

# IMPACT REPORT

YOUR SUPPORT. YOUR IMPACT.



SINCE OUR LAST REPORT:

Active Legal Cases

15

Publications

10

8

Legislative Testimony Provided

OVER 10,500

Constituent messages sent to lawmakers

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## A message from our Executive Director, Ben

Every few months, we write to share important updates about the ACLU of Ohio's new and ongoing litigation, statewide advocacy, grassroots initiatives, and public education campaigns. Yes, the political terrain can be hostile to civil liberties and civil rights, but the ACLU of Ohio consistently shows up in smart, strategic ways to fight in both principle and practice for the best ideals of fairness, freedom, and justice. This Impact Report demonstrates the power of good people united to make a difference.

As a member and donor, you position us to lead with determination, agility, practicality, and hope. Thank you for your continued support.

Ben



J. Bennett Guess  
Executive Director

Want to impact change for generations to come? Include the ACLU of Ohio in your estate plan and commit to fighting for freedom and defending democracy with a strong legacy. Please email [give@acluohio.org](mailto:give@acluohio.org) and our Development Department will follow up with more information.

## End Gerrymandering Now

We are "Citizens Not Politicians!" The ACLU of Ohio serves at the executive level of this incredibly important grassroots campaign to place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot to end gerrymandering in Ohio. This is one of our top priorities in 2024.

Right now in Ohio, politicians manipulate voting districts to protect their interests and to finagle near-zero accountability from their electorate. For democracy's sake, we must slay the gerrymandering beast once and for all.

The Citizens Not Politicians Amendment will:

- Create a 15-member Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission made up of Democratic, Republican, and Independent citizens;
- Ban current or former politicians, political party officials and lobbyists from sitting on the Commission;
- Require fair and impartial districts by making it unconstitutional to draw voting districts that discriminate against or favor any political party or individual politician; and
- Require the commission to operate under an independent process.

As a founding member of Citizens Not Politicians, the ACLU of Ohio's has long been a leader in this arena, advocating for fair maps in the streets, at the statehouse, and in federal and state courthouses for years. Redistricting reform is critical to the future of Ohio. It's past time for voters to choose their representatives, not the other way around. **Building off the huge success of our 2023 ballot victories, all ACLU supporters must join the fight and sign a petition near you!** Learn more at [CitizensNotPoliticians.org](https://CitizensNotPoliticians.org).



## Defending Transgender Youth

We are headed to court to defend transgender youth and their right to self-determination. Earlier this year, the Republican supermajority in the Ohio Legislature voted to override Governor DeWine's veto of House Bill 68, legislation that bans gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth. We seek to halt the law before it takes effect on April 24, 2024.

This state-sponsored vendetta against some of Ohio's most vulnerable young people is unconscionable. The ACLU of Ohio stands in solidarity with transgender youth and their families. Discriminatory, hateful, and harmful legislation cannot go unchallenged.

The use of gender-affirming hormone therapy to treat transgender minors is supported by every major medical association. Transgender youth, together with their doctors and parents, should have access to evidence-based medical care, just like anyone else. Families should be free to make private, personal decisions in consultation with their physicians, and free from interference by politicians. HB 68 is not only cruel; it violates the Ohio Constitution. **#SeeYouinCourt.**



## Rights versus Reality: New Video Series

Introducing our new six-part video series, *Know Your Rights: Rights vs Reality*. These informative videos advance racial justice by inviting viewers to consider the realities experienced by many Ohioans of color when exercising their constitutionally protected rights. These dynamic discussions empower Ohioans to reflect upon the realities often faced by those stopped by the police, including being arrested, exercising their protest rights, and even just daily living in one's own home. Here, we unpack what "The Talk" means — and has meant for generations — to Black and Brown families in America.

A longstanding cornerstone of our advocacy and public education, "Know Your Rights" presentations provide information critical to every Ohioan, especially young people.

Moderated by Columbus WBNS 10TV news anchor Tracy Townsend, these real-life conversations feature ACLU of Ohio board members and staff, including President Ebony Speakes-Hall of Liberty Township, former President Hasan Kwame Jeffries of Columbus, Curtis Maples of Cincinnati, Lori Urogdy Eiler of Cleveland, and Mary Paxton of South Euclid. We are tremendously grateful for our panelists' generosity of time and perspective. View the videos on the ACLU of Ohio's YouTube or at our website.



## Advocating for Voters with Disabilities

In December, we filed a federal lawsuit challenging a provision in House Bill 458 that impacts how voters with disabilities can cast absentee ballots. This law, which became effective in April 2023, makes it a felony for anyone who is not an election official or mail carrier to possess or return the absentee ballot of a voter with a disability, unless the assisting person falls within a list of "approved" relatives. This law is yet another attempt by anti-voter legislatures to criminalize voter assistance and suppress historically disenfranchised voters. To exclude caregivers and other trusted individuals from assisting a voter to effectively cast a ballot is an abhorrent provision that the court must strike down.



## We Must End Ohio's Death Penalty

The death penalty debate is heating up. In the same week that the ACLU of Ohio released new polling showing that a majority of Ohioans support *repealing* the death penalty, lawmakers introduced a bill that would allow a new method for execution: nitrogen hypoxia. To be clear, nitrogen hypoxia is suffocation by poisonous gas and this proposal is state-sponsored torture.

Our public opinion poll shows that, when asked if Ohio should do away with the death penalty and replace it with a life sentence for murder without the possibility of parole, 56% said yes. There are currently two bipartisan bills in the Ohio Statehouse that would abolish capital punishment. The momentum is on our side, and we oppose all execution methods, especially those reminiscent of gas chambers.

The death penalty is an expensive, ineffective, racist, and arbitrary system that puts innocent lives at risk. Currently, 23 states, plus Washington, D.C. have abolished the death penalty; Ohio can and should be next.

Stop Ohio Executions.

It's time to abolish capital punishment.

February 2024



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