

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAMYIA COX-TOURE



As I close out another year in my role with the ACLU of Oklahoma, I am excited to celebrate our wins and look forward to what we can accomplish in the coming years. Our successes can always be found in the hearts of our allies, our advocates, and our communities.

This year I am thankful to our supporters and ACLU members who continue to take an active role in our triumphs by working alongside us and sharing their time and energy. We could not continue to work for the rights of Oklahomans without the commitment, professionalism, and drive of our staff, board members, and interns. Without the efforts of all of you, the setbacks would outweigh the movements forward.

This year we celebrate the long overdue recognition of Indigenous students in Oklahoma and their right to wear tribal regalia during graduation ceremonies. Tribal regalia is a symbol of resistance, resilience, and reclamation by students of their right to an education that honors their culture and heritage. We also saw the passing of two bills that ensured paid 6-week maternity leave after a certain period of employment for both state employees and educators. When one of our most vulnerable communities was under attack, we immediately responded. We reached a non-enforcement agreement, the first of its kind, with the Attorney General's office to ensure Oklahoma's ban on gender-affirming care for minors was not enforced while we sought a preliminary injunction.

The world of criminal legal reform also saw many advances throughout the year. We finally celebrated the funding of State Question 781, which funds mental health services with the money saved from divesting from incarceration. This, a people-led movement, started with the passing of State Question 780. Additionally, we saw the passing of HB 2259 allowing defendants to request a cost hearing after sentencing to determine ability to pay and allowing courts to waive all or part of their court costs if they cannot pay. Furthermore, we witnessed the passing of HB 2210 which allows courts to depart from mandatory minimums when

sentencing victims of sexual violence who are sentenced as adults for offenses committed as a minor.

Without the need for litigation, our legal team was able to ensure additional changes for those directly impacted by Oklahoma's criminal legal system, including ensuring that Service Oklahoma began following the law to allow affordable access to provisional driver's licenses. Our team worked with the Department of Corrections to shorten the restrictive "death watch" period from 30 days to seven days, provide COVID booster shots to people who are incarcerated, and to instate more robust and inclusive group religious services for people with death sentences.

We do not have victories to celebrate without addressing the challenges. Oklahoma teachers and students faced censorship as a crushing force that sought to limit their rights and access on numerous issues. The classroom censorship law (HB 1775) continues to restrict our students and educators from providing and receiving an equitable education, as we marked year two without movement by the court. Death row executions continue to take place despite calls to abolish the practice all together. Transgender and non-binary communities face an onslaught of policies taking away their right to receive medical care, use correct gender markers on legal documents, and to live freely within the state of Oklahoma.

Despite these challenges, Oklahomans came together to support allyship, offer resources, and work hard to preserve the rights of our communities. Here at the ACLU, we continue to support those who face attacks from extreme politicians. No matter what is forthcoming, the ACLU of Oklahoma will continue to stand strong in our fight for civil liberties with you as we continue to push forward, stay positive, honor humanity, and fight for justice and freedom.

VISION AND MISSION

We envision a fair and equitable Oklahoma that recognizes all Oklahomans.

The ACLU of Oklahoma works to secure liberty, justice, and equity for all Oklahomans through advocacy, litigation, and legislation, leading by example and fueled by people power.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Veronica Laizure, President
- Cynthia Garcia, Vice President
- Ben Matthews, National Board Representative
- Sarah Adams-Cornell, Member At Large
- Jared Deck, Treasurer
- Amanda Sandoval, Equity Officer
- Aaron Wilder, Secretary
- Andrea Benjamin, Foundation Board
- Rachel Watson, Foundation Board
- Adisha Waghmarae
- Tesia Zientek
- Kimberly Francisco
- David Glover
- Tondalao Hall
- Julie Kulla
- Tina Peña
- Juanita Romo
- Sage Mauldin
- Komari Crisp
- Jim Radford
- Morgan Ipanema

STAFF

- Tamyia Cox-Toure, Executive Director
- Megan Lambert, Legal Director
- Lisa Pitsiri, Director of Development
- Bryan Newell, Operations Director
- Cindy Nguyen, Policy Director
- Randy Bauman, Of Counsel
- Cassidy Fallik, Communications Director
- Jasmine Brown-Jutras, Organizing Manager
- Adam Hines, Skadden Fellow
- Devraat Awasthi, Legal Fellow
- Bradley Thompson, Paralegal
- Jillian Owens, Organizer

COVER ART: "WE THE PEOPLE" BY DENISE DUONG

I was born and raised in Oklahoma City, OK by two weirdo Vietnamese parents. Along with them, was my wonderfully caring uncle, and my partner in crime sister, and two cousins. As soon as I was able to figure out ways to leave home, I was out and about exploring the cracks and crannies of this crazy world. I attended art school in Chicago, and my wandering soul set me out to do what I do best, create things and explore. I have a deep love for nature, adventure, exploration, and working with my hands. These things influence me in everything that I do. Textures and using different processes entertain me. People entertain me. The world entertains me. I entertain myself.



STEPS FORWARD IN 2023

POLICY DEPARTMENT

SB 429: Allows public, charter, technology center, and higher education school students to wear tribal regalia during graduation ceremonies. The legislature overrode Governor Stitt's veto during the 2023 legislative session. This bill flew through both houses in the legislature, but he continued to veto it.

SB 844: Provides financial support for state question 781, which funds mental health services from the money saved by divesting from incarceration with community led advances in criminal legal reform like state question 780. SQ 781 took effect in 2017 but it took the legislature six years to create a revolving fund for counties to apply for dedicated financial support of mental health services.

HB 2259: Allows people involved in Oklahoma's criminal legal system to request a cost hearing after sentencing to determine their ability to pay. This allows courts to waive all or part of a person's court costs if they cannot pay.

SB16X: Provides for six weeks paid leave for state employees after two years.

SB 1121: Provides for six weeks paid leave for public teachers after one year of employment.

HB 2210: Allows courts to depart from mandatory minimums when sentencing victims of sexual violence who are sentenced as adults for offenses committed as a minor. Often times, victims of sexual violence will commit crimes to survive the abuse.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Poe, et al. v. Drummond, et al.: In a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Oklahoma, Lambda Legal, and the law firm Jenner & Block LLP, a group of families with transgender adolescents and medical providers who support trans youth assert SB 613 unjustly and unfairly targets them and gender-affirming health care in violation of their rights under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

Bridge, et al. v. Oklahoma State Department of Education, et al.: The American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Oklahoma Foundation, Lambda Legal, and pro-bono co-counsel Covington & Burling LLP filed a federal lawsuit against the Oklahoma State Department of Education, three Oklahoma public school districts, one public charter school, and numerous government officials for implementing and enforcing a new school facilities access law established by the passing of SB 615 that singles out transgender students for discriminatory treatment.

Black Emergency Response Team, et al. v. Drummond, et al.: A lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Oklahoma, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and pro bono counsel Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP on behalf of plaintiffs the Black Emergency Response Team (BERT); the University of Oklahoma Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (OU-AAUP); the Oklahoma State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP-OK); the American Indian Movement (AIM) Indian Territory on behalf of itself and its members who are public school students and teachers, a high school student, and Oklahoma public high school teachers Anthony Crawford and Regan Killackey.

ACLU OF OKLAHOMA & FOUNDATION COMBINED OPERATING BUDGET

The ACLU of Oklahoma is comprised of two organizational entities: the ACLU of Oklahoma and the ACLU of Oklahoma Foundation. Together, these two entities allow the ACLU to advance civil rights through a three-pronged approach, using litigation, public education, and advocacy.

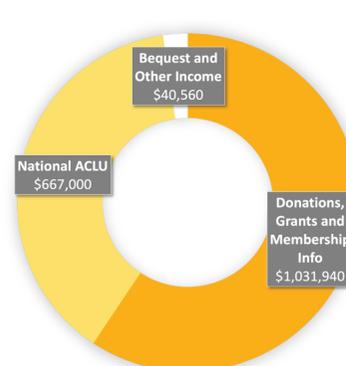
American Civil Liberties Union

ACLU membership dues fall under Union funding, so when you receive your trusty ACLU membership card, those dues have supported legislative advocacy and lobbying. The Union is registered as a 501(c)4, and as such donations to the Union are not tax deductible.

American Civil Liberties Union Foundation

All of the ACLU's litigation work and public education falls under the Foundation. The Foundation is registered as a 501(c)3, therefore all gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible.

COMBINED SUPPORT AND REVENUE



COMBINED EXPENSES



JOIN THE FIGHT

Every day across the nation, the ACLU is called on to defend all freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. There's never been a more important time for freedom-loving people to support the ACLU and our successful work to protect civil liberties. Take your stand and help us defend people's rights. For more information on ways to give, contact our Director of Development, Lisa Pitsiri, at 405-520-6431 or lpitsiri@acluok.org.