

IMPACT REPORT

YOUR SUPPORT. YOUR IMPACT.

ACLU
Ohio

SINCE OUR LAST REPORT:

Active
Legal
Cases

15

Publications

14

11

Legislative
Testimony
Provided

OVER
15,800

Constituent
messages sent
to lawmakers

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A message from our Executive Director, Ben

These are frightening times, and I know many people feel anxious, and rightfully so. But let me be clear: We're clear-eyed about the chaos and destruction Trump is bringing to the nation and his sycophants are mimicking at the Ohio Statehouse. That's why we have no time for hand wringing, as they wreak havoc on our constitution and trample individual rights and freedoms. We're fighting back, every day and in every way.

The ACLU of Ohio, and our ACLU colleagues nationwide, are built for moments like this, and the fight to protect our democracy – and our country and our state – is just beginning. This Impact Report demonstrates the power and promise of good people, like you, united to make a difference. As a member and donor, you are at the center of that people-powered, freedom-driven mission.

Thank you!

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 and our Development Department will follow up with more information.



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Protecting Immigrants' Rights

Since President Trump returned to office in January, there has been an all-out assault on immigrants and asylum seekers residing in this country. We know that mass deportations devastate our communities, and that families should be kept together, not ripped apart. While the ACLU is fighting in court to protect birthright citizenship, stop fast-tracked deportations without due process, and defend the right to asylum at the border, we also have been busy advocating for immigrants living in Ohio.



Over the past few months, the ACLU of Ohio team:

- Sent a letter to all 88 county sheriffs outlining the dangers of carrying out Trump's inhumane immigration policies.
- Issued a legal memo to Ohio school officials regarding the rights of immigrant students and the responsibilities of school administrators.
- Urged Ohio's U.S. Congressional delegation to reject a bill that would cut critical federal funds to communities simply for refusing to comply with Trump's mass deportation and detention agenda.
- Mobilized and educated supporters to fight an Ohio bill that forces local and state law enforcement to partner with the federal government on immigration enforcement.
- Attended multiple protests across the state and distributed signs to advocate for compassion, not cruelty, and dignity, not deportations.

Trump's mass deportation plan leaves children without parents and shatters our communities by removing people who have lived and worked here for decades. The ACLU of Ohio will do everything in our power to preserve the dignity and humanity of immigrants and asylum-seekers living in Ohio.

Campus Action Team Spring Conference

Ohio students are living in an era of unprecedented threats to democracy and relentless attacks on free speech rights on campuses and universities across Ohio. To build power among young scholars, the ACLU of Ohio was proud to convene a Campus Action Team Spring Conference, April 4-6, to leverage collective power for student activists from several of our established chapters in Ohio.

Students gathered in Columbus for a two-day retreat and learned foundational skills to build longstanding power on campus through field mobilization and civic engagement. We were thrilled to have representation from several ACLU of Ohio staff members and dozens of young activists to participate in workshops and network with social justice advocates to lead the next generation of change-makers in Ohio.

Lame Duck Wins

In Ohio, legislative sessions last two full years. This means that every even-year election, Ohioans are subjected to a "lame duck" lightning round to close out that specific general assembly session. While this is historically a time for controversy and chaos, we have two positive bills that made it over the finish line at the tail-end of the 135th General Assembly, in no small part due to the relentless tenacity and advocacy from the ACLU of Ohio policy team.



- **HB 29:** Legislation that ends most driver's license suspensions over unpaid debts from non-driving related offenses. A person's ability to pay should not determine whether they are free to drive.
- **SB 237:** Legislation that protects the right of citizens to speak truth to power, free from intimidation, by enacting critical protections against Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).



In fact, for the first time in ACLU of Ohio history, we were invited to Governor DeWine's official signing ceremony for both bills! Our Chief Lobbyist Gary Daniels was present for SB 237, and our Policy Counsel Patrick Higgins for HB 29.

Combatting Censorship

Over the past several years, Ohio's censorship efforts have been rampant. From attempts to censor classroom discussions around race, gender, and social issues in higher education classrooms, to gutting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, and banning books on "controversial topics" we know it's up to us to protect our First Amendment rights. Unfortunately, "thought police" proponents are alive in Ohio.

To raise awareness about the attacks on free speech, the ACLU of Ohio team attended student protests at The Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati, and hosted "Banned Books Bingo" events across the state, most recently in Cincinnati, Youngstown, and Athens.

Universities, public schools, and public libraries must reject federal and state pressure to censor free expression by students and scholars.



ACLU-OH hosted Banned Books Bingo in Athens, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Youngstown.



ACLU-OH Policy Strategist Sean McCann spoke to student protesters at The Ohio State University.

Donor Spotlight: Rob and Mark



Mark Mockensturm & Rob Salem

Meet donors, Rob Salem and Mark Mockensturm from Toledo! Rob is a Clinical Professor of Law at the University of Toledo College of Law and Mark is the founder and senior partner of Mockensturm, Ltd. which handles tax and commercial transactions and litigation. Rob and Mark have been loyal supporters of the ACLU of Ohio for years and Rob has recently joined our Board of Directors. They will be hosting a fundraiser at their home this June to support our organization.

"We can't think of a more important organization to support in these scary and uncertain times. The ACLU is fearless and on the frontlines every day, defending our rights and protecting our democratic institutions."

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