

FLORIDA FRONTLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL '26 EDITION



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

Article 1

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

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have one Vote. No Representative shall, when elected, be less than twenty five Years of Age, seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. And no Person shall be a Representative who shall, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. And no Person shall be a Representative who shall, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen.

is not grounds

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. The Senators of the first Class shall be created 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, and the Seats of the Senators shall be vacated in such Order as shall be determined by Law. No Senator shall, when elected, be less than thirty Years of Age, seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. And no Person shall be a Senator who shall, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected, seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen.

for deportation

Section 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Tuesday of December, unless they shall be otherwise appointed by Law. The Senate and House of Representatives shall keep their Journals, which they shall publish, except such Parts as may in their Opinions relate to Private Bills or other Business of Private Concern. 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; and no Person holding any Office under the United States shall be a Representative of that State in which he holds such Office.

MESSAGE FROM THE FRONTLINE

April Edition

The Ballot is the Battleground.

This year, America turns 250 years old.

Two and a half centuries after a Declaration told the world that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed – that self-determination is not a privilege but a birthright – we find ourselves, here in Florida, fighting once again to make those words mean what they say.

That fight is happening right now. And it is a fight that was waged on purpose.

Florida's special legislative session was not a procedural footnote. It was a declaration of intent – and we must respond with a righteous and overwhelming force of clarity, resilience and resistance.

When legislators convene outside of the regular session calendar to pass laws that restrict who can vote, how ballots are counted, and which voices are heard, they are not governing. They are engineering outcomes. They are deciding, in advance, who gets to decide. That is not democracy. If unchecked, that is its death knell, and the ACLU of Florida will not silently watch our democracy die.

Let me be direct about what election protection means in this moment. It means more than casting a ballot. It means ensuring that every ballot is counted, that every eligible voter can access the polls without intimidation or obstruction, that misinformation doesn't suppress turnout before a single vote is cast, and that when the rules change – as they keep changing in Florida – someone is watching, documenting, informing our communities and fighting back.

We are doing that work. Our policy and legal teams track every legislative development that impacts Floridians' right to vote. Our advocacy and field staff are building coalition and people power across counties. And we are preparing – now, not in October – to protect the integrity of this election cycle from the ground up.

Because here is what history teaches us: the people who want to limit democracy always move fast. The people who want to defend it have to move faster.

As we mark 250 years of this American experiment, I want to name something clearly. That experiment has never been finished. It has never been settled. Every generation has been asked – sometimes forced – to recommit to its promise or watch that promise erode. Florida's Black voters know this. Latinx communities know this. Young voters who showed up for the first time and found the process deliberately confusing know this. Voters with disabilities and elders who have faced unnecessary barriers know this.

The 250th anniversary is not a celebration of the myth of exceptionalism. It is a call to recommit. It is an invitation to look at what we promised, measure honestly the distance between that promise and this present, and decide that the gap is unacceptable.

We are deciding that. Every day.

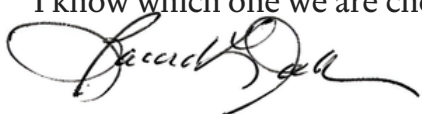
The ACLU of Florida is mobilizing on multiple fronts this year – through litigation, legislation, education, and organizing. We are building the infrastructure for a free and fair election because we know it won't happen automatically -- free and fair elections are demanded and fought for.

Here is what we need from you:

- Know your rights at the polls - join our webinars to learn more. Understand what Florida law allows and what it does not. If you are wrongly turned away, call our hotline. If you witness voter intimidation, document it and report it. Your testimony matters in court and in the court of public opinion.
- Talk to your neighbors. Voter suppression succeeds in silence. When people do not know what has changed – what ID is now required, which drop boxes were removed, which registration deadlines shifted – they stay home. Information is protection. Share it.
- Stay engaged beyond Election Day. The special session is proof that election rules are made and unmade year-round. Democracy is not a moment. It is a practice – one that requires showing up in non-election years, at school board meetings, at city commission chambers, in legislative hearings. Participation is the whole point.

Two hundred and fifty years in, the question is the same as it has always been: will we be the generation that held the line, or the generation that let it fall?

I know which one we are choosing to be.



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

Following tremendous effort, we and our partners secured a long-sought preliminary victory in our case challenging barriers to legal counsel at the gruesome Everglades immigration detention facility known as “Alligator Alcatraz.” The injunction issued by the judge requires ICE to provide readily available confidential outgoing legal calls to people detained at the facility, as well as publish information about how attorneys and those who are detained may contact one another. The order also states that ICE must continue their newly enacted policy of allowing attorneys to visit the facility without prescheduling visits, on behalf of the entire class. Finally, the court certified the case as a class action, which means that it protects all people currently at the Everglades Detention Facility, as well as those held there in the future.

At a time when due process is being sidelined left and right, protecting access to counsel is more critical than ever. This ruling is a major victory and underscores what we've known to be true all along: access to legal counsel is a constitutional right - not a privilege - for all people in this country, and the State of Florida and ICE can't simply lock people up without providing opportunities to speak with an attorney.



Litigation team from H.C.R. v. Noem (ACLU, ACLU-FL, AIJ) following the evidentiary hearing in January

More Legal Highlights

Brown v. Young - In our case challenging the dismissal of a state biologist based on a social media post about Charlie Kirk, the magistrate judge issued a “report and recommendation” recommending that the State of Florida be sanctioned for misconduct in the litigation related to submitting a sworn statement that was false. The judge noted that the State’s presentation “was result-oriented testimony and argument without regard for accuracy. These actions disrupted litigation and are an abuse of the judicial process. There is sufficient bad faith to warrant sanctions.”

- **Why It Matters:** Our court system can only function properly when the parties come to the table in good faith. In this litigation, the State has grossly breached that fundamental principle and has instead by committing fraud upon the court and upon our judicial system more broadly. When the State violates the law, it must be held accountable.

FIELD UPDATE: WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

This month our team started preparing for the upcoming election season. We officially launched our Vote-By-Mail re-enrollment phone banks to call voters across Florida who may not be aware that they are no longer enrolled to vote by mail. We'll be making re-enrollment and GOTV calls all month long and through the summer, join us so we can ensure Floridians get out to vote. We'll also be working with Common Cause and the Election Protection Coalition to train and deploy volunteers to voting locations where voters have historically been disenfranchised by confusion over election rules, long lines, under-resourced polling places, inaccurate information, and acts of intimidation. Stay tuned for more information on how to join this effort.

With Special Session coming to a start our Field team has also been working on hosting sessions to share more information about Special Session and what to expect, as well as drive advocacy efforts to Tallahassee, it's more important now more than ever to ensure your legislators are hearing from you. Not sure who your legislators are, go to: <https://www.flhouse.gov/FindYourRepresentative>



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 volunteer teams:

- Detention Advocacy Team [May 20](#)
- Reproductive Justice Team Meeting [May 26](#)

Community Meet-Ups and Local Activism

Join our teams on the ground across Florida:

- Orlando Team Meet Up [May 21](#)
- Broward Action Team Meeting [May 21](#)
- Tallahassee Action Team Meeting [May 26](#)

Trainings

Empower yourself and your community:

- Legal Observing: Protests and Rallies Training [May 8](#) and [May 20](#)

Take Action

- [Florida Vote-By-Mail renewal phone bank](#) - ongoing



POLICY UPDATE: WHERE ADVOCACY MATTERS

TURNING OUTRAGE INTO IMPACT

Florida's 60-day legislative session came to a close on March 13, but the legislature failed to do the one thing they are constitutionally required to do -- pass a budget. Instead, they callously prioritized making it harder for eligible Floridians to vote, silencing Floridians' voices, passing legislation that strong-arms county and local governments and seeks to prevent them governing in a manner that serves their constituents. Additionally, they made a mockery of the legislative process by wasting our taxpayer dollars passing frivolous legislation, including renaming the Palm Beach International Airport after Trump. In other words, the majority party in the legislature is not serving the people of Florida. They failed to prioritize passing a budget and passing legislation that would improve the lives of Floridians - that would make Florida more affordable and livable for all of us, that would help the people of Florida put food on our tables, a roof over our heads, and fuel in our tanks.

Governor DeSantis and the majority party are not prioritizing the needs of Floridians, and the people of Florida have had enough.

Instead of quickly calling a special session to finally comply with their constitutional duty to pass a budget, the Governor instead decided to call a special session to unconstitutionally and illegally redraw Florida's congressional districts to seize more power for his own political party. This is a partisan power grab and it is illegal under Florida's Constitution.

Voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around. That's why in 2010, Floridians amended our state constitution to ban drawing districts to benefit political parties.

Article III, Section 20 of the Florida's Constitution is clear: "no district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party." The bills put forth by the Governor do exactly that - they seek to redraw districts to favor a political party. This is a clear violation of Florida's Constitution.

It is a blatant attempt to seize party control and silence Black and brown voters, young people, and communities who have fought too hard to have their voices heard.

The people of Florida will not be complicit as those in power seek to rig our elections in real time. Floridians from across the state called and wrote their legislators and showed up in droves at the Capitol demanding that our elected leaders uphold the Constitution and follow the rule of law. The people of Florida packed the committee rooms, flooded the halls, and vowed to hold their elected officials accountable on election day if they refused to uphold Florida's Fair Districts Amendments.

Over the past two days, the majority party in power ignored the will of the people, refused to uphold the rule of law and Florida's Constitution, and violated their oath of office in doing so. Every Florida legislator took an oath to defend the Constitution — not to dismantle it for partisan gain. The ACLU of Florida is nonpartisan and we note the depressing fact that the vast majority of Republicans in both the House and Senate passed a map that violates Florida's Constitution. We appreciate that four Republican members followed the law and upheld their oath to uphold Florida's Constitution, along with the vast majority of Democratic members. We are asking every Floridian, how did your legislator vote? You can see for yourself here: [Senate votes](#); [House votes](#). If you don't know who your Florida representative is, you can find that information [here](#).

The work ahead will be laser focused on ensuring that our legislators are held accountable by the voters. In the meantime, enjoy these beautiful and inspiring photos of the resistance.



FUELING THE FIGHT

DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

Leaving a Legacy, a Donor Story

Helen McEachrane floated through the New York universes of art, dance, literature and fashion. She knew everyone worth knowing. On any given night she was at a gallery opening, at Elaine's (the restaurant where the literati hung out), at book reading, the Museum of Modern Art, Alven Ailey, the Whitney, meeting with Baryshnikov at White Oak and others—wherever culture was living and breathing—Helen was there and at the center of it all.

Her sense of style and fashion was unique. She mixed clothes and jewelry from cultures as diverse as Mexico, India, Japan and Indonesia into a look that was both international and delightfully eccentric.

Helen was born in Trinidad and educated in Europe where she experienced brutal racism. Instead of living in anger and revenge, Helen rose to the occasion and became a graceful, brilliant goddess of the arts. She led by example on how to best live a fulfilled life. As they say, “living well is the best revenge”.

The one-word description that fits Helen and still applies today after she joined the company of the celestial gods is MUSE.

In addition to her cultural calendar, Helen became the assistant to the President of Mexico and an executive of the Howard Gilman philanthropic foundation. When she moved to Miami, she became involved with the ACLU as she was keenly aware of the harsh injustices of our world.

To honor and preserve her legacy, the ACLU of Florida in coordination with her Trust has renamed the ACLU of Florida's Banned Book Club as presented by the Helen McEachrane Be Kind Trust. This recognition in Helen's honor is meant to further free and creative thought through books in the state of Florida.



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.



ANYEN SAN AYITI: BY NEUTEYSHE FELIZOR

Ayiti translates to the land of mountains.

to my land:

i'm sorry they've mistreated you.

dug through your rubble and left you in the dirt.

to be needed but not wanted is heartbreaking.

to be the weirdo toddler nobody connects with on the playground

because you don't talk like them or look like them or think like them

is a viscerally hardening experience.

how do we return home when home feels even more empty,

more estranged?

i am reminded that a home once broken can be rebuilt though.

and just like that, a country too.

Ayiti

the highest peak,

a touch away from God.

this is what reminds me that heaven isn't so far away.

I still remember the morning of July 21, 2025. I had just returned to the office from summer vacation. I was expecting a slow day—emails, calls, and quarterly planning. Instead, I received a collect call from a colleague detained at the Everglades Detention Center.

He had been taken against his will by ICE and stored in this facility for 10 months. I didn't know what to say. What do you say when someone you know is swallowed by a system designed to erase them? What does "support" even look like or mean at that moment? A freedom fighter, an organizer, and a faith-based advocate who had been living in the U.S for over two decades was discarded as obsolete. Detained in a facility rife with abuse and built to isolate people from their families and communities— and even access to legal counsel.

What people have been experiencing at the Everglades Detention Center is nothing new. We know that our country's immigration system has been broken for decades.

We cannot talk about the deportation of immigrants without discussing power. We cannot talk about the injustices of our immigration system without talking about its disparate treatment of Black immigrants—including those from Haiti. Haiti is often dismissed as “poor” and “failed,” but is rarely acknowledged as a landmass that holds significant mineral wealth, like iridium— the world's second largest deposits. Global interests for such resources are never separate from geopolitical control. So, when people like President Trump reduce Ayiti to a “shithole country”, we must ask: what purpose does this framing serve? It's easier to justify displacement when a nation is portrayed as inherently broken.

Imagine calling a nation “shitty” and in the same breath deciding its people are undeserving of temporary protected status so that they can build a better future for themselves and their families.

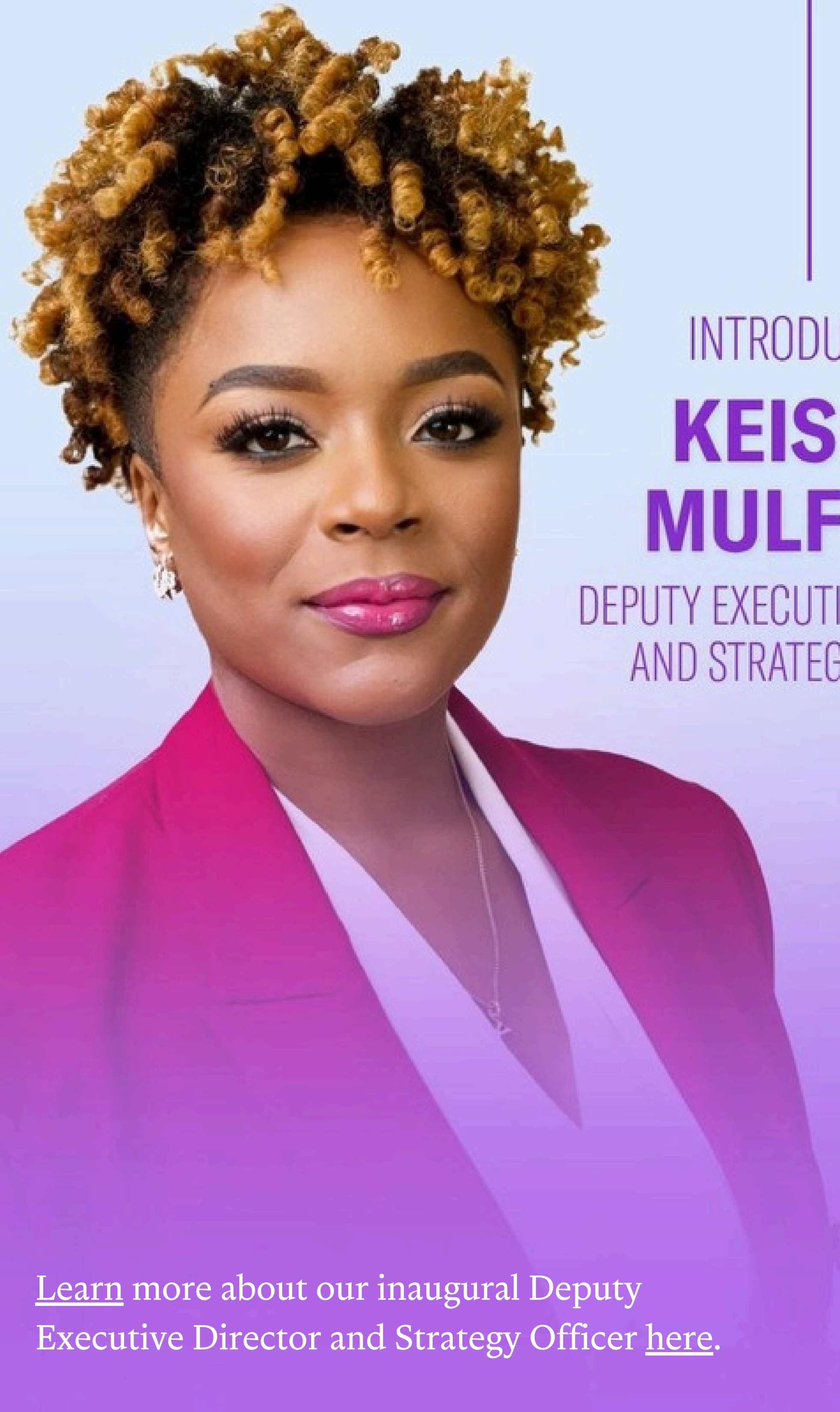
I remember the devastation of the 2010 earthquake. I remember the foundations it shattered and the chaos it caused, but I also remember how my father refused to give up. He designed and built a multi-unit apartment building on the road where he grew up. For 12 years, he returned to Haiti every summer to manage the properties until arson wreaked havoc amid gang violence in the deadly summer of 2024.

While policy continues to mask cruel politics, it means we allow stereotypes to govern our immigration system. It means we allow colonization to recreate itself as a new form of oppression. It means reducing an entire people to caricatures and erasing their stories of resilience and bravery.

We know immigrants are not a burden to this country. They are essential to it. Many companies and communities would perish without them. Immigrants contribute over \$96B in taxes. They are also among the least likely to commit crimes, despite being framed as such. Anti-immigrant language, though, is obviously used to justify something larger. U.S immigration is not about protecting working-class Americans from danger. It's about control and maintaining a system where exploitation and extraction are not questioned.

But when policy fails, the community will always remain. Where a government displaces, the people replace. That's what community has looked like for decades in South Florida—organizations like Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Florida Immigrant Coalition, and the ACLU continuing to build for and with each other with the resources we do have.

There may be those who normalize the moral failure of governance, but there are also those who take action. I am one who takes action because a better life is not guaranteed for immigrants like my family, but because it must be insisted upon. Because those who come from the land of mountains—the highest peak—know heaven isn't so far away— and that is a promise we are all worthy of.



INTRODUCING
**KEISHA
MULFORT**

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND STRATEGY OFFICER

Learn more about our inaugural Deputy Executive Director and Strategy Officer here.

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FL**

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- [Deputy Communications Director](#)
- [Sr Digital Strategist](#)
- [Sr Communications Strategist](#)
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