

# FLORIDA FRONTLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025



# MESSAGE FROM THE FRONTLINE

## August Edition

This month, as we mark 60 years since the Voting Rights Act and 70 years since the formation of one major force of resistance in Florida - our very own ACLU of Florida - I am reminded that none of this happened by accident. Freedom was never given. It was demanded, strategized, marched for, and won with intention, sacrifice, and vision.

This work is not abstract for me. It's what I was raised to do. My mother was an anti-apartheid activist and principal organizer of the 1967 Pentagon demonstration and continues to be a fierce advocate who has taught me that courage means speaking up even when your voice shakes, and that silence in the face of injustice is complicity. My father was one of the architects of the children's march in Birmingham and the voting rights movement in Selma - precursors to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He was a strategist whose vision turned protest into policy. He understood that power concedes nothing without the courage of foot soldiers, and he believed in the transformative force of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

From him, I learned that voting is not the end, it's the beginning. That the ballot is not just a right, but a responsibility. And that behind every movement are the minds that imagine a better world and the feet that march toward it.

That legacy shapes how I lead today. At the ACLU of Florida, we carry the memory of those who came before us, even as we fight the battles of now. We are confronting coordinated attacks on the right to vote, the erasure of Black history in our schools, and government policies rooted in cruelty and control by any means.

But we are not afraid. Because we know where we come from and what we've already overcome.

We are descendants of organizers and truth-tellers. Of bridge-crossers and ballot defenders. Of elders who strategized with precision and marched with purpose. We are here because they dared to fight, and now it is our turn to carry that torch forward.

So as we reflect on this moment - 70 years of defending civil liberties in Florida and 60 years since the Voting Rights Act - we recommit ourselves to the work. We protect what they built. We grow what they dreamed. And we make sure the next generation inherits more rights, not fewer than we've had.

Because we 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

For *seven decades*, the ACLU of Florida has stood on the frontlines — challenging unjust laws, defending the most vulnerable, and protecting the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution. From the courtrooms to the streets, we have resisted censorship, fought segregation, defended voting rights, and stood with communities targeted by discrimination and abuse.

ORLANDO KICKOFF - SEPTEMBER 19, 2025  
6:00 PM

The celebration begins in **Orlando**, where we will gather to remember the battles fought, recognize the people who made them possible, and renew our commitment to the struggles ahead.

### The evening will feature:

- **A Commemorative Short Film** — tracing our journey from 1955 to today, capturing the cases, protests, and moments that have defined Florida's civil liberties movement.
- **Live Performances & Art** — reflecting the spirit of defiance, hope, and unity that drives change.
- **Opportunities to Take Action** — because honoring the past means building the future.

### HONORING COURAGE

Meet the 3 honorees who embody courage, sacrifice, and vision and learn about their stand against injustice:

- *Justice & Liberty Partner Award*
- *Courage in Action Award*
- *Defenders of Democracy Award*

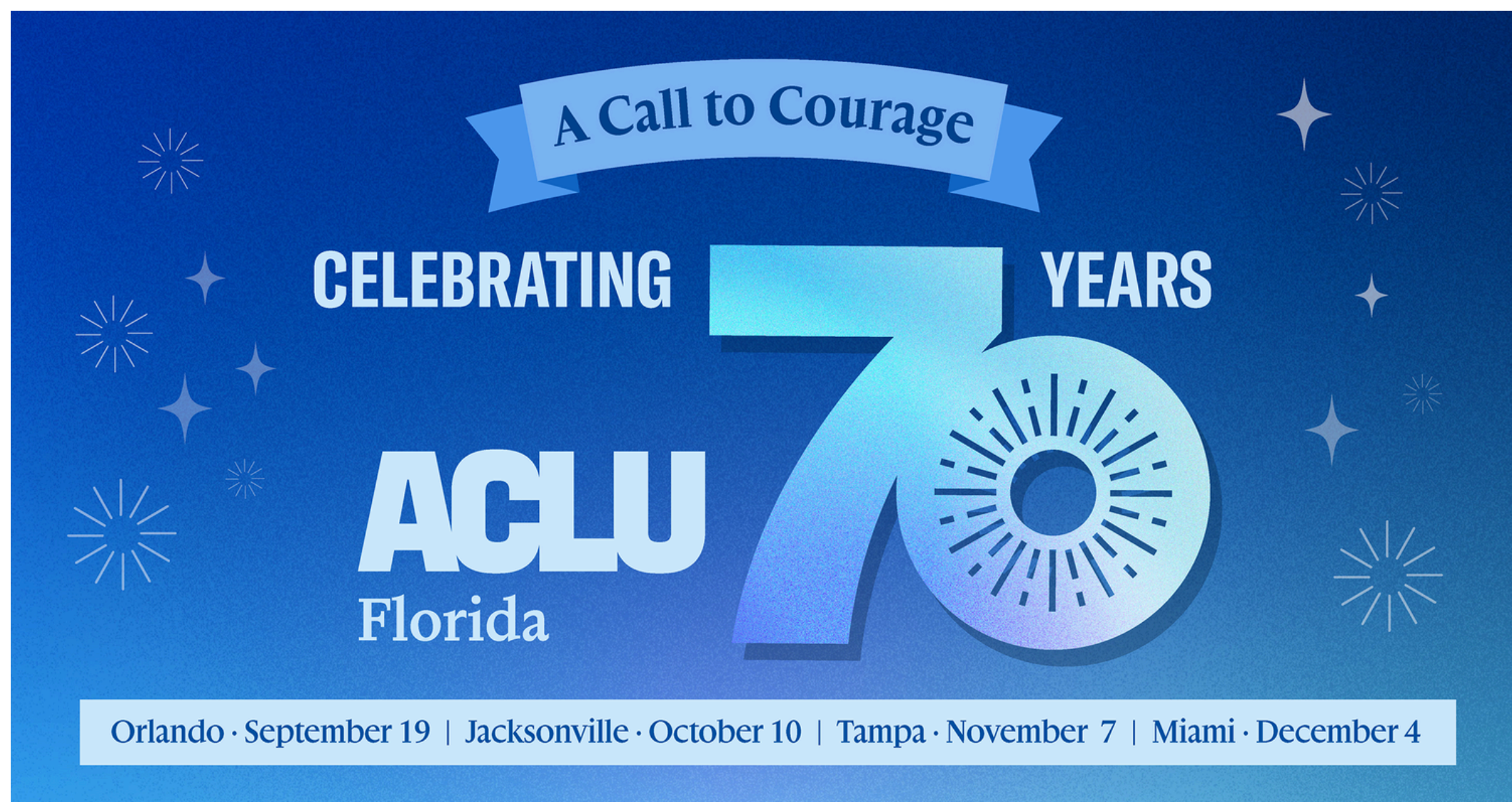
**For 70 years, we have defended liberties, resisted abuse and overreach and expanded democracy.**

In this moment, we ask you to answer the call to courage and join us, because the fight for freedom is far from over.

**Tickets:** \$75 General | \$25 Student

**[Answer the Call to Courage.](#)** Reserve your spot in a city near you today.

[Become a Statewide Sponsor](#) | [Orlando](#) | [Jacksonville](#) | [Tampa](#) | [Miami](#)



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; New York six; Georgia three.

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

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 Clase shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Clase at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Clase 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 passed by the House of Representatives. 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 the same, or veto it.

# LEGAL UPDATE: WHERE JUSTICE MEETS RESISTANCE

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

## The Battle Over the Everglades Continues

After a flurry of filings in federal court in Miami, the first round of our litigation concerning the gruesome detention camp in the Everglades has been transferred to a different court. Working with our partners at the national ACLU and Americans for Immigrant Justice, we spent countless hours bringing the full force of the organization to bear to prevent some of the most egregious constitutional violations from taking place. Together with the larger community, we collected stories from so many detainees, clients, family members, and attorneys. Although the court transferred our case to a neighboring court, as a result of our filings we were able to secure commitments from the federal government to finally offer bond hearings in Miami to those detained at the facility. Our work here shows that even where we don't get a flashy court ruling (and even where the media does not accurately report what courts do), our litigation brings meaningful results to the communities we serve. As we gear up for round two of this litigation, we continue to plan for additional ways to bring justice to those in dire need at the facility.



***Brown v. Ramsay*** – After seven years, we secured long-overdue justice for our client Peter Sean Brown. Mr. Brown is a U.S. citizen who was nevertheless unlawfully detained by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office at ICE's request. His repeated pleas that he was a U.S. citizen and could not be held on immigration charges went ignored, and he languished in detention and would have been deported to Jamaica — a country to which he has no ties whatsoever — if not for the last-minute intervention of a friend who sent a copy of his birth certificate to an ICE agent. After a court ruling in our favor, we obtained a favorable settlement for our client, and the case was finally dismissed this month.

***USA v. Burke*** – This summer, we filed an amicus brief in support of Timothy Burke, an investigative journalist whose house was raided by the FBI following his reporting on an interview between Tucker Carlson and Kanye West (Ye). He had located and distributed an unedited livestream of the interview in which Ye made antisemitic and racist comments that were previously unaired. The journalist claimed the livestreams were unencrypted, publicly accessible feeds that anyone who searched for the URL could access, even though they were not published on any search engine—but Fox News contended to the FBI that the livestreams had been “hacked.” The journalist was arrested and charged with conspiracy and wiretapping. Our amicus brief warned against the implications of the government's legal arguments, which could open the floodgates to frivolous prosecutions that would have widespread chilling effects.

***Pernell v. Florida Board of Governors of the State University System*** – We continue to wait for an appellate ruling in our challenge to the 2022 Florida Legislature's “Stop Woke Act.” The Stop Woke Act is a classroom-censorship bill that severely restricts Florida educators and students from learning and talking about issues related to race and gender in higher-education classrooms. The law prohibits educators from teaching or even expressing viewpoints around racism and sexism that are disfavored by Florida lawmakers, even where those viewpoints are widely accepted and considered foundational information in their academic disciplines. The bill specifically targets and places vague restrictions on educators' ability to teach and discuss concepts around the legacy of slavery in America, privilege, and anti-racism. We obtained a preliminary injunction against the law's higher-education provisions in November 2022, and the state appealed. The Eleventh Circuit heard oral arguments in June 2024, and, more than a year later, we continue to wait for a ruling. In the meantime, the law remains on hold in higher-education settings.

# WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

## GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

In the fight for fair representation, the ACLU of Florida has been busy advancing two powerful, community-driven initiatives. Earlier this month, we partnered with our friends at LDF to hold a town hall in the City of South Miami that drew a strong turnout, providing a space for residents to voice concerns in their community and connect their local experiences to Florida's broader battle to hold politicians accountable to their constituents. We broke bread, distributed voting resources, and even had free backpacks and educational supplies to give away for the new school semester. At the same time, our Stronger Miami campaign continues to gain momentum with a Miami Community Roundtable event bringing together a diverse array of local Miami organizations to collaborate on how we move the city forward. With new partners like the Miami-Dade League of Women Voters joining the coalition, we're doubling down on our commitment to ensure every Miami neighborhood is heard and each voter knows who truly holds the power. These local efforts are building the power we need to pave the way for systemic change across the state.



### 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:

#### Back to School Series - Fostering Civic Engagement on Campus

- *Free Speech in the U.S.: Academic Freedom & Education* - [September 9](#)
- *Know Your Rights for Immigrants: University Faculty/Staff* - [September 15](#)

#### Issue-Based Campaign Events

- *Banned Book Club Meeting* - [October 7](#)
- *Free Speech in the U.S.: Academic Freedom & Education* - [September 9](#)
- *Real People, Real Stories: A Storytelling Event* - [September 23](#)

#### Campaign Team Meetings

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

- *Floridians for Immigrant Justice Campaign Meeting* - [September 8](#)
- *Free Speech Team Meeting* - [September 10](#)

#### Community Meet-Ups and Local Activism

Join our teams on the ground across Florida:

- *Miami-Dade Activist Meet-Up* - [September 4](#)
- *Orlando Team Meet-Up* - [September 21](#)
- *Tallahassee Action Team Meeting* - [September 23](#)

#### Know Your Rights Trainings

Empower yourself and your community:

- *Know Your Rights for Immigrants: University Faculty/Staff* - [September 15](#)

# WHERE POLICY MEETS THE PEOPLE

## TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT

### Florida's Elected Officials Need to Be Reproductive Freedom Champions

By Kara Gross, Legislative Director and Senior Policy Counsel, ACLU of Florida

The ACLU of Florida is embarking on a targeted campaign to ensure that Florida's elected officials support reproductive freedom. We are living in a dangerous and dystopian time where the state is exercising increasing control over our bodies, our liberty, and our freedoms. The vast majority of Floridians do not believe that the state should control whether and when Floridians grow their families, and Floridians do not want the government interfering in our individual decisions over whether and when to have a child.

Unfortunately, many Floridians are not even aware that a near-total abortion ban is in effect in Florida and do not understand its severe impact on their ability to access abortion care in Florida. The first time many Floridians learn about the current ban is when they show up at their doctor's office, only to learn that they are beyond the extreme ban's two-week time limit from when they missed their period to obtain abortion care in Florida. (For those reading this who may not be aware, Florida's "6-week ban" actually prohibits the vast majority of individuals from obtaining an abortion just 2 weeks after they miss their period).

Educating Floridians about the current ban and lack of access in Florida, ensuring that elected officials commit to actively supporting reproductive freedom, and holding legislators accountable who do not, is critical for protecting the safety and liberty of women and pregnant individuals.

We understand that we are in this for the long haul. It took the opposition 50 years to overturn Roe v. Wade, and we know that it will take a concerted and long-term effort to restore reproductive freedom for Floridians. Our work on Amendment 4 – and achieving 57% of Floridians, the majority of Floridians, to vote in favor of it – was just the beginning of this movement.

We need to build a bench of elected officials who are reproductive freedom champions and expand Florida's reproductive freedom movement so that all Floridians are able to access the care they need. We recognize that this will not happen overnight given that there is an anti-abortion supermajority trifecta at the legislature (Governor, Senate supermajority, and House supermajority) and we understand that this may be a decades-long movement. It took the anti-abortion movement over 40 years to overturn Roe, and they did it bit-by-bit, until they were in a place where they had created a bench of anti-abortion extremists in positions of power. We will be mirroring that strategy, ensuring that our elected leaders – local, state, and federal – are reproductive freedom champions, that they vow to support reproductive freedom, and that voters hold them accountable when they do not. This is a huge undertaking, but we literally have no choice in the matter. The ACLU of Florida is committed to growing our movement and our bench of reproductive freedom champion elected officials. Our liberty and freedom depends on it.

After more than 13 years of extraordinary service, we celebrate and thank Interim Political Director **Sara Latshaw** as she embarks on her next chapter. Sara first joined the ACLU of Florida in 2012 as the Regional Organizer for Northwest Florida, where she built campaigns that secured protections for LGBTQ+ youth, pushed for fairer policing, and challenged harmful immigration practices in Pensacola. Her work proved that persistence and courage can move communities toward hope. Beyond the policies and campaigns, Sara has been a source of strength and joy for our movement. She has led with compassion, creating community through some of our hardest seasons. During the fight for Amendment 4, Sara reminded us all that while wins are essential, it is the people beside us who make the work possible. Her ability to carry both strategy and heart is a legacy we will continue to build on. Thank you, Sara, for your vision, persistence, and unwavering commitment. Your legacy here is lasting, and we are all better for having walked this journey with you.



# FUELING THE FIGHT

## DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

### Celebrate 70 Years by Investing in the Work Needed to Reclaim Our Rights and Freedom

For seven decades, the ACLU of Florida has stood at the forefront of the fight for civil liberties by defending freedom, expanding justice, and ensuring that the rights of all Floridians are protected.

Florida is now one of the most critical battlegrounds in the nation for civil rights. The challenges we face are escalating, and our ability to respond boldly requires steadfast investment from those who understand that freedom must be defended in every generation.

This fall, we invite you to join us in shaping the next era of the ACLU of Florida through our 70th Anniversary Major Giving Campaign. Your leadership gift will:

- **Solidify our foundation**, ensuring that we remain agile, resilient, and bold in the face of unprecedented attacks.
- **Expand our capacity** to respond swiftly to urgent threats while building long-term change through litigation, advocacy, and education.
- **Grow our movement** by strengthening community partnerships and attracting new allies in the fight for justice.

**Make your contribution through a Donor Advised Fund, an annual leadership gift, gifts of stock, or a legacy gift in your will, securing the future of freedom for generations to come.**

There are many additional ways to demonstrate your commitment to our 70th Anniversary:

- [Sponsor one of our 70th Anniversary Celebrations](#), helping us honor our past while expanding our future.
- **Attend and bring guests** to one of these milestone events, amplifying our reach and visibility.

Together, we can ensure that the ACLU of Florida has the strength, vision, and staying power to defend rights and expand freedoms for the next 70 years and beyond.

We invite you to stand with us at this historic moment by investing in freedom, honoring our past, and shaping a just and equitable Florida for the future.

**To speak with an ACLU of Florida major gift officer, please email [development@aclufl.org](mailto:development@aclufl.org).**

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.

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- 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