

FLORIDA FRONTLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH '26 EDITION



MESSAGE FROM THE FRONTLINE

March Edition

Women's History Month is often framed as a celebration of American progress; and it should be.

For generations, women organized, marched, litigated, and sacrificed to force this country to live up to its promise of equality. Women fought for the right to vote. They fought for equal protection under the law. They fought to be recognized not as dependents of the state, but as full participants in democracy and public life. Those victories reshaped our nation.

But Women's History Month also reminds us of something equally important – progress is never permanent when power goes unchecked.

Across Florida, we are watching a troubling pattern unfold. Lawmakers are advancing proposals that expand government authority while making it harder for ordinary people to participate in democracy, organize in their communities, and hold those in power accountable.

Over the last couple of months, the Florida Legislature passed legislation that would burden eligible voters with new documentation requirements and bureaucratic hurdles to register and vote. When lawmakers add barriers like these, the impact is predictable. The burden falls hardest on students, seniors, naturalized citizens, and working families – people who already face obstacles when navigating government systems. And, once again, the new law also unnecessarily burdens the franchise for women – in particular, married women who have changed their names.

At the same time, the Legislature advanced a bill that would allow state officials to label organizations and individuals as “domestic terrorists” under vague standards that lack meaningful transparency or constitutional guardrails.

When government officials claim the authority to stigmatize dissent, intimidate advocacy organizations, and create barriers between the people and the ballot box, they are not strengthening democracy; they are weakening it.

In a democracy, the government does not get to decide which advocacy is legitimate and which voices should be silenced. The First Amendment was written precisely to prevent that kind of power from being abused.

And, the cornerstone of our democracy is the right to vote, which has never been handed down freely in this country. Decades of organizing and sacrifice by people – including countless women – who refused to accept that democracy should belong only to a privileged few demanded it. Now, we must once again defeat power-stealing barriers.

Women's history – which began in this nation with the denial of full and equal citizenship – teaches us exactly why that matters.

As Dr. King would say, “progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability.” The women on whose shoulders we stand progressed by challenging systems that tried to silence and exclude them. They organized. They resisted. And they demanded equity and inclusion. They understood something fundamental: participation in democracy is not a privilege granted by those in power. It is a right that must be defended from those who seek to restrict it.

That lesson is as urgent today as it was then.

Because the erosion of democracy rarely begins with sweeping declarations. It happens incrementally – new barriers at the ballot box, expanded authority for government officials to punish dissent, and policies designed to make people withdraw from civic life out of fear or exhaustion.

The courage of women who demanded and won equality left us a blueprint and a legacy that now calls on all of us to recognize what is at stake in this moment and to take action.

We must challenge laws that threaten our constitutional freedoms. We must defend the rights of, and stand alongside, Floridians who are targeted by abuses of power. We must do all that is necessary for democracy to remain open, participatory, and free.

Because history has shown us this clearly: democracy does not defend itself. People do.

In solidarity,



Bacardi L. Jackson
Executive Director, ACLU of Florida





We are the frontline of
RESISTANCE



LEGAL UPDATE: WHERE RESISTANCE DEFIES INJUSTICE

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

Free Speech Back in Court

We continue to fight tooth and nail for our client Brittney Brown, a biologist who worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for more than seven years before she was summarily terminated for reposting, on her own time and on her personal social media page, a temporary meme concerning Charlie Kirk from a parody account. One important part of what we did this month was wrap up our briefing on our motion for summary judgment in the case, asking for the court to issue a final decision and rule in our client's favor before the trial that is scheduled to begin in June.

But the most striking development in the case concerned the hearing that the court held on our motion for sanctions against the State for its misconduct in the litigation. The court held an evidentiary hearing on our motion, and we put three witnesses on the stand to show how FWC has misled the court to delay the case and further harm Ms. Brown while she waits for justice. As we predicted, the record is now even clearer that the State made material misrepresentations to the federal court during this litigation. Once again, FWC's actions make one thing clear: some state officials are willing to protect speech only when they agree with the message. We hope for rulings on our motions for summary judgment and sanctions by early May. We will continue fighting to ensure that public employment is never used as a tool to silence constitutionally protected expression.



Our client and members of our litigation team in *Brown v. Young* following the hearing on our motion for sanctions. L-R: Daniel Tilley, Brittney Brown, Michelle Morton, Gary Edinger.



Members of our litigation team in *Alvarez v. Warden* following oral arguments. L-R: Daniel Tilley, Amy Godshall, My Khanh Ngo, Michael Tan, Sam Lester

More Legal Highlights

Alvarez v. Warden, Federal Detention Center Miami - On March 26, the ACLU presented oral argument at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit in two cases challenging the federal government's authority to detain migrants.

- **Why It Matters:** Parts of these cases turn on which specific federal statute applies to noncitizens detained shortly after entering the United States. The outcome will affect many people who are at risk of being considered "mandatorily" detained in immigration detention, losing the chance to apply for release on bond.

Naples Pride v. City of Naples - On March 23 and 24, we conducted depositions of current and former Naples government officials regarding their role in placing unconstitutional restrictions on the annual Pride celebration of our client, Naples Pride.

- **Why It Matters:** Pride is something to celebrate. When our First Amendment freedoms are threatened, we fight back. Our communities are resilient, and our commitment is unwavering. We will fight to ensure that every person has the inalienable right to live fully, freely, and visibly. Taking these depositions of government officials will help us show the court once again how unlawful the City's actions against Naples Pride are.

Keohane v. Dixon - In our class-action case challenging the denial of gender-affirming care in Florida prisons, we filed our response to the State's motion for summary judgment, its final attempt to dismiss the case before trial.

- **Why It Matters:** Every human being has dignity and deserves access to needed healthcare, but the Florida Department of Corrections took that away from an entire class of people. Our clients deserve their day in court, and that's what we intend to provide. We're looking forward to trial in July.

Inman-Johnson v. City of Tallahassee - In our challenge to an unconstitutional city tax that disproportionately harms low-income, Black, and Hispanic residents, the court denied the City's motion to dismiss. The case will move forward.

- **Why It Matters:** Every resident has the right to fair and equal treatment by their government. Yet as living costs keep rising, the mayor and city commissioners chose to increase a charge that exacerbates inequality and falls hardest on our neighbors who are most under strain. In doing so, the city sidestepped our Constitution's safeguards against unauthorized taxation.

FIELD UPDATE: WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

We entered March re-energized after bringing together our College Campus Clubs leaders from across the state. We learned together, shared best practices, built real community, and students left not just inspired, but equipped with clear, actionable strategies to take back to their campuses and put into motion immediately. If you are a student, or know a student ready to lead and make an impact, join the ACLU of Florida's Campus Club Initiative: <https://www.aclufl.org/college-campus-initiative/>.

Our Field team has been on the ground, working alongside volunteers in Tallahassee and supporters across the state to ensure their stories are heard directly by legislators, both in support of and in opposition to critical legislation. While Florida's legislative session has come to an end, the work is far from over. A special session to redraw the state's Congressional map begins April 20, and the stakes could not be higher. If you are local, we need you with us in Tallahassee. If you are anywhere in Florida, sign up for legislative alerts to stay informed and ready to act. Wherever you are, your voice matters, and your legislators need to hear from you.

Finally, our Field team mobilized and prepared volunteers and supporters across Florida to show up and take part in No Kings Day protests, standing together in defense of our rights and our democracy.



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.

If you are a registered voter in the City of Miami, print and [sign our petition today](#) and mail it back to us ASAP! And, please share. We need to collect over 20,000 signed petitions from Miami registered voters to get on the ballot.

JOIN AN UPCOMING TRAINING OR EVENT

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

Campaign Team Meetings

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

- Storytelling Planning Team Meeting ~ [April 1](#)
- ACLU of Florida Banned Book Club ~ [April 7](#)
- Floridians for Immigrant Justice Campaign Meeting ~ [April 13](#)
- Free Speech Team Meeting ~ [April 14](#)
- Detention Advocacy Team ~ [April 15](#)
- Reproductive Justice Team Meeting ~ [April 28](#)

Community Meet-Ups and Local Activism

Join our teams on the ground across Florida:

- Miami Action Team Meeting ~ [April 7](#)
- Orlando Team Meet Up ~ [April 16](#)
- Broward Action Team Meeting ~ [April 16](#)
- Tallahassee Action Team Meeting ~ [April 21](#)

Trainings

Empower yourself and your community:

- Legal Observing Training: Protests & Rallies ~ [April 3](#)
- Rise Together for Florida's Special Session: Voting & Democracy ~ [April 16](#)



Our first annual Campus Club College Retreat with 7 of our 8 clubs represented!



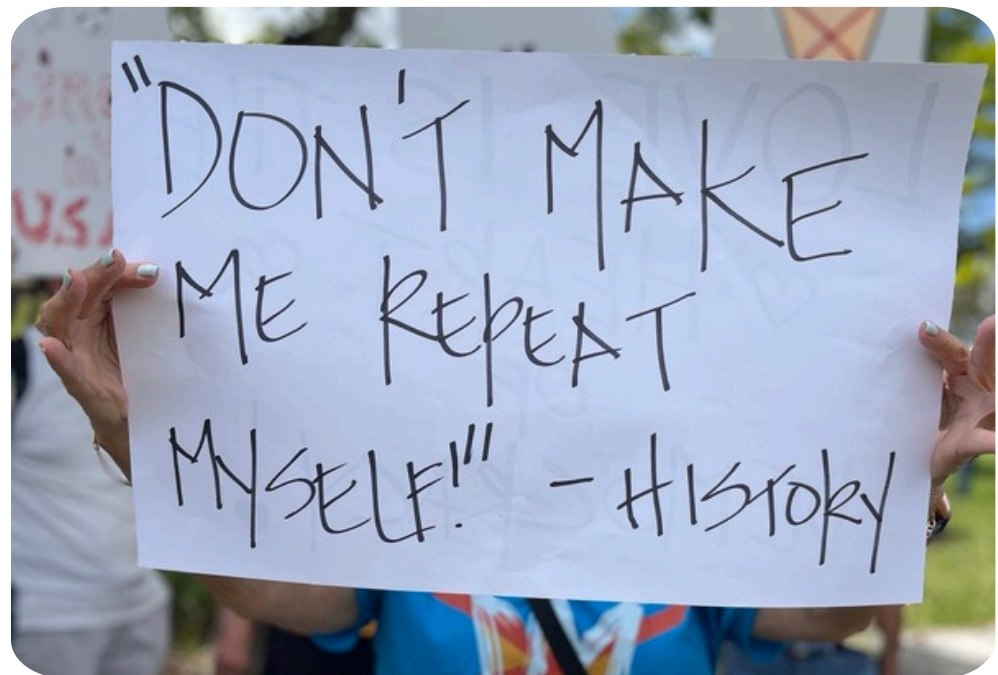
FIELD UPDATE: WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

NO KINGS DAY PROTESTS

HOLLYWOOD



MIAMI



ORLANDO



TALLAHASSEE



#NOKINGS

Across our state on March 28, we hit the streets to declare this truth: Floridians are here, and we aren't going anywhere.

Across the state at each No King's Protest, we stood up against the Trump administration's continuous abuses of power because protecting our democracy is not a partisan issue — it is an American duty.



POLICY UPDATE: WHERE ADVOCACY MATTERS

TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT

On March 13, the Florida Legislature ended its 60-day legislative session. Although the Legislature's only constitutional requirement is to pass a state budget, legislative leaders – Senate President Albritton and House Speaker Perez – failed to timely do so. Instead, they will reconvene in an April special session to pass a budget.

We, the People, were successful at holding the line and protecting our freedoms on several fronts. We defeated a dangerous bill that would have allowed abusive partners to sue the friends and family members of individuals who accessed abortion care. A bill that would have infringed upon our privacy rights and created a massive state surveillance apparatus ripe for abuse stalled. And thanks to everyday Floridians like you speaking up, four of the five biggest anti-LGBTQ bills failed to pass.

But we won't sugarcoat it – rather than help everyday Floridians who are struggling to make ends meet and address our state's affordability crisis, the party in control of the purse strings wasted taxpayer dollars and state resources passing several anti-civil liberties bills.

They passed HB 991, an anti-voter bill modeled after the federal so-called SAVE Act that will create hurdles to the ballot box and could force Floridians off the voter rolls. They passed SB 1134, targeting local diversity and inclusion initiatives and threatening elected officials with removal from office for working to ensure that every member of their community is represented. And they passed HB 1471, a dangerous bill that gives the governor and a handful of state officials broad power to brand groups as “domestic terrorists” with no transparency or oversight – and opens the door for selective enforcement and political targeting.

The bills our lawmakers chose to pass do not make Florida a more affordable or livable state. They won't lower your family's utility or insurance bills. That's why it's important to show what a better Florida can look like. This means putting forward good, proactive legislation that advances our civil liberties.

For the third session in a row, we worked with pro-democracy champions to file the Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Florida Voting Rights Act: a tribute to the first martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement that seeks to fill the holes in the federal Voting Rights Act created by the US Supreme Court.

And this year for the first time, we worked with partners and legislators to introduce the Reproductive Freedom Act. Personal medical decisions should involve a patient and doctor – not politicians. This bold piece of legislation seeks to repeal the state's extreme abortion ban that takes effect before many even know they are pregnant, and ensures the state cannot prevent a Floridian from accessing abortion care, IVF treatment, or any other aspect of reproductive health care.

While these good bills did not move in the legislative process because Florida's elected leaders in charge of the process refused to hear them, they are building a movement of Floridians who want real results that make Floridians' lives better. We're in it for the long haul. We are committed to seeing these transformative bills passed. Whether in the halls of the Capitol, in our communities, or in the courtroom, the ACLU of Florida will continue to fight for the free state we all deserve to live in.



FUELING THE FIGHT

DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

Philanthropy as a Force for Freedom: The ACLU of Florida's Role in Shaping a More Just State

In moments of uncertainty, philanthropy becomes more than generosity, it becomes a declaration of values. Across Florida, where debates over civil rights and liberties are not abstract but deeply lived, philanthropy plays a critical role in ensuring that freedom, dignity, and justice are not reserved for a few, but protected for all.

From safeguarding voting rights and protecting free speech to challenging government overreach and advancing racial justice, the ACLU of Florida serves as both a shield and a catalyst for systemic change.

None of this work happens in a vacuum — and **that's where our supporters come in.**

Philanthropy fuels the ACLU of Florida's ability to act swiftly and strategically in response to emerging threats. It enables impact litigation that can set statewide precedent. It supports policy advocacy that shapes laws before harm takes root. And it sustains community engagement efforts that build a more informed, active, and resilient public.

What makes this moment particularly urgent is not just the scale of the challenges, but the speed at which they are unfolding. Rights can be eroded quickly. Protecting them requires foresight, resources, and a steadfast commitment to action.

A gift to the ACLU of Florida is not simply a donation, it is an investment in the infrastructure of democracy. It is a commitment to ensuring that every Floridian, regardless of background or belief, has their rights protected and their voice respected.

At its core, philanthropy is about shaping the future. Together, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to build one where freedom is not fragile, but enduring.



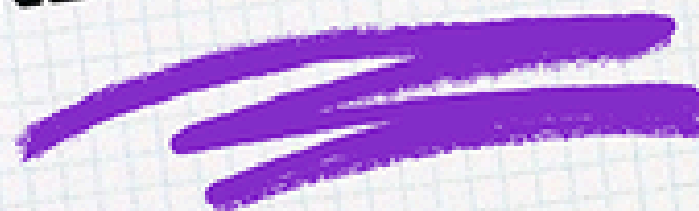
[Interested in Learning More?](#)

Members of the ACLU of Florida's development team are available to share more about current priorities and ways to deepen your impact in the year ahead. We welcome the opportunity to connect and explore how your support can help advance justice and liberty across Florida. Please call [786-363-4432](tel:786-363-4432) or email kgelok@aclufl.org.





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FLORIDA HIGH
SCHOOL SENIORS
AND GRADUATES**



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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
SCHOLARSHIP

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Join the resistance.

WE'RE HIRING!



Spread the word within your networks.

- Capital Punishment Staff Attorney or Senior Staff Attorney
- Development Operations Associate
- Deputy Legal Director
- Legal Investigator
- Manager of Electoral
- Engagement and Power Building Campaigns
- Policy Strategist

All positions will remain open until filled.

ACLU
Florida

APPLY NOW

aclufl.org/jobs

THE RESISTANCE IS YOU

This movement is powered by people who refuse to back down. With your continued support, we'll keep holding the frontline to freedom.

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