



BY THE NUMBERS

2016 - 2017 Annual Report

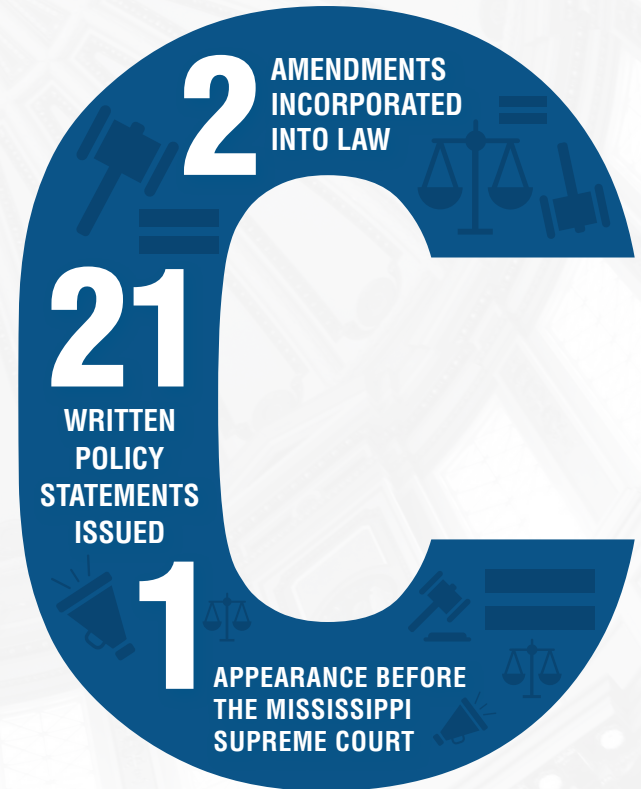


ACLU

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of MISSISSIPPI



Your support made it all possible.



Protecting Freedom, Ensuring Justice,

1

ENTIRE
COMMUNITY
CHANGED VIA
SCSCP

92

SPEAKING
ENGAGEMENTS

\$200,000

RECEIVED IN GRANT DOLLARS

130

TV/RADIO
INTERVIEWS

2

AMICUS
BRIEFS

37,145

WEBSITE HITS

1,927
MEMBERS

1

MAJOR
PIECE
OF
INVESTIGATIVE
LITIGATION

Advancing Equal Opportunity for All.

Joint Letter from the Board President and the Executive Director

This has been an amazing and yet compelling year. As we think about the importance of this great organization and its quantifiable impact, a glimpse of which is provided in this report, we want to frame our accounting. We also want to say thank you for your efforts in leading the resistance against the denial of rights, using the words of wisdom that cry from our past, resound in our present, and echo to our future.

Over the past year, we watched the elevation of ignorance to positional power, the rise in public display of hatred, and deliberate governmental disregard of the care and concern for the people of this nation. As we watched, we also resolved to resist tyrannical intolerance. The ACLU made a promise to those who present

“It is certain, in any case, that ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.”

– James Baldwin

as an enemy of justice – they would “contend with the full firepower of the ACLU.” With your support, we have kept and will continue to keep this promise.

Across the nation, we continue to see the criminalization of an entire population. We see access to the “American Dream” denied to children of immigrants. In Mississippi, we see attempts and, unfortunately, the successful, codification of political

rhetoric into state law. When the ACLU of MS saw injustice, we stood up and fought back. We challenged unlawful police practices. We defended the free speech rights of those with whom we agree and those with whom we fundamentally disagree – because we are determined to defend freedom.

“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and **where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.**”

– Frederick Douglass

“ Fighting for one’s freedom, **struggling towards being free**, is like struggling to be a poet or a good Christian or a good Jew or a good Muslim or good Zen Buddhist. You work all day long and achieve some kind of level of success by nightfall, go to sleep and wake up the next morning with **the job still to be done**. So you start all over again.

– **Maya Angelou**

We launched an initiative to lift the voices and civically empower thousands of transgender men and women in our state. With you by our side, we said “*We Are All Mississippi!*”

The ACLU of MS stands resolute in its commitment to make Mississippi better.

We are proud to be an affiliate of an organization that is 2 million persons strong. Our strength lies in your strength. When we see state officials create unnecessary protections for police, change prescriptions to accelerate the execution of the condemned, all the while failing to mandate policies and programs that ensure protection for the innocent, we call on your strength and fight back. Together, we resist and are committed to protect freedom, ensure justice, and advance equal opportunity for everyone.

“ **Despair and frustration will not shake our belief that the resistance is the only way of liberation.**

– **Émile Lahoud**

The ACLU of MS’s membership is nearly 2,000 strong. Your membership and support of this organization is invaluable. We are grateful that we are not in this struggle alone. Every day, the Board of Directors, the executive director and the staff of the ACLU of MS wake up ready and willing, but it is only because of your support that we are able to start the fight for freedom all over again. Thank you.

Cassandra Welchlin
Board President

Jennifer Riley Collins
Executive Director



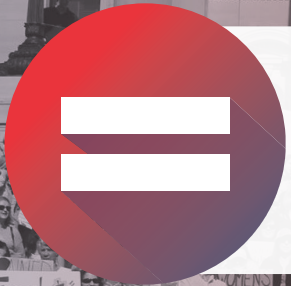
Your support advances...



**CRIMINAL
JUSTICE
REFORM**



**YOUTH
JUSTICE**



EQUALITY FOR ALL



FREEDOM OF SPEECH & EXPRESSION



MISSION: The ACLU of Mississippi is dedicated to promoting, defending, and extending civil liberties to all Mississippians with emphasis on **Criminal Justice Reform, Youth Justice, Equality,** and **Freedom of Speech and Expression.**

SEPTEMBER 2016

- Launched the Community Control Over Police Surveillance initiative in Hattiesburg, joining nationwide initiative.
- Keynote speaker Shaka Senghor joined us for our 2016 Jazz Brunch.
- Partnered with Hope Credit Union for National Voter Registration Day.



NOVEMBER 2016

- Urged MDOC to suspend “Immediate Family Only” visitation policy before implementation.
- Defended student’s First Amendment Right to refuse to say the pledge in Gulfport.

DECEMBER 2016

- Addressed protected speech via First Amendment in Pearl, MS billboard controversy.
- Launched Transgender Education and Advocacy Program in Mississippi (TEAP-MS), a continuation of our We Are All Mississippi campaign.



FEBRUARY 2017

- Launched People Power “Grassroots Mobilization” platform in Tupelo.
- Filed FOIA to demand documents on implementation of Trump’s Muslim ban.
- Provided resource materials in response to ICE raids and bans.
- Vigorously opposed House Bill 638, which opened the door for the use of sedatives in lethal injections.



OCTOBER 2016

- Demanded school leadership ensure protection of all children in Greenville Public Schools following recorded incident showing staff abusing a special education student.
- Submitted changes to the Supreme Court of Mississippi on proposed Mississippi Rules of Criminal Procedure that addressed modern-day debtors’ prison issues.



JANUARY 2017

- Issued 2017 Equity Agenda to guide legislative actions to ensure fairness and a more just Mississippi.
- Pursued legislative priorities for 2017 session: Mississippi Civil Rights Act; police body camera policy; written consent to search vehicles; racial impact analysis on proposed legislation; special prosecutors for office-involved shootings; state protections against housing discrimination; state employment protections against discrimination.
- Issued a response to the governor’s state of the state.
- Published the 2016 Legislative Score Card, holding state legislatures accountable for progress on issues of equity and inclusion.
- Released the Blueprint for Police Accountability, which included five reforms.
- Hosted 35 participants during our annual Legislative Advocacy Day, which included a citizen’s lobbying training and news conference.
- Presented workshop on impacts of House Bill 1523 at the “Creating Change” conference in Philadelphia, PA.
- Trained Sunflower County Consolidated School District faculty and staff on Restorative Justice model.



133 BILLS TRACKED

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MARCH 2017

- Promoted inclusivity during Transgender Day of Visibility with volunteer service at the Mississippi Food Network and the first ever TDOV celebration at a local restaurant in Jackson.
- Held a legislative hearing on trans rights and the need for protections.
- Launched R.O.O.T.S. exhibit at the B.B. King Museum in Indianola.
- Released statements in opposition to the “Back the Badge” bill and in support of civil asset forfeiture.
- Participated in the “March on Mississippi” as legal observers.
- Hosted the Social Activism 101 panel discussion with We Are All Mississippi coalition partners, dedicated to promoting equality throughout the state.
- Presented the Sunflower County Systems Change project and R.O.O.T.S. at Delta State University’s “Winning the Race Conference.”



JUNE 2017

- Held a news conference in response to 5th Circuit’s ruling of House Bill 1523.
- Reached settlement agreement in federal class-action suit *Burks v. Scott County, MS*, which challenged the county’s practice of detaining people without appointing counsel or formally charging them with a crime.
- Celebrated LGBT Pride Month with social media videos from TEAP-MS key leaders.



APRIL 2017

- R.O.O.T.S. exhibit traveled to Smith Robertson Museum in Jackson.
- Responded to governor’s veto of House Bill 1033, a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill that addressed debtors’ prisons, re-entry and sentencing.
- Participated in Forest Hill High School’s “Anti-Hate Week” with a discussion on LGBT rights.
- Hosted a legal observers training session at the University of Southern Mississippi.



MAY 2017

- R.O.O.T.S. exhibit traveled to the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University.
- Called for investigation of Rep. Karl Oliver in racist Facebook post regarding confederate monuments.
- Launched our “Transality” forums in Biloxi.
- Filed suit against Madison County Sheriff’s Department over its racially biased policing practices.
- Authored a brief and participated in an oral argument before the Mississippi Supreme Court in support of Forrest County Justice Court Judge Gay Polk-Payton’s free speech.

JULY 2017

- Spoke out against president’s Twitter policy to ban transgender military service members.
- Legally observed the “Die In” rally in response to U.S. Senate’s “Better Care” Reconciliation Act.
- Engaged newly elected and returning Mississippi mayors with our Municipal Equity Agenda, which was also showcased at the Mississippi Municipal League Conference in Biloxi, MS.
- Highlighted impacts of House Bill 1523 following appeals court ruling in opinion-editorial, “Don’t Discriminate Against Me, See Me.”



AUGUST 2017

- Legally observed protests in response to Confederate emblem on state flag.
- Hosted 75 students and parents at the 3rd Annual Schoolhouse Rights Rock at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.
- New discipline policy reflective of national best practices adopted in Sunflower County Consolidated School District as a result of the SCSCP work.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Communities of color should not be open-air prison complexes, but that is the climate for Black communities in Madison County, MS. The Madison County sheriff's deputies routinely subject Black residents to stops, searches, and seizures without suspicion. **So, we sued the Madison County Sheriff's Department (MCSD).**

The courageous plaintiffs are Black men and women ages 27 to 62, who were unconstitutionally searched, detained, or arrested by the sheriff's department, sometimes violently, while they are merely walking to work, driving in their neighborhood, celebrating with family, or just spending time in their own homes.

When **Quinnetta Manning** declined to allow the MCSD into her family's home, deputies forced their way inside and threatened her and her husband with jail time if they did not provide a false witness statement. When she refused and her husband told the deputies he knew his rights, they handcuffed and choked him in the middle of his living room.

I know that **every American citizen has rights**, but the Madison County police treated us like we didn't have any rights. Taking my husband away from our home not only embarrassed him, but made us feel **less than American**. How can we show our children that we can protect them and keep them safe when the police can just come in my house whenever they want without cause?

– **Quinnetta Manning**,
Plaintiff



They called him “Crip” and “Mr. Cripple” because of his disability and use of a cane to walk. They then dragged him down the stairs in his underwear and beat him until he submitted to writing the false statement. Terrified and under duress,

Mrs. Manning was also compelled to write a false statement after recording the encounter on her cell phone.

Steven Smith was stopped and searched by plainclothes MCSD deputies at a pedestrian “checkpoint” while walking by his home. He was ordered to produce his identification and required to submit to an automatic, suspicionless search. Because deputies discovered that he owed the county a fine for a minor driving infraction, he was arrested and jailed for weeks.

Betty Jean Tucker was hosting a barbecue in her yard for family and friends when plainclothes deputies drove up and “jumped out” of unmarked cars. Without a warrant or reason for suspecting criminal activity, they detained and searched all of her guests, including in their pockets. After literally crawling around on the patio and finding nothing, they left without explanation.

Our lawsuit, along with several other criminal justice reform initiatives, seeks reforms that safeguard constitutional

rights by promoting bias-free and evidence-based policing, transparency, and police accountability. Other Criminal Justice Reform initiatives include Debtors’ Prison, Community Control Over Police Surveillance, and Restorative Justice initiatives.

There was **no reason** for the deputies to stop and search us. All they saw was **two Black guys walking**, and that was reason enough for them to treat us like suspects.

– **Stephen Smith**,
Plaintiff





YOUTH JUSTICE

In schools across Mississippi, young men of color are punished more often and more harshly based on who they are and what they look like. In order to disrupt the school to prison pipeline, it is necessary to take a community-based systems approach that directly engages the systems that adversely impact students of color. The Sunflower County Systems Change Project (SCSCP) has fostered transformation by engaging the school system, community, law enforcement, and media to change the narrative around young men and boys of color and implement policy change.

There are two products that have solidified SCSCP as a model for districts statewide: the success of the R.O.O.T.S. of Sunflower County Project and the Sunflower County Consolidated School District's newly adopted student code of conduct. The new code now offers alternatives to suspension, limits zero-tolerance policies to those mandated by state law, and adds multi-tiered supports for students.

In order to address negative narratives, the Reclaiming Our Origins Through Stories

(R.O.O.T.S.) Project, made up of 19 young men from Sunflower County, collected stories about growing up in the Mississippi Delta and curated them into a traveling museum exhibit. The exhibit, which traveled from Indianola to Jackson, MS lifts up the authentic and affirmative voices of young men of color, and provides a springboard for impacting change across the state and U.S.

Being part of R.O.O.T.S. is like **being a part of history**. When I think about how far we've come and the perception of young black men and boys, **I find myself hopeful** about the prospect of success for my generation. The fact that my grandmother and grandfather couldn't cross the tracks and now I can gives me inspiration.

– Calvin, R.O.O.T.S Participant



EQUALITY FOR ALL

For too long, misinformation has created confusion and fostered more fear and more prejudice of transgender and gender non-conforming people. As a result, trans-antagonistic voices have dominated the public square. The ACLU of Mississippi has answered the call with our Transgender Education and Advocacy Program of Mississippi (TEAP-MS) Initiative.

The aim of TEAP-MS is to dispel the fear surrounding transgender and gender non-conforming individuals by educating our communities about harmful myths and increasing the visibility of transgender activists. TEAP-MS also advocates for the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people on a state level by advocating for the passage of the

Mississippi Civil Rights Act and local non-discrimination ordinances. TEAP-MS is an integral part of the We Are ALL Mississippi (WAAM) Campaign.

We are taking control of the narrative by first developing leaders from the trans/GNC community across the state, and then building the first trans-led coalition. These individuals have supported efforts, including the first-ever legislative hearing for trans rights with Senator Debbie Dawkins,



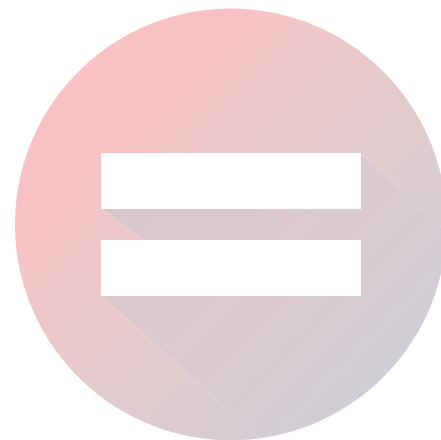
the first-ever public celebration of Transgender Day of Visibility, and a series of town halls to educate the general public about transgender identity and the importance of activism.

Jensen Mater, one of our key leaders, has been pivotal in pushing TEAP-MS. He has faced workplace discrimination as a trans man, but has used those experiences as motivation to becoming a true advocate for trans equality. The TEAP-MS program has provided him a platform to freely express his experiences and his truth. He published the first-ever opinion-editorial on his experiences as a trans man and the importance of policy protections inclusive of gender identity in the Clarion Ledger, our statewide daily newspaper.

In addition to LGBTQ Advocacy, other Equality for All initiatives include the Legislative Score Card and Equity Agendas, Voter Protection and Education, and Immigration Protection Project.

“ Now that I look like the man society finds acceptable and my legal documentations have been changed to reflect my identity, I face less discrimination. **Not every transgender person will.** And, I am the same man today as I was then. Without policy protections in place, I and other LGBT individuals cannot fully participate in society.

– **Jensen Mater**, *TEAP-MS Key Leader*



FREEDOM OF SPEECH & EXPRESSION

Nearly 60 years ago, the Supreme Court made clear that all ideas, “unorthodox ideas, controversial ideas, even ideas hateful to the prevailing climate of opinion – have the full protection of [First Amendment] guarantees.” So whether one approves or disapproves of Ku Klux Klan flyering in Rankin County; a student’s refusal to recite the Pledge of Allegiance in Harrison County; the billboard in Pearl that placed President Trump’s campaign slogan on top of the Bloody Sunday photograph; or a judge wearing their robe on a book cover they authored, the First Amendment acknowledges the right to engage in these activities.

The Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance sought to reprimand Forrest County Justice Court Judge Gay Polk-Payton for her social media activity and for a book she authored. Judge Polk-Payton’s attorneys, David McCarty and Oliver Diaz, asked the ACLU of Mississippi to participate in the case as “amicus curiae” to help the Mississippi Supreme Court properly evaluate and decide

“Free speech is fundamental, **fundamental to our being**, to individual flourishing, to democracy, to accountable and responsive government, to progress, artistic and social and human, and thus should be limited **in only rare and compelling circumstances.**”

– **Joshua Tom**, *Staff Attorney*

the First Amendment free speech issues. Staff Attorney **Joshua Tom** authored a brief highlighting the free speech issues and argued that Judge Polk-Payton could not be reprimanded as her speech was protected by the First Amendment. Mr. Tom participated in oral argument before the Mississippi Supreme Court. The day after oral argument, the Court in a short opinion decided for Judge Polk-Payton and held that she could not be reprimanded for her speech.



LOOKING AHEAD

Strategic Initiatives For 2017 - 2018

Criminal Justice Reform

- Debtor Prison Reform (Enact Legislation and Monitor Implementation)
- Mental Health Access for Justice Involved Individuals
- Law Enforcement Accountability and Transparency
 - Require Independent Prosecutors for Police Violence
- Statewide Body Camera Policy Report and Reform
- Require Written Consent to Search
- Civil Asset Forfeiture – Increase Standard of Proof
- Racial Impact Analysis for Criminal Reforms
- Brown v. Madison County (Madison County Policing Case)
- Stout v. Vincent (Racial Profiling Case)
- Prosecutorial Accountability

- Washington County Restorative Justice Project
- Ban the Box City Ordinance – Greenville, MS
- Reentry Support
- Expungement Clinic
- Bail Reform

Educational Opportunities

- Sunflower County Systems Change Project
- Equitable Opportunities for Educators
- Special Education Equity Project
- Education Reform on School Discipline
 - Racial Impact Analysis of Discipline Policies in Target Districts
 - Amend Mississippi School Safety's Act (3 Strikes Law)

Voter Rights

- Let People Vote Campaign
- ID Me – Transgender Voter ID Compliance Campaign

Equal Access/Equality for All

- Transgender Education Advocacy Project (TEAP – MS)
- We Are All Mississippi Campaign
 - Non-discrimination Ordinances
 - Mississippi Civil Rights Act
 - Mississippi Employment Protection Act
 - Fair Housing Legislation
 - Inclusive Jury Selection Amendment
- Immigration Protection Project

Governmental Transparency & Accountability

- Community Control Over Police Surveillance (CCOPS)
- MBI Transparency Project

DONORS

Thank you to these contributors who partnered with ACLU of Mississippi to advance Criminal Justice Reform, Youth Justice, Equality for All, and Freedom of Speech and Expression.

\$5,000 or more

- Jonathan Kennard Youngwood

\$500 to \$749

- Melissa Beavers
- Patrick O'Connor
- Gabriela Ungo
- Stephen & Bernice Silberman
- Monica Galloway
- Dr. Kelly Marsh & Dr. Brian Anderson
- Richard Johnson
- C. Jackson Williams
- John R. & Sumali J. Conlon

\$1,000 to \$4,999

- Richard Raspet and Wendy Garrison
- Joseph O'Gorman
- Sabra and Ron Laumbach
- Daniel Garcia
- Alisan Steiner

\$250 to \$499

- Hodding Carter, III
- Kaiser R. Brown
- Joseph Barlow
- Michael Adelman
- Stratton Bull
- William Ingram
- Richard Raspet
- Elmore & Peterson Law Firm, PA
- Former Justice Fred Banks
- Dr. & Mrs. Glenn Gentry



FINANCIALS

Substantial financial resources are essential for the ACLU of Mississippi to effectively defend and advance civil liberties.

The ACLU of Mississippi's financial engine is driven by the dedicated work of committed Board members, staff, and volunteers.

The ACLU of Mississippi receives no government funding. We depend entirely upon private donations, foundation grants, court-awarded legal fees, membership dues and, as a small affiliate, significant investment from our National organization.

ACLU of MS, Inc.

REVENUE AND SUPPORTS

■ Guaranteed Minimal Income	32,530
■ Membership Income	1,125
■ Revenue Reconciliation	1,397
■ Private Grants	0
Total Revenue and Supports	35,052

EXPENSES

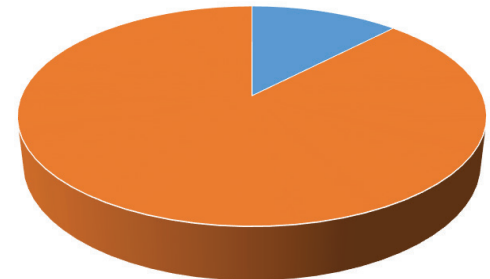
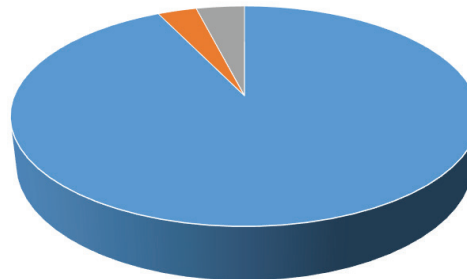
Programs and Services

■ Legislative	525
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Supportive Services

■ General and Administrative	3,772
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Total Expenses	4,297
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ACLU of MS Foundation, Inc.

REVENUE AND SUPPORTS

Support from National ACLU	805,777
Private Foundations	164,766
Interest and Dividend Income	12,076
Professional Fees	8,914
Events Income	5,750
Other Income	26,321
Unrealized Gain (Loss) or Investments	-33,824
Total	1,057,428

EXPENSES

Programs and Services

Legal	244,931
Advocacy	738,697
Communications	111,972
Total Programs and Services	1,095,600





Supportive Services

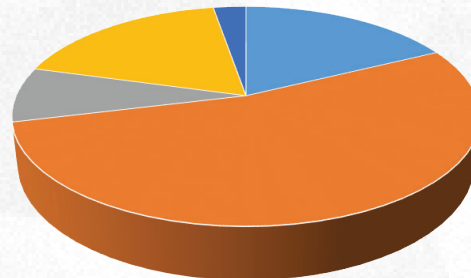
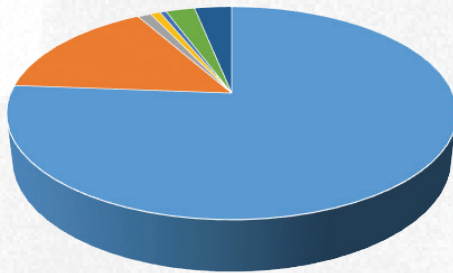
General and Administrative	248,976
Fundraising	37,315
Total Supportive Services	286,291
Total Expenses	1,381,891

SUPPORT OUR WORK

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DONATE to the ACLU
GET ACTIVE in your community
VOLUNTEER with ACLU
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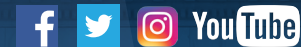
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