

# DEFEND



THE CONSTITUTION  
IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS  
TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
TRANS RIGHTS  
FREE SPEECH  
RACIAL JUSTICE  
CIVIL LIBERTIES  
CIVIL RIGHTS

PROTECTING THEIR FUTURE

ToryThunder

# 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAMYRA COX-TOURE

**ACLU Oklahoma**

## DEFEND

ARTWORK BY TONY THUNDER

*'Defend' - Defending Oklahomans from unjust laws, self-serving politicians and negative legislation.*

**Main Subject:** All these subjects featured on the heart affect ALL Oklahoman families in one way or another in the long run. Overall causing a negative impact on our children's futures.

**2 Little Girls:** Represents the unsafe and nonsensical abortion laws.

**The Girls' Skin Color:** Oklahoma meaning: Okla = Red, Humma = People. All though originally referring to the Native Americans that were on this

land first we are all Oklahomans - so any race can be represented in the little girls. (Latino Immigrants, black, native or white, etc )

Since 1964, over six decades, the ACLU of Oklahoma has worked tirelessly in the courts, the legislature, and communities across the state to expand the constitutional protections afforded to all Oklahomans, regardless of background or ideology. And that work continues today.

Our affiliate strives for courage, integrity, justice, and a people-centered impact in our work. Our bold strategic plan reflects this. As we approach a full year into our strategic plan, we are even more committed to ensuring with are uplifting our priorities restoring abortion access, ending the death penalty, and advancing criminal legal reform. We continue to acknowledge that our plan is bold, but we are prepared for the challenge.

I am filled with gratitude for our achievements and eager for what we can accomplish in the years ahead. Our progress is driven by the support of our allies, the resilience of those we advocate for, and the strength of our communities.

We know there are many challenges ahead, but we hope you will join us in the continued fight for civil liberties in Oklahoma. Our supporters and ACLU members continue to play a vital role in our successes, working alongside us and generously offering their time and energy.

Our ability to stay in these fights relies on the commitment, professionalism, and determination of our staff, Board of Directors, and interns. Together, we have made meaningful strides. With your continued support, we will keep pushing forward to create lasting change for the people of Oklahoma.

Thank you for being an essential part of this work.

**The Heart & Flower:** They represent the issues that ACLUOK handles, but also represent the people affected in these battles. These targeted demographics and subjects who the ACLUOK fight for play an important part in what makes this state great and what it is. The heart is 'watering' a struggling flower that's in a dark place ( 'shadowed' shape of Oklahoma )

**Flower:** A Red Perennial: A common flower in Oklahoma.

**The Clouds/ Sky:** Represents the sometimes breath-taking pink Oklahoma skies after a big storm with a little bit of beautiful blue sky peeking out behind it.

**Scissortail/State bird:** Life. Flight = Freedom

## VISION AND MISSION

*We envision a fair and equitable Oklahoma that recognizes all Oklahomans.*

*The ACLU of Oklahoma works to secure liberty, justice, and equity for all Oklahomans through advocacy, litigation, and legislation, leading by example and fueled by people power.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## JOIN THE FIGHT

Every day across the nation, the ACLU is called on to defend all freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. There's never been a more important time for freedom-loving people to support the ACLU and our successful work to protect civil liberties. Take your stand and help us defend people's rights. For more information on ways to give, contact our Development Director, Sara Jane DelMonte, at 405-659-0581 or [sdelmonte@acluok.org](mailto:sdelmonte@acluok.org).

## STEPS FORWARD IN 2024

### POLICY DEPARTMENT

#### Reproductive Freedom

No attacks on reproductive freedom survived the 2024 legislative session! Our policy team fought and led the efforts to defeat bills that attempted to ban emergency contraceptives and create a statewide database of abortion patients - H.B. 3216 - and further criminalized the spread of STIs - H.B. 3098. Not only this, but a bill allowing medical providers and insurance companies to deny healthcare to any person based on any reason - H.B. 3214 - was voted down in committee.

#### 2SLGBTQ+ Rights

In 2024, Oklahoma had the highest number of anti-2SLGBTQ+ bills introduced in the nation with over 50 bills being introduced. Our team worked with coalition members to defeat almost all these bills including ones related to: pro-conversion therapy, bans on drag shows, gender affirming care bans for adults, pride flag bans, don't say gay/trans bans, and placing chaplains in public schools.

#### Criminal Legal System

Each year, we work with coalition members to defeat rollbacks to SQ 780, which lowered certain property and drug crimes from felonies down to misdemeanors. Our team also led the efforts to defeat bills that would have expanded the use of automatic license plate readers and increase mass surveillance across Oklahoma.

In 2024, our team saw several successes in the criminal legal space. Not only did we pass our speedy trial bill - S.B. 325 - which reduces the max time somebody can spend in jail from one year to nine months after the initial appearance for charges, but we worked with the Survivor's Justice Coalition to overcome a veto by the Governor to pass the Oklahoma Survivor Justice Bill - S.B. 1835 - to allow for reduced sentencing for domestic violence survivors who fought back against their abusers.

In October 2024, we led a highly popular and successful interim study to advocate against the use of the death penalty in felony murder cases.

### LEGAL DEPARTMENT

#### *United States v. Oklahoma (consolidated with Padres Unidos, et al. v. Drummond, et al.)*

This year, we filed a case challenging H.B. 4156, which attempts to empower state law enforcement officials to arrest, detain, and expel noncitizens from Oklahoma. H.B. 4156 is a harmful and far-reaching law that would have devastating consequences for Oklahoma's immigrant communities and create a state system to regulate immigration that bypasses and conflicts with federal law. We argue that this attack on the safety of Oklahoma's immigrant communities is preempted by federal immigration law and therefore violates the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution; impermissibly regulates people's entry into Oklahoma, imposing unacceptable burdens on interstate and foreign commerce, and therefore violates the Commerce

Clause of the United States Constitution; and allows for the banishment of noncitizens convicted under the law and therefore violates the Eighth Amendment protections against cruel and unusual punishment. We brought this challenge alongside the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project, the National Immigration Law Center, and Rivas and Associates on behalf of the Oklahoma-based organization, Padres Unidos de Tulsa, and four individuals who live in Oklahoma and could be prosecuted, banished from the state, and separated from their families under the law.

#### *Walke, et al. v. Walters, et al.*

In October of this year, we filed a challenge to the State Superintendent's mandate that all Oklahoma public schools incorporate the Bible into classroom instruction. The mandate is a blatant power grab by the Superintendent that tramples the separation of church and state by prioritizing one religion over all others. We argue that the mandate violates the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act because it was adopted without the required notice and comment process for adopting new rules and because the authority to require the inclusion of specific texts in school curricula lies exclusively with school districts. We also argue that the Superintendent lacks legal authority to spend \$3 million of taxpayer money on Bibles for Oklahoma classrooms because the proposed spending supports an unlawful rule and because spending state funds on religious items associated with one particular religion violates the Oklahoma Constitution. We brought this challenge on behalf of more than thirty Oklahomans - including parents, students, teachers, and faith leaders - and alongside our partners at Oklahoma Appleseed, ACLU Freedom of Religion and Belief Project, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and Freedom From Religion Foundation.

#### *Poe, et al. v. Drummond, et al.*

We started our year by advocating for equal access to health care on behalf of transgender adolescents. In January, we appeared before the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals to argue that S.B. 613, Oklahoma's ban on gender-affirming care for minors, should not be enforced during the pendency of the case because the law is unconstitutional discrimination on the basis of sex and transgender status, in violation of the Equal Protection Clause, and is an unconstitutional infringement on parents' rights to make healthcare decision on behalf of their children, in violation of the Due Process Clause.

#### *Bridge, et al. v. Oklahoma State Department of Education, et al.*

In March, the court dismissed our challenge to S.B. 615, a law prohibiting transgender students from using public school restrooms that are consistent with their gender identity. We argue that this attack on the safety and well-being of transgender students is unconstitutional discrimination on the basis of sex and transgender status and should be struck down. The court, however, found that the law did not amount to unconstitutional discrimination and dismissed the case. We appealed that dismissal to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals to ensure that all students can use school restrooms safely and that Oklahoma public schools are spaces free from discrimination.

#### *Terry, et al., v. Drummond, et al.*

After the Oklahoma County District Attorney used the riot statute to criminalize and silence protesters during the 2020 racial justice movement, we challenged the statute as an unconstitutional restriction on free speech.

In May, the court denied our motion to preliminarily stop enforcement of the Oklahoma Riot Statute against expression. We appealed the court's denial of our motion for preliminary injunction to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals and continue the fight for the free speech rights of protesters.

#### *Black Emergency Response Team, et al. v. Drummond, et al.*

In June, we received a partial injunction of H.B. 1775, a classroom censorship law that severely restricts teaching about race and gender in Oklahoma public education. The injunction temporarily prohibits any enforcement of H.B. 1775 in higher education classrooms and stops K-12 officials from enforcing H.B. 1775's most vague language while the litigation is pending. Specifically, the court prohibited the enforcement of subsections (c) and (d) of H.B. 1775 against K-12 teachers and administrators. The court also signaled that teachers should be allowed to discuss issues related to racism and sexism in the course of their instruction but should refrain from endorsing any of H.B. 1775's other banned concepts. While the partial injunction of H.B. 1775 is an important victory for Oklahoma education, we continue to defend Oklahoma's students and educators from politically motivated censorship and racial discrimination.

## ACLU OF OKLAHOMA & FOUNDATION COMBINED OPERATING BUDGET

The ACLU of Oklahoma is comprised of two organizational entities: the ACLU of Oklahoma and the ACLU of Oklahoma Foundation. Together, these two entities allow the ACLU to advance civil rights through a three-pronged approach, using litigation, public education, and advocacy.

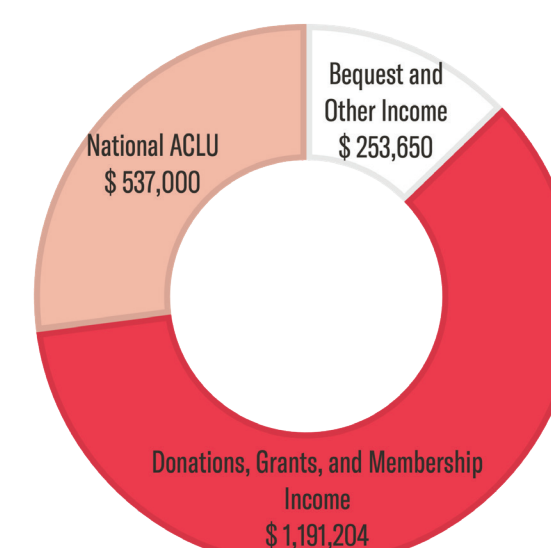
#### American Civil Liberties Union

ACLU membership dues fall under Union funding, so when you receive your trusty ACLU membership card, those dues have supported legislative advocacy and lobbying. The Union is registered as a 501(c)4, and as such donations to the Union are not tax deductible.

#### American Civil Liberties Union Foundation

All of the ACLU's litigation work and public education falls under the Foundation. The Foundation is registered as a 501(c)3, therefore all gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible.

#### COMBINED SUPPORT AND REVENUE



#### COMBINED EXPENSES

