. **With your support, we will continue the fight** — through the November elections and into a second century of advancing our most cherished rights and freedoms together.

Thank you for all you do to support the ACLU!



James Duff Lyall, Executive Director



Photo credit: Glenn Russell

Why I Support the ACLU of Vermont



Growing up amidst the social unrest and protests of the 1960's and 70's, I saw the ACLU do something bold — it defended the constitutional rights of everyone, even those I disagreed with. I came to realize the importance of an organization whose mission is defending our Constitution and fighting for all people. If there is one thing I know, it's that the ACLU will always fight for my rights — and yours.

Susan Romans
Montpelier, Vermont

You make this work possible

Please consider making a gift today.

- Give online at acluvt.org/give
- Mail a check to ACLU Foundation of VT
PO Box 277
Montpelier, VT 05601
- Call 802-223-6304

THANK YOU!

2020 Legislative Priorities

In January, legislators returned to Montpelier for the 2020 session and got right to work on some of the ACLU of Vermont's top priorities.

Championing Criminal Justice Reform Vermont's prison population is increasing. One reason is that our community supervision system — a system designed to facilitate re-entry into the community — returns people to prison at the highest rates in the country.

A staggering four out of every five admissions to Vermont's prisons are for people revoked from community supervision, 70% of those for "technical violations," like lack of housing or curfew violations.

We are advocating for an overhaul of community supervision, better data collection for more effective oversight, and greater investments in transitional housing and other supports.



ACLU of Vermont Attorney Jay Diaz speaking to a joint legislative committee about protecting access to public records.

Protecting Access to Public Records In September 2019, we scored a major victory in the Vermont Supreme Court when it affirmed that government officials cannot require Vermonters to pay fees to inspect public records. In *Doyle v. Burlington Police Department*, the Court reinforced the principle that government transparency and accountability are vital to a democratic society.

Already, some state officials want to roll back the *Doyle* decision by restricting the public's right to know. We and our allies are working to ensure that the *Doyle* decision stands and access to the public's records is not put behind a paywall.



Advocacy Director Falko Schilling testifying in the House Human Services committee.

Investing in Vermonters The systemic underfunding of core functions of our state government has created a situation where many of the most marginalized Vermonters cannot meet their basic needs. We are urging the Legislature to make increased investments in social services that are essential to Vermonters, including our mental health system, support for young families and children, and programs that prevent and address trauma and substance-use disorder across our state.

Defending Vermonters' Civil Liberties And, as always, we will be testifying, lobbying, and fighting for a host of other ACLU priorities — advancing racial justice, enacting stronger privacy protections, and bringing greater accountability to police departments, among other initiatives.

Case Docket

Featured Case:

Immigrants' Rights



Meet Our New
Campaign Director
Maroni Minter



ACLU of Vermont Attorney Lia Ernst announcing the settlement terms at the press conference.

Migrant Justice v. McAleenan

In January, we settled our lawsuit against the Vermont DMV for unlawfully targeting Migrant Justice and its leaders in coordination with federal immigration agents. As a result, Vermont immigrant communities will be safer, and Vermont DMV will be more accountable for its actions.

The ACLU and our allies filed this lawsuit in 2018, following years of harassment, surveillance, and arrests of immigrants' rights leaders in Vermont. This campaign of repression was in direct retaliation for Migrant Justice's successful activism.

The DMV has a long history of bad acts — including violating state privacy laws and coordinating with federal immigration agents to target our clients. We are hopeful this settlement will bring much needed changes to the DMV, and we will continue monitoring the agency to hold it accountable.



What inspires you to do this work?

Connecting with passionate advocates, community leaders, and people who pull together to make Vermont a better place.

Why do we need to reform our criminal justice system?

We must recognize the humanity of people incarcerated. That means investing in people not prisons.

What's a mantra you try to live by? You must care. Caring is the cornerstone for building trust. When people feel cared for, they step beyond their perceived limits and do great things.

What's one thing you want people to do right now? That's easy! Sign our petition! Fill out and return the Smart Justice postcard or visit acluvt.org to sign the petition online.

Homeless Rights:

Burlington Settles with ACLU Over Rights of Homeless Residents

In December, our client Brian Croteau Sr. reached a settlement with Burlington in his lawsuit challenging the City's policy of confiscating and destroying the property of homeless residents.

This is the third ACLU lawsuit Burlington has settled in just over two years relating to its unlawful treatment of low-income residents. Combined, these cases have resulted in numerous policy reforms to protect the rights and dignity of all community members.

For further details on our current docket, please visit acluvt.org/cases.

Police Accountability:

Vermont Supreme Court to Hear Case Testing Limits of Border Patrol's Search Powers

In December, we filed an appeal to the Vermont Supreme Court on behalf of a Vermont couple who were prosecuted following an August 2018 "roving patrol" stop by a U.S. Border Patrol agent in Jay, Vermont.

State v. Lena-Butterfield & Walker-Brazie will set important legal precedent and is part of the ACLU's ongoing efforts to rein in Border Patrol abuse and overreach.



Vermont

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JOIN US

Save the Date:
Smart Justice Advocacy Day
March 19, 2020
Details at acluvt.org

Want to take action and get breaking news? Join our email action alerts!

- ✓ Get critical updates on our work inside and outside of the State House.
- ✓ Learn about opportunities to impact the political process.
- ✓ Hear the latest on our case docket.

Head to action.aclu.org/vt-takeaction to sign up today.

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