

FLORIDA FRONTLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE FRONTLINE

October Edition

As we look toward the close of 2025, we find ourselves in a defining moment for democracy — not just in Florida, but across our nation. Our democracy is being tested — not by a single law or leader, but by the creeping belief that power belongs only to the powerful, and that ordinary people can do nothing to stop them. We reject that lie.

The truth is, America has been here before. Nearly 250 years ago, a group of men declared that tyranny was intolerable — even as they built a nation on stolen land and the enslavement of other human beings. Their words were imperfect, but the idea they unleashed — that all people are created equal and endowed with unalienable rights — has been reimagined and made real by those they excluded.

It is the descendants of the enslaved, the immigrants, the teachers, the workers, the dreamers — the everyday people — who have carried this promise forward. Every expansion of freedom has come not from the halls of power, but from the courage of those who refused to be silent.

Today, that torch is in our hands. We see the same forces of tyranny at work: attempts to silence teachers, erase history, criminalize protest, restrict voting, and redraw maps to divide our communities. But we also see the same courage that has always defined this movement. We see it in students demanding honesty in education. In voters who know that their voices matter. In communities organizing for equality for our LGBTQ+ neighbors, dignity for immigrant families and pregnant people, and equal protection under the law for all — even when their voices challenge those in power.

The same courage that fueled revolutions, marched across bridges, and desegregated schools lives on in us. It reminds us that democracy is not a spectator sport — it is a collective act that requires commitment. And when we move together, history bends toward justice.

Dr. King once asked, “Where do we go from here — chaos or community?” In Florida, we have answered: we choose community. We choose courage. We choose democracy. Because this is not the end of our story — it is the moment when we rise to write the next chapter.

So yes, the stakes are high. But the power is ours. We will not surrender truth to propaganda or freedom to fear. We will stand up, speak out, and defend the rights that belong to all of us.

Because we are the people who refuse to be silenced. Because we are the movement that keeps marching forward.

Because we are the frontline of resistance.

In solidarity and struggle,

Bacardi L. Jackson

Executive Director, ACLU of Florida





On October 10, we continued **our 70th Anniversary Celebration in Jacksonville** — honoring seven decades of courage, community, and resistance. In a city whose people have long resisted racial terror, censorship, and injustice, we gathered to reflect on the past, uplift those carrying the work forward, and recommit to the ongoing fight for freedom, justice, and equality. From the civil rights movement to today's fights for free speech, reproductive freedom, immigrant justice, LGBTQ+ equality, and voting rights, the people of Jacksonville have always been on the front lines of freedom — and we are proud to have stood alongside them in challenging segregation, defending the right to protest, and protecting the civil rights of every Floridian.

We proudly recognized **Jacksonville's honorees** — visionaries, advocates, and truth-tellers whose lives remind us that democracy survives only when people are willing to stand up and speak out.



Justice & Liberty Partner Award :
Bledsoe, Jacobson, and Wright

For decades, this firm has carried the weight of history on its shoulders, using the law as a weapon for fairness and equality. From *Papachristou v. City of Jacksonville*, which helped end the criminalization of poverty and Blackness in Florida, to *Brenner v. Scott*, advancing marriage equality, their impact litigation has transformed lives and fortified the principles of justice and dignity across our state.

Defender of Democracy Award: The Northside Coalition

Under the leadership of Kelly Frazier, the Northside Coalition continues the powerful legacy of the late Ben Frazier — a fearless truth-teller and tireless advocate who challenged racist laws and risked his own safety to defend the rights of entire communities. Today, the organization carries forward his spirit, reminding us that defending democracy is a daily act of courage, community, and conviction.



Courage in Action Award: Bill Sheppard

A brilliant legal mind and fearless defender of civil rights, the late Bill Sheppard transformed Jacksonville — and Florida — through his unwavering pursuit of justice. His legacy lives on through his beloved wife and lifelong partner, Betsy White, who continues to advance his vision of a more just and equitable Florida. Bill's courage and conviction remain a guiding light for generations of advocates.



The Celebration Continues

[Join us](#) for the final stop of **our 70th Anniversary Celebration in Miami** as we come together one last time to honor seven decades of defiance — and to envision the next chapter of freedom in our state.

Tickets: \$75 General | \$25 Student

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

[Become a Statewide Sponsor](#) | Reserve Your Spot in [Miami](#)



We are the frontline of
RESISTANCE



LEGAL UPDATE: WHERE JUSTICE MEETS RESISTANCE

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

Free Speech Under Fire: Florida's Leaders Are Silencing Public Servants — We're Fighting Back

When a government punishes its own employees for lawful speech, democracy itself takes the hit. That's what happened to Brittney Brown, a respected biologist with seven years of service at Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Her "offense"? A temporary social media post about the tragedy of school shootings that referenced the death of Charlie Kirk on her private account. The post did not condone Mr. Kirk's killing nor did it call for further violence; rather, it conveyed a satirical indifference — a viewpoint fully covered by the First Amendment.

Yet her temporary 24-hour post was screenshotted from her private account and later uploaded to X by an account called "Libs of TikTok," which shared a screenshot of Brown's post next to a screenshot of her LinkedIn profile. The post called for her immediate termination at the state agency. Within 24 hours, FWC wrongfully complied and terminated Brown — violating her First Amendment rights.

This case isn't an outlier. It's part of a broader pattern of state leaders using fear and political loyalty tests to police speech, from classrooms to workplaces. Brown's firing is just another extreme example of how Florida's leadership pressures and seeks to exact revenge against state workers with differing political views. For the past several years, the state has employed a wide range of tactics to chill or censor speech across state entities and programs. Just earlier this year, Gov. DeSantis called for a DOGE audit to "[prune ideological stuff](#)" at universities and state agencies.

Our lawsuit against the FWC sends a clear message: the Constitution doesn't belong only to those in power. Free expression — especially speech that challenges authority — is the cornerstone of a free society. We're standing with Britt Brown, and with every Floridian who has been brashly targeted by state censorship.

More Legal Highlights:

- ***Florida Immigrant Coalition v. Uthmeier*** - In our case challenging the invented state-level "crimes" for people accused of improper entry, we gave oral argument on October 9 in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit in Atlanta to defend our preliminary injunction putting the law on hold. We now await the appeals court's decision.
- ***Vote! v. City of Daytona Beach*** - Represented by the ACLU of Florida, three local residents and a community membership organization, VOTE!, filed a federal lawsuit in mid-October challenging the map recently adopted by the Daytona Beach City Commission because the new map unlawfully ignored communities of interest and neighborhood needs in favor of impermissible racial goals. The lawsuit follows the City Commission's decision to redraw its map after resolving a [previous lawsuit](#) in January 2025 that challenged the City's first attempt to redistrict as illegally gerrymandered. We are proud to stand with Daytonans who are taking a stand to defend their democracy
- ***Keohane v. Dixon*** - In our case challenging the denial of medically necessary gender-affirming care in Florida's prisons, the court granted in part our motion for class certification, meaning our case has officially been certified as a class action. The judge's ultimate ruling will have the potential to impact hundreds of transgender individuals in state custody as to certain aspects of their gender-affirming care.

WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

This fall, our staff and volunteer teams showed up - on the ground, online, in small and large spaces all across the state. We hosted our first Power and Purpose: Fight For Reproductive Justice training in Orlando, where the community came together to learn how our legislators voted, fine-tune our organizing skillsets, build community, and take action for reproductive justice. We also hosted our virtual, volunteer-led Constitution in Crisis Series to review the countless human rights abuses and constitutional violations occurring within our detention facilities and to learn how to join the fight to shut them down.

Our volunteer team also showed up for No Kings Day, prepared to do the work. In Miami, we had our fearless Stronger Miami volunteers who collected ballot initiative petitions from City of Miami residents. Across counties in Tallahassee, Miami, Ft Lauderdale, Orlando, and St. Petersburg, our legal observers wore their vests with commitment and pride and ensured nothing was missed. These are just a few of the many ways supporters and volunteers are showing up across the state to make an impact. There are so many opportunities to join this fight—in person or virtually.

As we get into the holidays, we invite you to join us at our next [training](#) and learn how to change hearts and minds through storytelling. We also invite you to sign up to volunteer and show up with us!



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.

Issue-Based Campaign Events

- *Community Conversation: LGBTQ+ Activism in Florida* – [November 19](#)

Campaign Team Meetings

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

- *Detention Advocacy Team* – [November 19](#)
- *Spanish Translators Team* – [November 26](#)

Community Meet-Ups and Local Activism

Join our teams on the ground across Florida:

- *Tallahassee Action Team Meeting* – [November 18](#)
- *Broward Action Team* – [November 20](#)
- *Tallahassee Power & Purpose: Fight for Reproductive Justice (in-person)* – [November 22](#)

WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

LeadershipBIO:

This is a virtual program to activate and refine your civic engagement and activism skillsets. This month, we will be training on storytelling.

- LeadershipBIO: A Story for Hearts and Minds - [November 18](#)

Legislative Advocacy:

Florida's legislative session in Tallahassee is around the corner, and our volunteers are preparing to show up and be heard. In the lead-up to the legislative session, committee meetings are taking place, and some bills are already being introduced. If you live in Tallahassee or plan to travel to the area, join us:

- If you live outside of the area, you can still join this action by calling your state Senator and urging them to vote no. Make sure to provide your zipcode so that they track that you are their constituent. Not sure who your state Senator is? Use the look-up tool [here](#).

Know Your Rights Trainings

Empower yourself and your community:

- Conozca sus Derechos para Inmigrantes - [November 19](#)
- Know Your Rights While Voting - [December 2](#)

Delegation Meetings:

Our volunteers are mobilizing in Broward, Miami-Dade, Orange, and Leon counties. Sign up to join us and learn about the process for delegation meetings. If you are not in one of the 4 areas above, you can find your delegation meeting below.

- Miami-Dade County - [December 15](#)
- Find your delegation meeting [here](#)



WHERE POLICY MEETS THE PEOPLE

TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT



Honoring Civil Rights Heroes of the Past Through Legislation Today

The freedom to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy and the foundation for all of our rights. Without that foundation, all our other rights fall. In August, the nation celebrated 60 years since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. But the US Supreme Court has weakened the VRA over the last decade, making it much harder to protect the right to vote for all citizens regardless of race.

That's why in 2024, the ACLU of Florida worked with partner organizations and legislators to draft the [strongest pro-voter legislation ever filed in Florida](#). We became the first state in the Deep South to file a state Voting Rights Act, and other states are following in our lead. We are thrilled to announce that the Florida VRA will soon be filed by legislative champions for a third straight legislative session.

Named after the first martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement – Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore – this bold legislation builds on work across the country to pass state-level VRAs and restore key provisions of the federal Voting Rights Act that have been weakened by the Supreme Court.

Harry and Harriette Moore were civil rights activists who helped to found the Brevard County chapter of the NAACP. Due in large part to their work, over 100,000 Black people were registered to vote in Florida – the most in the South. Unfortunately, the Moores paid the ultimate price for their advocacy when on Christmas Day 1951, members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the Moore home in Brevard County. This bill honors their memory and their dedication to the sacred right to vote.

We are building a voting rights movement in Florida, and this is just the beginning of our advocacy. Stay tuned for ways to get involved this upcoming legislative session to support this and other movement-building legislation.

10,000 Petitions Collected for a Stronger Miami

We just hit a major milestone in our local campaign to increase voter turnout in Miami city elections, ensure local officials are accountable to the constituents they serve, and establish fair redistricting standards. Last week, Stronger Miami announced that it had collected 10,000 signed petitions! You can watch our campaign's latest video on [YouTube here](#).

This milestone demonstrates what we already know: Miamians are ready for change and determined to build a government that truly listens, represents, and delivers. For decades, corruption and backroom power plays have plagued the City Commission and silenced the will of the people. Voters finally have a chance to change that and demand a government that works for us, not against us.

WHERE POLICY MEETS THE PEOPLE

TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT

Miami Voters Deliver a Historic Win for Fair Representation

Miami just made history. On November 4, voters passed Referendum 3, a citizen-led reform that ends political gerrymandering in city elections and creates an independent Citizens' Redistricting Committee.

This victory proves what we already know: Miamians are ready for change and determined to build a government that truly represents every neighborhood and every voter. For too long, backroom map-drawing has divided our communities and diluted our voices. Now, residents have taken power back — demanding fairness, transparency, and accountability in how our city is governed.

With the passage of Referendum 3, we've taken a historic step toward a stronger Miami — one where every vote counts and every community has a voice at City Hall. This win belongs to the residents who organized, spoke out, and showed that when people lead, real change follows.

But we're not done yet. The Stronger Miami campaign is already building toward 2026, when voters will have the chance to pass a comprehensive City Charter Amendment to make local government more accountable, align elections with statewide cycles to boost turnout, and strengthen standards that keep special interests out of redistricting.

We need 20,000 verified petitions to get this city charter amendment on the 2026 ballot. We need every hand, every signature, and every voice. The time for change is now, and democracy can't wait. If you or someone you know lives in the City of Miami and has not yet signed the petition to get this issue on next year's ballot, click [here](#) to print, sign, and mail in your petition today.

Miami's message is clear: democracy works when we do. To stay involved, volunteer, or contribute, visit StrongerMiami.org



FUELING THE FIGHT

DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

Join Us at the Miami Book Fair

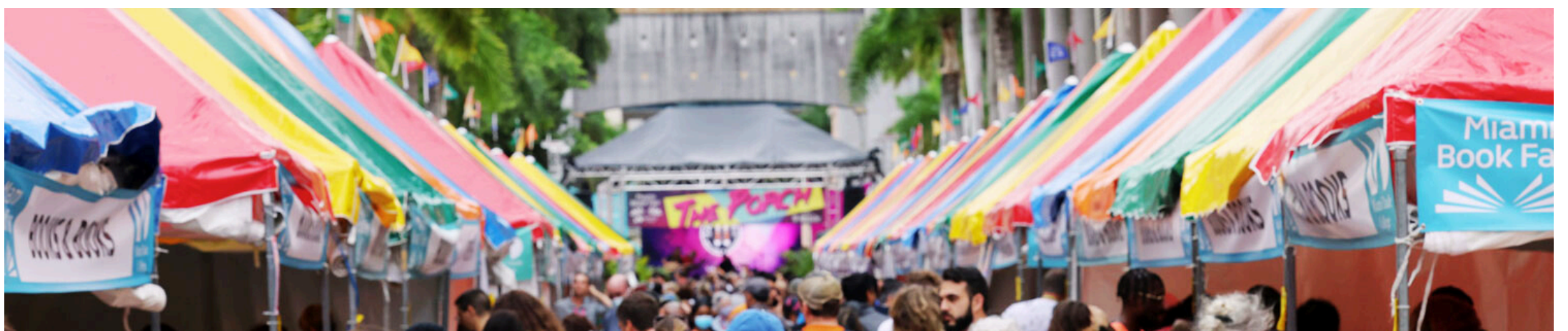
The ACLU of Florida is proud to be a sponsor of this year's Miami Book Fair, one of the nation's premier celebrations of literature and the power of ideas which begins on Sunday, November 16th. We'll be at the Street Fair from **Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23**, and we invite you to stop by our booth to connect with our team, explore our work, and stand with us in defending the freedom to read.

At a time when book bans are surging across Florida and efforts to silence marginalized voices are growing, the Miami Book Fair is more than a cultural gathering—it is an affirmation of our First Amendment rights. The ability to share ideas, challenge assumptions, and access diverse stories is the cornerstone of a free society. Your support helps ensure that these rights remain protected for all Floridians.

As a valued ACLU of Florida supporter, you also receive an exclusive discount on street fair tickets. Use the code **SPONSORxMBF2025** when purchasing tickets online [here](#).

Featured Event: Confronting Inequality with Deborah N. Archer, ACLU National President

We encourage you to attend Highways & Byways as Borders, a powerful conversation featuring Deborah N. Archer, ACLU National President, civil rights attorney, scholar, and author of *Dividing Lines: How Transportation Infrastructure Reinforces Racial Inequality*. In her groundbreaking work, Archer reveals how highways, roads, bus routes, and even sidewalks were deliberately designed to entrench segregation and restrict access long after the end of Jim Crow. From multilane highways cutting through Black neighborhoods to exclusionary suburban planning, she exposes the hidden architecture of inequality—and offers a vision for a more equitable system.



Archer will be joined in conversation by Oscar Corral, documentary filmmaker and co-director/co-producer of *INTERSTATE*. Event information is below:

Sunday, November 23 • 1:30 p.m.
Room 8301 (Building 8, 3rd Floor)
300 NE Second Ave., Miami, FL 33132
[Register here](#)

This is a must-attend event for anyone committed to civil rights, racial justice, and understanding the systemic barriers that continue to shape our communities. We hope to see you at the Miami Book Fair as we celebrate the freedom to read, the power of storytelling, and the ongoing fight to protect our constitutional rights.



FUELING THE FIGHT

DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

Important Year-End Giving Deadlines

To ensure your contribution counts for the 2025 tax year, please note:

- Checks by Mail: Must be postmarked by December 31.
- Credit Card Gifts: Must be completed (charged) by December 31.
- Wire Transfers: Must be initiated early enough to be received by December 31, please confirm timing with your bank, as some require initiation several days in advance.

Whether you give online through [Give Miami Day](#), through the mail, or by wire, your support will make a tangible difference in protecting the rights and freedoms that define us.

This is our moment to stand together to defend democracy, protect privacy, and preserve the promise of freedom for future generations.

Make your year-end gift today and help ensure that in 2026 and beyond, the ACLU of Florida remains a steadfast defender of liberty for all.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

THE RESISTANCE IS YOU

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.

- Follow Us: [BlueSky](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Mobilize](#) | [Threads](#) | [TikTok](#) | [Twitter/X](#)
- [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