

FLORIDA FRONTLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MAY '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 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

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 more than seven Years of Age, and seven Years after he shall have attained to that Age, he shall be qualified to Exercise the same. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, seven Years, and seven Days, and be seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have been seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when elected, have been 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 Classes. 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; but the Electors in each State shall have the same Number of Senators as Electors in that State. Vacancies happening during the Course of the Term of any Senator, shall not affect the Elections of the Senators of that Class.

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 Meetings shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they be otherwise by Law. 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 Senator or Representative.

MESSAGE FROM THE FRONTLINE

May Edition

Sixty years after thousands of Civil Rights Movement leaders bled, marched, and mobilized for the Voting Rights Act, Black voters and other voters of color are now facing the risk of districts across the country being eliminated — diluting their right to be represented in our democracy.

On April 29, the U.S. Supreme Court eviscerated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, and within days, state lawmakers across the country rolled back voting rights with impunity by enacting discriminatory maps for partisan gain.

Florida was one of those states.

Following the Callais decision, the Florida Legislature passed an illegal and partisan gerrymandered map during its special session, which Gov. DeSantis called for earlier this year in response to Trump's demand that Republican-controlled states do whatever necessary to maintain power in Congress.

This outcome was no coincidence. It was but the latest move in a deliberate, decades-long plot to manipulate maps for congressional seats and state legislatures for political gain.

But we are clear-eyed and ready. Efforts by the Trump administration and our own state leaders to tamper with our constitutional right to fair elections and representation will not go unchallenged. Right now, our partners are leading several lawsuits challenging Gov. DeSantis' unconstitutional maps, and we actively support their efforts. As our partners take on the new illegal state map, we remain committed to the final remaining legal actions that we brought over the past few years against the former map and illegal gerrymandering all across the state. Our current litigation includes two cases — one challenging gerrymandered districts in South Florida, and a second one challenging districts in Daytona Beach. We also are continuing our local advocacy for fair representative districts through our Stronger Miami campaign, which grew out of a litigation victory against unfair districts at the city level.

Now more than ever, it's important we hold the line across all fronts.

We are facing a coordinated campaign to dilute and remove civil liberties champions from positions of power, but we are not ones to back down. This moment demands more than outrage. It demands action. We know their playbook — and now we are activating ours.

We must remain relentless in our efforts to challenge the state legislature's overreach in the courts and hold our leaders accountable at the ballot box for the future of our multiracial democracy. And this year, we face the most consequential election of our lifetime. One where our voting power will decide whether democracy cedes to authoritarianism or remains with the People. One where casting a ballot will serve as an act of defiance.

Everyone must be prepared to vote in the August primaries and in November. It's our duty to ensure our communities feel the urgency to exercise our power, while we do what is necessary to protect the integrity of our elections and make our voices heard.

Because we are the frontlines of resistance.



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

A Victory for Free Speech

Following a flurry of filings, 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 a meme about Charlie Kirk on her personal social media page — has walked away with a victory. She had been fired in 2025 after state officials falsely claimed that her private post caused significant operational disruption and generated hundreds of public complaints. Discovery in the case revealed those claims to be fabricated. In May 2026, the federal court hearing the case entered an order imposing sanctions on an FWC official who submitted a false affidavit and on the law firm of Lawson Huck Gonzalez for engaging in vexatious litigation on behalf of the state. A trial had been scheduled for June 2026, but the parties negotiated a settlement to conclusively resolve the case in advance of trial. Under the terms of the settlement, FWC will pay Brown \$275,000 — including \$40,000 in back wages and \$235,000 in compensatory damages—plus \$210,000 in attorneys' fees and costs. FWC also agreed to provide Brown a neutral reference for future employment inquiries and to permit her to interact with FWC staff and resources on the same basis as any other external partner or volunteer, preserving her ability to continue her conservation work through partner organizations.

Brittney fought back when it would have been easier to walk away, and today we celebrate that courage. This settlement makes clear that there is a cost for the government's abuse of power, and it should put every state agency in Florida on notice: we see you, we are litigating, and the First Amendment is not negotiable on our watch.



More Legal Highlights

- **Save the Garden v. City of Clearwater** — On Friday, May 22, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of citizens' initiative group Save the Garden challenging the City of Clearwater's unlawful rejection of thousands of valid petition signatures. Save the Garden had launched its petition effort to preserve South Garden Avenue as a public community space by establishing a memorial garden and heritage trail honoring Clearwater's African American community. The petition proposes requiring voter approval before the city transfers public rights-of-way in Clearwater's downtown. Under the city's charter, residents have the explicit right to initiate ordinances through a citizen petition process. But Save the Garden's organizers faced misinformation, bureaucratic obstacles, and the unlawful rejection of thousands of valid petition signatures.
 - **Why It Matters:** Clearwater voters have the right to sign onto petitions like this one, and to have their signatures count. The lawsuit challenges the city's obstruction of its residents' right to directly participate in local democracy through its ballot initiative process.
- **Keohane v. Dixon** — In our class-action litigation concerning gender-affirming care in state prisons, the court held a hearing on the state's motion for summary judgment (the state's final attempt to end the case before trial). We await a ruling from the judge.
 - **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.
- **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 followed 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.) The court hearing the case had put the case on hold pending the Supreme Court's resolution of the recent redistricting case, Louisiana v. Callais. Now that Callais has been resolved, the court hearing our case lifted the stay in early May, and we have asked the court to issue a preliminary injunction in our favor.
 - **Why It Matters:** This is the second time we've had to go to court to protect Daytona voters. Even when presented with fair and constitutional alternatives, City Commissioners again chose to adopt a gerrymandered map. Our clients are standing up because the very basis of democracy requires each and every voter to have fair representation.

FIELD UPDATE: WHERE THE PEOPLE MOVE

GRASSROOTS POWER IN ACTION

Miami was built by immigrants. That truth doesn't change no matter what laws get passed or what rhetoric gets amplified. At the beginning of May, we gathered at Books & Books — a pillar of this community where storytelling has always changed hearts and minds — to hear immigrant justice leaders share stories of resilience, contribution, and belonging. Sponsored by 10 Days of Connection, the event brought together over 150 Miamians from all walks of life to learn from the activists driving change on the frontlines. In a moment when immigrant communities are under relentless attack, showing up for each other is itself an act of resistance.

We also gathered for something quieter — and just as powerful. Motherhood Under State Control brought together mothers, advocates, and community members to mark two years since Florida's near-total abortion ban went into effect. We were honored to hear from Cherise Doyley, a mother who — while in active labor, hooked up to IVs and monitors — was forced to defend her own medical decision in a virtual court hearing after refusing a C-section. Cherise's story is not a policy abstraction. It is what state control over a mother's body looks like in real time. Her courage, and the community that gathered around her, is exactly why this fight cannot wait.

Finally, we officially launched our Vote-By-Mail re-enrollment phone banks, calling voters across Florida who may not know they've been removed from VBM rolls. We'll be making re-enrollment and GOTV calls all month long and through the summer. We're also partnering with Common Cause and the Election Protection Coalition to train and deploy volunteers to polling locations where voters have historically faced confusion, long lines, under-resourced polling places, and outright intimidation.

The work is everywhere. Come be part of it.



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:

- Floridians for Immigrant Justice Campaign Meeting — [June 1](#)
- ACLU of FL Banned Book Club — [June 2](#)
- Storytelling Planning Team Meeting — [June 3](#)
- Free Speech Team Meeting — [June 10](#)
- Detention Advocacy Team — [June 17](#)
- Reproductive Justice Team Meeting — [June 23](#)

Community Meet-Ups and Local Activism

Join our teams on the ground across Florida:

- Broward Action Team Meeting — [June 4](#)
- ACLU FL Tallahassee Postcard Writing Party — [June 6](#)
- League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade Annual Meeting - [June 6](#)
- Miami Action Team Meeting — [June 8](#)
- ACLU of FL Orlando Postcard Writing Party — [June 18](#)
- Orlando Team Meet Up— [June 18](#)
- Tallahassee Action Team Meeting — [June 23](#)

Trainings

Empower yourself and your community:

- Legal Observing: Protests and Rallies Training — [June 5](#); [June 17](#)

Take Action

- Orlando Vote-By-Mail Renewal Phone Bank — [June 3](#); [June 11](#); [June 15](#)



FUELING THE FIGHT

DEFENDING FREEDOM AND EXPANDING OUR FUTURE

Every day in Florida, fundamental rights are being tested in real time.

From attacks on voting rights and free expression to threats against immigrant communities, reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ Floridians, and the right to dissent itself, the stakes for our democracy have never been higher.

And every single day, the ACLU of Florida is fighting back.

In recent months, we have:

- Challenged unconstitutional laws that threaten to disenfranchise eligible voters and place unnecessary barriers between Floridians and the ballot box.
- Continued defending immigrant communities and advocating against dangerous detention conditions and government overreach.
- Stood alongside national efforts before the United States Supreme Court to defend constitutional protections, including birthright citizenship and due process rights.
- Mobilized communities across Florida through advocacy, civic engagement, public education, and rapid-response organizing efforts.

This work does not happen by accident.

It happens because people like you choose to invest in it.

Your support fuels the legal challenges that stop harmful policies before they spread. It powers organizers and advocates working directly in communities across Florida. It allows us to respond rapidly when rights are threatened while also building the long-term infrastructure needed to protect democracy in the years ahead.

At a time when many institutions are retreating, the ACLU of Florida is leaning in with courage, clarity, and determination.

But we cannot do this alone.

A donation today is more than a contribution. It is an investment in defending constitutional rights, holding those in power accountable, and ensuring that freedom in Florida belongs to everyone, not just the powerful.



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@acluf.org.



AAPI Heritage Month

From the hundred of thousands of Floridians that are from the Pacific Islands, Central, South, East, and Southeast Asia—
we honor the contributions and bravery of our AAPI community.



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Anyen San Ayiti

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.



Poem by Neuteyshe Felizor

Haitian Heritage Month

by Neuteyshe Felizor

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.



"It's easier to justify displacement when a nation is portrayed as inherently broken."

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.

Haitian Heritage Month

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.

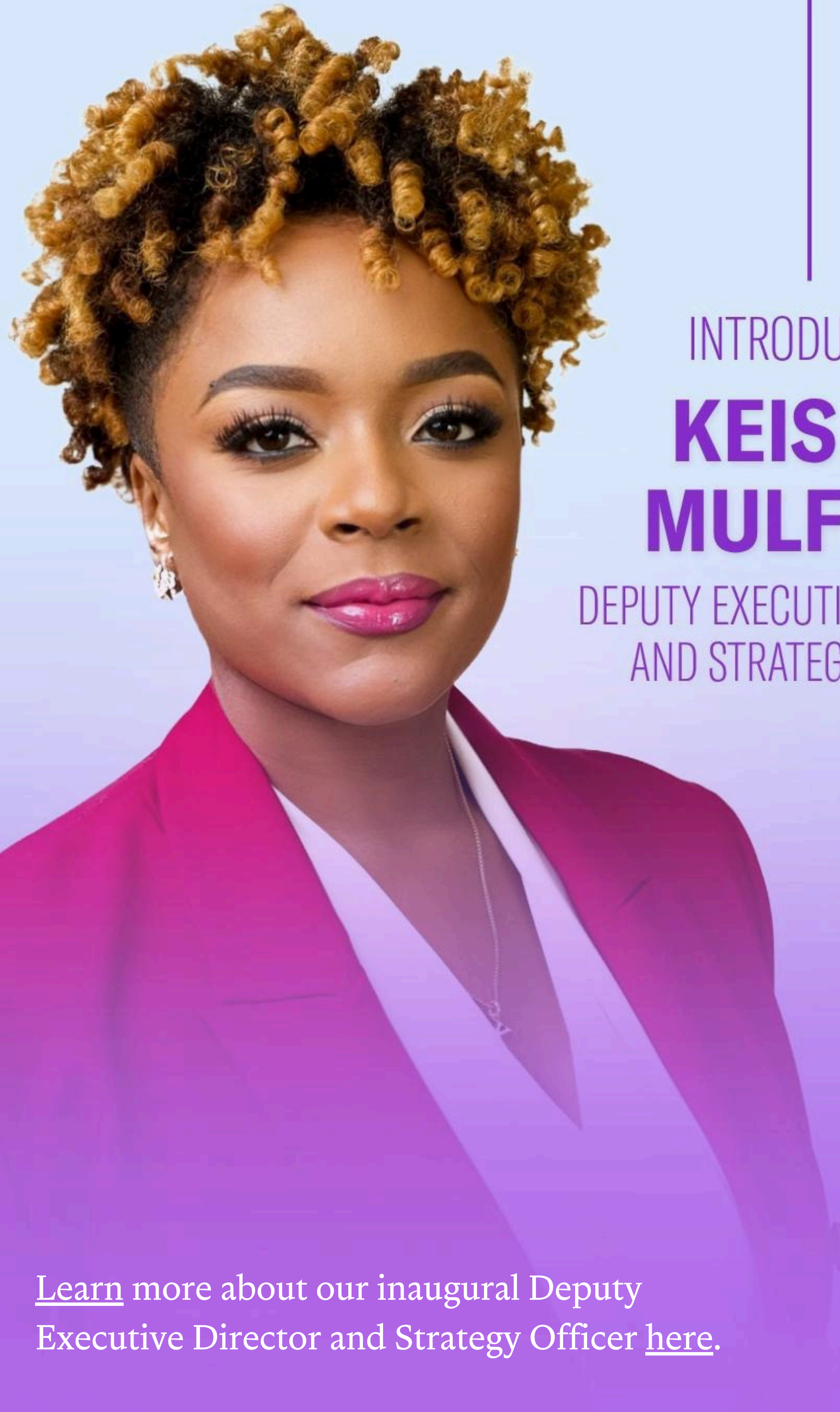
We know immigrants are not a burden to this country. They are essential to it. Many companies and communities would perish without them. Immigrants contribute over \$96B in taxes. They are also among the least likely to commit crimes, despite being framed as such.

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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WE'RE HIRING!



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your networks.

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- [Staff Attorney](#)
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- [Manager of Electoral Engagement and Power Building Campaigns](#)
- [Policy Strategist](#) (IR-Focused – 2 Year Role)
- Policy Analyst/Counsel
- [Deputy Communications Director](#)
- [Senior Digital Strategist](#)
- [Senior Communications Strategist](#)
- [Field Program Manager](#)
- [Tampa Field Organizer](#) (2 Year Role)
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