

FILED: WE'RE CHALLENGING OHIO'S UNCONSTITUTIONAL ABORTION BAN

Lawmakers have perpetually targeted women's constitutionally protected right to choose, seemingly with one goal: to make it impossible to obtain an abortion. In December 2017, legislators passed a bill that would ban a woman from having an abortion if the woman has reason to believe the fetus has Down syndrome and would criminalize doctors who knowingly perform these abortions. We pushed back, urging Governor Kasich to veto this unconstitutional bill, and over 2,000 supporters took action. However, on December 22, the Governor signed this bill into law.

On February 15, the ACLU of Ohio filed a lawsuit, *Preterm-Cleveland et al. v. Himes et al.*, on behalf of Preterm Cleveland, Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio, and several other abortion providers, challenging the unconstitutional abortion ban. We are committed to keeping politicians out of the exam room, and ensuring all women are able to make medical decisions with consultation from their doctor, not their legislator. Stay tuned!

**LEGISLATORS
PASSED A LAW
THAT VIOLATES
WOMEN'S
REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS.**

SO WE SUED

MEET THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM

YOUR SUPPORT OVER THE LAST YEAR HAS BEEN PIVOTAL IN OUR ABILITY TO DEFEND AGAINST THE RECENT ATTACKS ON OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES.

During the past several months, our team has grown – alongside our fight to expand civil liberties. Dedicated to challenging some of Ohio's most oppressive systems, six new people have joined our policy department in the Cleveland and Columbus offices.



COLUMBUS

Catalleya Storm, Policy Associate
Robin A. Wright, MPA, Policy Manager

The increase in support means we can now act in bigger and bolder ways. The ACLU of Ohio is diving deeper into the calamity of mass incarceration by challenging unjust collateral sanctions. We are focusing on enfranchising voters in this pivotal mid-term election year, including those who are facing challenges getting to the polls. We are continuing the fight for statewide non-discrimination laws through our Transgender Education & Advocacy Program (TEAP). And, our efforts to reform bail practices, and end discriminatory mayor's courts, are stronger than ever. Join us in welcoming these talented people to the ACLU family.



CLEVELAND

Caitlin Hill, Policy Counsel
Melekte Melaku, Policy Associate
Avery Martens, Policy Associate
Sri Thakkilapati, PhD, Policy Researcher

LGBTQ ACTIVISM

#OPENTOALL

On December 5, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* – the ACLU case that will decide whether businesses that are open to the public can refuse to serve LGBTQ people. On December 3, the weekend before the arguments, community volunteers and activists, on behalf of the ACLU of Ohio and Equality Ohio, canvassed around greater Cleveland to spark interest in the case. We asked local businesses to post signs declaring that they were #OpenToAll, to show support for LGBTQ people being treated fairly in regard to public accommodations. With a wealth of support, over two dozen new small businesses pledged to join our coalition, Ohio Business Competes, which is tasked with gathering private sector support for non-discrimination laws in the state. Our coalition now has over 250 business partners!



OHIO FAIRNESS ACT

On January 31, for the first time in nine years, a non-discrimination bill to protect LGBTQ Ohioans had a proponent hearing in the Ohio House. Our Executive Director Ben Guess provided written testimony for the hearing.

“The ACLU of Ohio is extremely supportive of House Bill 160, which will expand legal protections in housing, employment, and access to public services for all Ohioans based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression,” said Guess. With your continued support, we are closer to ensuring statewide protections for all LGBTQ Ohioans.

HUSTED V. APRI

On January 10, the ACLU was at the U.S. Supreme Court delivering oral arguments in the Ohio voting purge case *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI)*. “We look forward to the Supreme Court validating the law – that Ohio’s practice of purging eligible voters violates the National Voter Registration Act, and is illegal,” said Freda Levenson, legal director for the ACLU of Ohio. Stay tuned for the decision this summer!



Elizabeth Bonham, Staff Attorney
Emma Keeshin, Legal Assistant
Freda Levenson, Legal Director

A VICTORY FOR FREE SPEECH

In January, we celebrated a victory with a settlement in our lawsuit challenging Cleveland’s anti-panhandling ordinances. The laws enforced by Cleveland unconstitutionally restricted people’s free speech right to ask for help. “Trying to arrest your way out of poverty is not a good approach, and all cities need to make sure that the laws they have on the books are fair and are applied fairly,” said Joe Mead, volunteer attorney with the ACLU of Ohio.

ENSURING ALL YOUTH HAVE AN ATTORNEY IN COURT

This past year marked the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *In re Gault*, which sets forth the principle that children have a constitutional right to legal counsel in court. The ACLU of Ohio, together with the Children’s Law Center and the Ohio Public Defender, asked the Supreme Court of Ohio to strengthen these protections for juveniles, and ensure the benefit of counsel intended by *Gault* was being practiced in our state.

Our position: children facing any charge should be permitted to at least consult with an attorney before being able to waive their right to counsel. No child should navigate the justice system without the guidance of counsel, regardless of where they live or the nature of the charge. It should not matter how big your wallet is, or what charge you are facing; everyone – young and old – has a constitutional right to counsel.