

FLORIDA FRONTLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE FRONTLINE

July Edition

Florida has long been a testing ground for cruelty. Cruel policies crafted here, sadly do not stay here. They often are exported — as model laws and precedents for other states and the federal government. But what’s also born here, what cannot be denied, is resistance.

This month, we stood face-to-face with the creators of the swamp-built detention center of unfathomable inhumanity and international shame designed to disappear people. We challenged a state law that would have turned local police into border agents. And we amplified the voice of a survivor whose courage shook the walls of ICE detention.

And we did not blink.

Because this is not just about legal wins or policy defeats. It’s about power — who holds it, how it’s used, and who is harmed when it is abused and the resulting injustices to go unchecked.

At the ACLU of Florida, we are not neutral in the face of dehumanization. We do not shrink when the stakes rise. We show up in courtrooms, in communities, and in the lives of those counting on us to fight like their freedom depends on it. Because it does.

So let this be a reminder:
Florida may be on the frontlines of cruelty.
But we, together, are the frontline of resistance.

In solidarity and struggle,

Bacardi L. Jackson
Executive Director, ACLU of Florida



SEVENTY YEARS STRONG

A Call to Courage: Celebrating 70 Years of Resistance in Florida

This fall, we're marking a major milestone — 70 years of defiance, solidarity, and transformation.

This is more than an anniversary, it's the ignition of a movement.

The ACLU of Florida was born out of defiance — launched in the face of censorship, government surveillance, and racial injustice. Since then, we've stood with the people of Florida through every chapter of resistance:

- From the Johns Committee to book bans.
- From voter purges to fighting racial gerrymandering.
- From criminalizing pregnancy to fighting abortion bans.

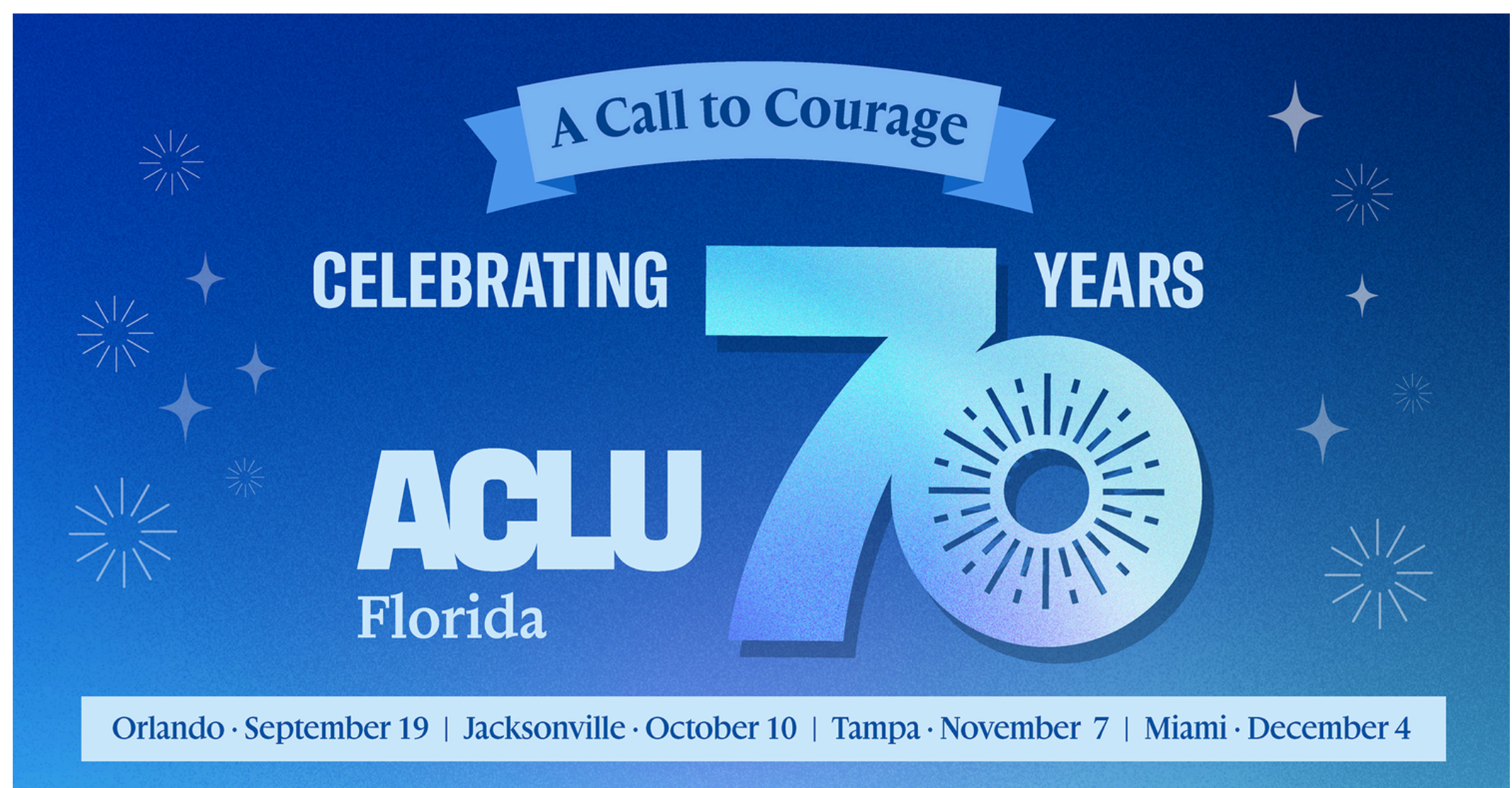
We're marking this moment the only way we know how — by standing together in the fight for what's next. As we face new waves of censorship, criminalization, and unchecked control, we're gathering across Florida to reflect on the past and rally for the future. Join us at events across Florida!

Join us for powerful storytelling, live performances, immersive exhibits, and a bold call to courage. We'll honor the visionaries who exemplify the movement we've built, while honoring the rising voices who carry this work forward.

Tickets: \$75 General | \$25 Student

If ticket cost is a barrier, email development@aclufl.org — sponsor-funded tickets are available.

[Become a Sponsor](#) | [Reserve Your Ticket](#) | [Choose Your City](#)



We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish
insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to our
and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I.

Section. 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

DISSENT

entitled to three; Maryland two; Delaware one; Maryland two; Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation of any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Section. 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Clases. Of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one-third may be chosen every second Year, unless a Vacancy happen.

is not grounds

for deportation

Section. 6. The Senators and Representatives shall receive Compensation for their Services, as well as Expenses in going to and returning from any other Place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time; and no Person holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office.

Section. 7. All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments to any Bill. Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; and he may sign it, or he may veto it.

LEGAL UPDATE: WHERE JUSTICE MEETS RESISTANCE

THE COURTS ARE A FRONTLINE AND WE'RE MEETING THE MOMENT WITH TRUTH AND COURAGE

The Fight in the Swamps of the Everglades

The ACLU of Florida, along with the national ACLU and Americans for Immigrant Justice, filed a federal lawsuit against ICE, the Department of Homeland Security, Governor DeSantis, and other government officials over the denial of attorney access at the newly constructed detention camp in the Everglades. Around 700 individuals are held in a swamp-surrounded site with no confidential attorney access, barriers to visitation, and no basic infrastructure for due process.

This is not just unconstitutional. It is inhumane.

“We will use every tool at our disposal to end this cruel experiment and defend the rights of every person trapped inside of this unconstitutional abomination.”

— Bacardi Jackson, Executive Director, ACLU of Florida

Note: We are intentionally avoiding and urging others to avoid repeating the cruel reference to “Alligator Alcatraz” – the insensitive and dehumanizing marketing ploy of Florida’s Attorney General, which harkens back to some of the worst parts of [Florida’s racist past](#).

Victory: Supreme Court Rejects Florida’s Efforts to Enforce SB 4-C

Earlier this year, Florida passed statute SB 4-C, which unconstitutionally authorized the arrest of certain non-citizens for entering or re-entering the state of Florida. We filed a lawsuit with partners and quickly got these provisions enjoined, blocking the enforcement of these provisions. When Florida appealed the injunction up to the Supreme Court, the United States Supreme Court rejected Florida’s effort to enforce SB 4-C, which sought to criminalize the movement of immigrants across state lines and detain people before trial without bond.

“This ruling reaffirms what we’ve long known: immigration policy belongs to the federal government, not fear-fueled state leaders.”

— Amy Godshall, Legal Fellow and Immigrants’ Rights Attorney

By rejecting the state’s request for the Supreme Court to overrule the lower court rulings in our favor, the constitutional boundaries between state and federal authority remain firm, which will protect immigrant communities from expanded racial profiling. This is a crucial win — but it’s just one step. We’ll continue fighting to ensure that this unconstitutional law is struck down for good.

Justice for Ana: Lawsuit Filed Against Baker County

Alongside Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and the law firm of Gibson Dunn, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of Ana, a trafficking survivor subjected to psychological torture in ICE custody. Her story of solitary confinement, denial of hygiene products, and physical restraint is emblematic of a broader crisis of abuse within [ICE-run jails in Florida](#).

Ana survived trafficking. Then she was punished for asking for basic dignity. Her story is disturbing, but not rare. Our lawsuit on her behalf has become a rallying cry to expose what ICE does when no one is watching.

“In this critical moment, we stand with Ana to seek justice and shine a light on a system that thrives on secrecy and dehumanization.”

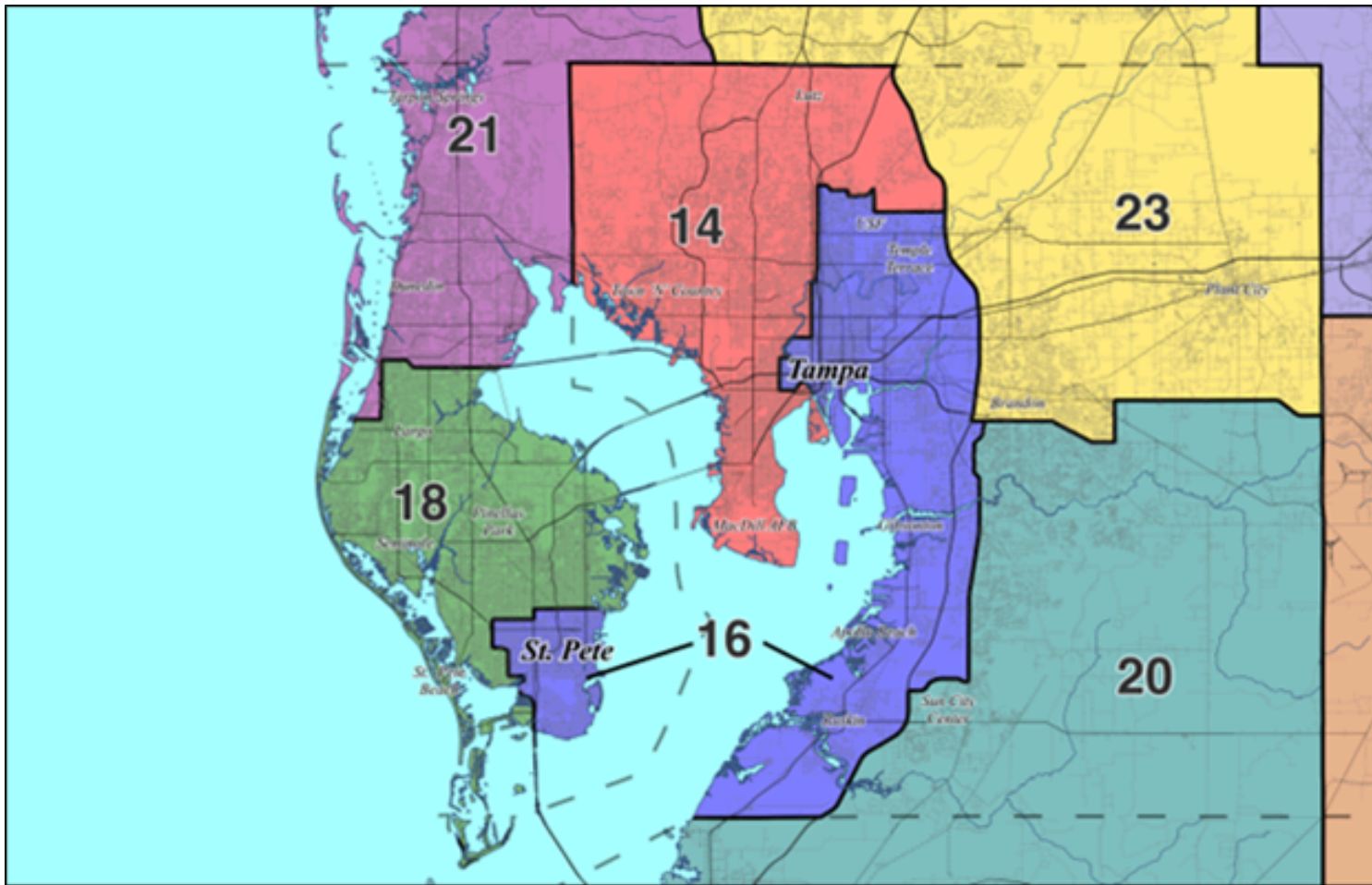
— Amy Godshall, Legal Fellow and Immigrants’ Rights Attorney

We are pursuing structural accountability and fighting to ensure no one else suffers in silence.

LEGAL UPDATE: WHERE JUSTICE MEETS RESISTANCE

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Nord Hodges v. Albritton – In our litigation challenging a state senate district in the Tampa Bay area as racially gerrymandered in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, we held a four-day trial in June and recently completed post-trial briefing. We now await the decision of the three-judge panel.



Austin v. Lamb – We continue to push forward with our challenge to the 2023 Florida legislature's SB 266, which bans the funding of expression that "[a]dvocate[s] for diversity, equity, and inclusion, or promote[s] . . . political or social activism," and restricts the viewpoints that can be taught in general education courses. Through the regulations implementing SB 266, the state has stripped hundreds of university courses of their general education status, including courses that historically have been designated as general education. Florida's public universities also have denied scholarship and research funding to faculty and students that had been approved in the past, and have cut funding for initiatives promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. We filed a lawsuit earlier this year and are awaiting for the court to rule on the state's motion to dismiss our amended complaint.

Naples Pride v. City of Naples – Our client Naples Pride, a nonprofit that provides social services to the LGBTQ+ community, filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Naples and its entities for denying the organization a special events permit to host a family-friendly drag performance in one of the city's public parks as part of its annual Pridefest celebration, as it was permitted to do in the past. The city's refusal to grant a permit was part of a years-long effort to target drag performances and LGBTQ+ pride events in violation of the First Amendment. The district court granted a preliminary injunction in our client's favor, but the Eleventh Circuit placed a stay on that ruling less than 24 hours before the event. We are continuing to fight for our client's First Amendment rights and their freedom to express their message that the LGBTQ+ community should live openly and without fear.



WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

From the Everglades to neighborhood canvasses, our organizers are doing what Florida's leadership refuses to do by: showing up, listening, and mobilizing for justice.

Defending the Dignity of the Detained

As President Trump praised a swamp-bound detention center on stolen Indigenous land, our field team was already on the ground gathering stories, connecting with families, and mobilizing communities. The site quickly became a flashpoint for national attention and grassroots outrage.

Our team helped amplify the voices of those detained and isolated, bringing public pressure to an otherwise hidden crisis. Through coordinated outreach and media support, we made clear that no detention site — no matter how remote — is beyond accountability.

Mobilizing for Reproductive Justice

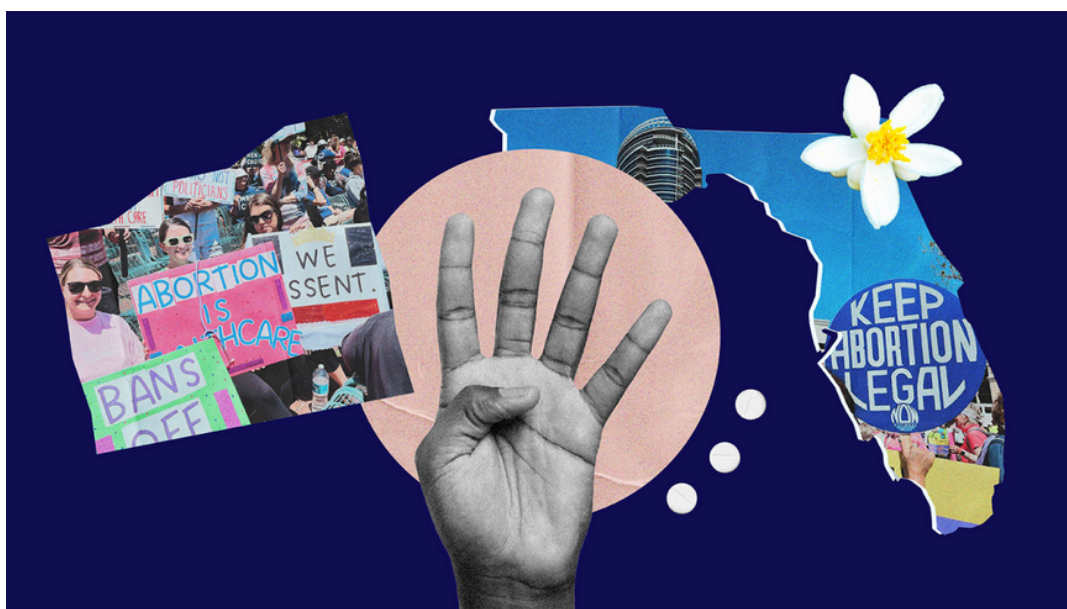
Fifty-seven percent of Floridians voted to overturn Florida's unpopular abortion ban.

That's not a loss — that's a majority. That's a movement. And we're honoring every single one of those voices by refusing to back down.

From Jacksonville to Miami, we are building power on campuses, and gathering in sanctuaries and living rooms to continue the fight. We are hosting teach-ins, re-launching our speaker series, and growing the network of organizers, storytellers, and advocates who will not rest until reproductive freedom is not just supported by the people, but protected by law.

They may have rigged the rules to stop us from achieving the supermajority vote, but they cannot change the will of the people. And the people are rising.

The ban is still in effect. But so are we.



WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

Championing Freedom of Speech

In a time when speaking out comes with real risks, defending free speech is non-negotiable. Across Florida, our organizers are on the ground training volunteers on how to protest safely, de-escalate tense situations, and assert their rights with confidence. We are also re-launching our Legal Observer program county by county, keeping watch and holding power accountable on the frontlines of dissent. Our volunteers have already been staffing major protests like the “No Kings” marches and rallies in [Tallahassee](#), at [Mar-a-Lago](#), [West Palm Beach](#), [Miami](#), [Fort Lauderdale](#), [St. Pete](#), and Orlando and the “Good Trouble” rallies in Broward and Tallahassee.

And through our [Banned Book Club](#), we are building a bold, informed community that resists censorship and fights back, one chapter at a time.



Take Action – Volunteer with Us

Stand up for immigrant rights, reproductive freedom, voting access, and free speech. Sign up to [volunteer](#) and become part of the movement to defend civil liberties across Florida.

Join an Upcoming Training or Event

Take part in our powerful in-person and virtual actions this month:

Issue-Based Campaign Events

- *Call to Re-Enroll Miami-Dade Voters in Vote-by-Mail* – [August 5](#)
- *Real People, Real Stories* – [August 13](#)
- *Banned Book Club Meeting* – [August 13](#)
- *Legal Observer Training* – [August 15](#)
- *LeadershipBIO: Public Speaking Training* – [August 26](#)

Campaign Team Meetings

Learn more and get involved in one of our core campaigns:

- *Floridians for Immigrant Justice Campaign Meeting* – [August 11](#)
- *Reproductive Justice Team Meeting* – [August 12](#)
- *Voting Rights Team Meeting* – [August 12](#)
- *Free Speech Team Meeting* – [August 19](#)

Community Meet-Ups and Local Activism

Join our teams on the ground across Florida:

- *Miami-Dade Activist Meet-Up* – [August 7](#)
- *South Miami Voting Rights Town Hall* – [August 19](#)
- *Tallahassee Action Team Meeting* – [August 26](#)

Know Your Rights Trainings

Empower yourself and your community:

- *Know Your Rights When Voting* – [August 6](#)
- *Know Your Rights for Immigrants* – [August 19](#)
- *Know Your Rights While Protesting* – [August 27](#)



WHERE POLICY MEETS THE PEOPLE

TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT



Driving Policy Change at the Local Level

As Advancing a Charter Amendment in Miami: We are a founding member of Stronger Miami, a campaign to create [fairer, more representative districts](#) for the City Commission and to remove barriers to voter engagement by amending the City of Miami charter.

Stronger Miami is a nonpartisan coalition engaged in collecting petitions to place an amendment on the August 2026 ballot. We Chair the Executive Committee of the Stronger Miami Campaign. Together, with our community partners, we are working to increase voter turnout in local elections and ensure that local government is responsive and representative.

To learn more about our Stronger Miami campaign, read the article below, and visit: <https://strongermiami.org/>. If you are a Miamian, print and sign your petition here: <https://strongermiami.org/download/>.

Opposing the Use of Local Resources to Support ICE's Inhumane Mass Deportation Agenda

ACLU of Florida has been educating local elected officials, media outlets, community partners, and the public-at-large about the racial profiling and family separation that result when local police act as ICE agents pursuant to [287\(g\) agreements](#).

We've worked with several local commissioners, arming them with talking points, legal research and other materials to fight back against the spread of 287(g) agreements in their local communities and supporting local efforts to [pass resolutions](#) denouncing the dehumanization of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones, and respecting the dignity and contributions of Florida's immigrant population.



Providing Policy Updates and Briefings to Elected Officials and Coalition Partners

This past month, we presented at a virtual town hall hosted by State Voices centered on the inhumane Everglades Detention Center, along with [State Representative Angie Nixon](#) and coalition partners, including the Florida State Director of Unidos US and the Deputy Executive Director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition. We also presented during a Legislative Briefing panel alongside [State Senator Darryl Rouson](#) and the Executive Director of Equal Ground.



WHERE POLICY MEETS THE PEOPLE

TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT

Florida's Local Governments Are Broken. The ACLU Is Helping Fix Them — Starting in Miami.

By Abdelilah Skhir, Senior Campaign Strategist

What happens when your local government is more responsive to developers than to voters? When elections are held during low-turnout cycles? When communities are sliced apart just to protect political power?

It may sound extreme, but that's the reality in Miami — and the effects on the electorate reverberate throughout Florida.

The ACLU of Florida has long fought to protect fair representation. That fight has brought us to Miami, where City Hall has been known for years for corruption and a lack of accountability. From backroom deals to racially gerrymandered maps, the system has failed the people it's supposed to serve.

When we sued the City of Miami for racial gerrymandering, residents came forward at town halls and community forums to share not just what was broken, but also how to fix it. Their solutions weren't radical. They were common sense.

That's why the ACLU of Florida is a founding member of Stronger Miami, a nonpartisan coalition collecting petitions to place a structural reform amendment on the August 2026 ballot.

The Stronger Miami charter amendment would do three things:

1. Move city elections to even-numbered years, when turnout is highest and more voices are heard.
2. Increase the number of city commission districts from five to nine, making government more local, responsive, and accessible to the people.
3. Achieve fairer redistricting, based on communities of interest, not race or politics.

These reforms directly address long-standing dysfunction. Today, the City of Miami has only five commissioners representing a very large population of over 450,000 residents. For comparison, the City of Stuart (in Martin County) also has five commissioners, but for just 18,000 residents.

The proposed amendment would create more manageable district sizes. That would mean:

- It would be easier for everyday residents to meet with their commissioners to voice concerns,
- Districts would cover less ground, meaning fewer competing interests between neighborhoods for resources, and
- If a commissioner acts in a way that voters disagree with, it will be easier to hold them accountable come election time.

The *Miami Herald* editorial board agrees, writing:

"Diluting the power with a bigger board would help. And if districts are smaller, Miami residents might get more responsive representation out of the deal, too."

The amendment would also move city elections to even-numbered years, aligning them with state and federal races. That means more voters will participate — and fewer elections will be decided by a small, unrepresentative fraction of the electorate.

At its core, this campaign is about strengthening democracy. The ACLU of Florida's legal challenge already forced the city to redraw its racially gerrymandered maps. And as a direct result of that litigation, voters will see another major reform on the November 2025 ballot: the creation of a Citizens' Redistricting Commission to ensure fair and transparent map-drawing in the future. That win belongs to our legal team and the community members who stood up and fought back.

But litigation alone can't fix deeply broken systems. That's why we're stepping up to ensure this fight continues beyond the courtroom.

As part of Stronger Miami, we are:

- Providing legal and policy support
- Mobilizing our members to help collect petitions
- Educating voters on how this amendment will shift power back to the people
-

We've heard from residents across the city — renters and small business owners, immigrants and lifelong locals — who want a government that works for them. They know that real change won't come from the same political insiders who created the problem. It has to come from the community.

And while this campaign is focused on Miami, the stakes reach far beyond city limits.

When voters see their communities gerrymandered, their elections timed to suppress turnout, and their concerns ignored by unresponsive officials, they lose faith in the system — and check out. In a city as large and influential as Miami, that kind of disengagement has ripple effects across Florida and even the country. Stronger Miami offers not just local solutions, but a model for structural reform that can inspire democratic renewal statewide.

You can help. Visit StrongerMiami.org to learn more, sign the petition, make a donation, or share this campaign with your networks. The more people who join us, the stronger our democracy becomes. No matter what part of Miami you are from, you can also join our volunteer team in collecting petitions. Our team [will be out](#) at community events, protests, and neighborhoods across the City.

FUELING THE FIGHT

DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

This is the Time: The ACLU of Florida is Launching a Three-Year Major Giving Campaign

For 70 years, the ACLU of Florida has stood on the frontlines of the fight for justice by defending freedom and holding power to account in every corner of the state.

As we mark this milestone anniversary, we do so with pride in our past and with urgency for the road ahead. Florida has become a critical national battleground for civil rights, and the threats we face are escalating. Now is the time to deepen our impact, grow our movement, and ensure that the ACLU of Florida has the strength and staying power to meet this moment and the next.

This Fall, we are launching a **Major Giving Campaign** coinciding with our 70th anniversary and to power the next era of our work. This campaign is about more than our legacy, but it is a strategic investment in the ACLU of Florida's future. It is our opportunity to:

- **Solidify our financial foundation** so we can remain agile, resilient, and bold in the face of growing attacks on civil liberties.
- **Expand our capacity** to respond swiftly to threats while investing in long-term advocacy, community partnerships, and public education.
- **Attract new major donors and philanthropic partners** who share our vision of a just and equitable Florida.
- **Honor and thank our dedicated supporters**, whose loyalty and generosity have sustained our work for seven decades.
- **Raise our visibility statewide and nationally** as the leader in the fight for civil rights and a trusted resource for communities in crisis.

This campaign is a call to action for those who believe in freedom and fairness, who understand that rights must be defended and advanced in every generation, and who are ready to help build a Florida where everyone can thrive.

We invite you to stand with us to recognize our 70 years of impact, and to help shape the next 70 of civil rights and civil liberties in Florida.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Resistance is YOU

The Summer of 2025 has tested our resolve, but it has also fortified our mission. Every lawsuit, every victory, and every survivor's story brings us closer to the Florida we believe in: one where dignity, justice, and compassion prevail. And with your continued support, we'll keep holding the frontline to freedom.

- Forward this email
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- [Volunteer](#) with us
- Join or Renew Your [Membership](#)
- Support our work: [Donate Now](#)
- Join Our Team: [Careers](#) at the ACLU of Florida
- [Register](#) for the 70th Anniversary and Call to Courage

In solidarity,
The ACLU of Florida

70 YEARS OF MEETING THE MOMENT WITH TRUTH AND COURAGE

ACLU

Florida

CELEBRATING

70 YEARS