

Protecting our rights. Preparing our future.

2026 Annual Report

ACLU Texas

Mission Statement

The ACLU of Texas works with communities, at the State Capitol, and in the courts to protect and advance civil rights and civil liberties for every Texan, no exceptions. With offices across the state, the organization focuses on six core issue areas: Border & Immigrants' Rights, Free Speech & Pluralism, Justice System & Carceral Reform, LGBTQIA+ Equality, Reproductive Freedom, and Voting Rights & Democracy.

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Letter From the Executive Director & Board Chair

At the end of each summer, our interns present their individual projects to the entire ACLU of Texas team. This year, a young Black intern working with the legal team reflected on her work supporting our advocacy for free speech in communities and classrooms across the state. She told us that, in her law school studies, “free speech” mostly meant protecting hate speech.

Some of the lawyers on our team nodded in recognition. In contrast, she said, she was proud that her work with the ACLU of Texas ensured that the people who have been historically marginalized — whose voices have most often been silenced and whose stories have most often been erased — have the right to constitutional protection.

Her reflection captured two through lines in our work this year: protecting our right to voice the political future that we want and holding the government accountable when it fails us. These rights intersect with every part of our advocacy. From Houstonians mourning and protesting the ICE killing of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, to professors in the Texas A&M University System banding together to protect their freedom to teach both Black history and Plato, our right to speak is foundational to our democracy.

Our dissent is more than our right: It is our patriotic duty. We at the ACLU of Texas are proud to protect it.

In solidarity,

Oni K. Blair
Executive Director

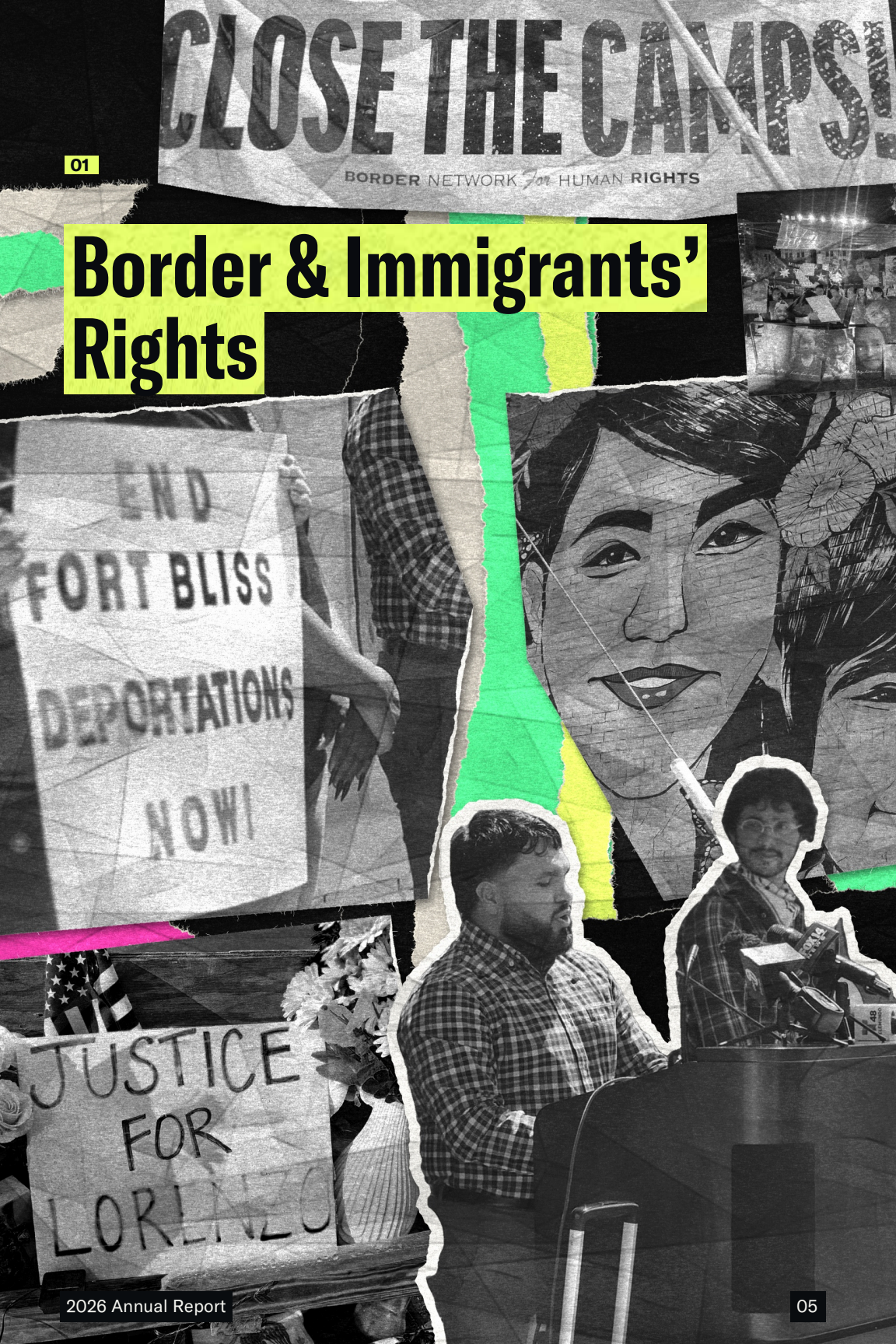
Royce Brooks
Chair, Board of Directors



IMAGE CREDIT Ray Carrington


UNITY
MELTS
ICE
STOP ICE

Border & Immigrants' Rights



Challenging Immigrant Detention & Preserving Due Process

Camp East Montana Litigation

We filed a class action lawsuit challenging inhumane detention conditions at the largest immigrant detention center in the country — Camp East Montana in El Paso — following letters we sent to the federal government documenting excessive force, medical neglect, and dehumanizing conditions. Our legal team filed a preliminary injunction over the conditions in the camp in October.



ACLU of Texas staff member Osvaldo Grimaldo advocates for the closing of Camp East Montana at a press conference in El Paso.

Preventing Detention Expansion

We advocated alongside local partners and residents to prevent immigrant detention infrastructure expansion across Texas. At Socorro City Council, our testimony and community advocacy helped support an ordinance that prevented detention facilities from being approved. In San Antonio, we continue to work with local partners to oppose new ICE warehouses.

Community Events

We joined local partners in El Paso at rallies advocating for an end to the administration's mass deportation regime. We also helped organize a community art installation highlighting abuses at Camp East Montana and supported a community vigil to commemorate lives lost in the tent camp.

Opposing State Immigration Enforcement

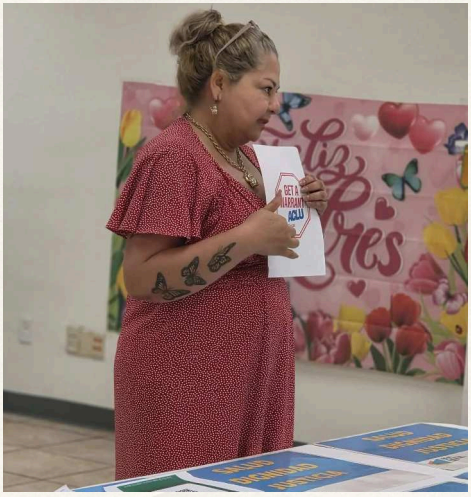
Senate Bill 4 Litigation

We filed a putative class action challenging Texas' anti-immigration criminal law, S.B. 4 (2023). This is our second lawsuit challenging this law to ensure that key provisions of S.B. 4 do not take effect.


CLOSE THE CAMPS!
BORDER NETWORK For HUMAN RIGHTS

Know Your Rights Trainings

We expanded access to Know Your Rights (KYR) information through more than 100 in-person trainings, webinars, social media, and WhatsApp. Our KYR trainings covered topics like interactions with ICE and law enforcement, students' rights during school walkouts, workplace encounters with immigration agents, and ways to find detained family members.



Border Report

We surveyed more than 1,000 border residents across the political spectrum in El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley about increased immigration enforcement under the Trump administration. A majority said ICE tactics have "gone too far" — and that immigration enforcement makes life harder, not safer.

Holding ICE Accountable

Limiting Police Collaboration with ICE

We partnered with community members to repeal a 287(g) agreement in Primera, near Harlingen. These agreements shift local law enforcement time and resources from addressing community needs toward working with ICE to enforce federal immigration law. We also coordinated local advocacy in Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio to limit local law enforcement's collaboration with ICE statewide. Additionally, we briefed approximately 30 reporters on Texas' 287(g) requirements, strengthening relationships with journalists and expanding our press network.

"Lives Torn Apart" Digital Series

We used social media to highlight Texas communities and individuals who have been targeted by ICE — including a nun on her way to mass, a veteran's wife, a legal interpreter, a 23-year-old U.S. citizen, and two brothers in a mariachi band.



ACLU of Texas clients Ronaldo Salgado and Lorenzo Salgado Araujo Jr. share remarks at a community rally in Houston.

Seeking Justice for the Family of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo

Following the ICE killing of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo in Houston, we are representing his family to seek accountability and justice for his death — and ensure nothing like this happens again. We joined Texans across the state who are calling for an independent investigation, while challenging government narratives that sought to obscure the circumstances surrounding the shooting.


JUSTICE
FOR
LORENZO





Free Speech & Pluralism









Upholding Free Expression

Supporting Marka27 Amid Censorship

We held the administration at the University of North Texas accountable for censoring artist Victor "Marka27" Quinonez's exhibit over its anti-ICE themes by partnering with the National Coalition Against Censorship on digital storytelling and a mobile billboard campaign across campus.



Texas A&M Lawsuit

We filed a lawsuit and preliminary injunction against the Texas A&M University System on behalf of professors challenging a new university policy that restricts what faculty can teach and discuss in their classrooms — censoring certain viewpoints related to race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Protecting Religious Freedom

Ten Commandments Lawsuits

We advanced three lawsuits with our partners challenging Senate Bill 10 (2025) that requires public schools to display a state-mandated version of the Ten Commandments in every classroom, ultimately petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court to take the case and block the law. These cases represent families of diverse religious and nonreligious backgrounds and seek to ensure that the government cannot impose its preferred religious beliefs on Texas students.

Opposing State-Sponsored Prayer in Public Schools

We joined a statewide advocacy effort urging school districts to reject a state-proposed policy allowing dedicated daily periods for prayer and the reading of religious texts in public schools. More than 90% of Texas school districts did not adopt the policy.



IMAGE CREDIT Jettlife Productions

ACLU of Texas staff member Matt Simpson joins Emgage on a panel discussion about the urgent need to combat anti-Muslim racism and discrimination in Texas.

Countering Anti-Muslim Racism

We strengthened partnerships with Muslim-led organizations, civil rights groups, faith communities, and other advocates to develop a more coordinated response to rising anti-Muslim racism across Texas. Through strategic messaging, digital storytelling, and policy advocacy, we're better prepared to challenge harmful narratives and defend the rights of Muslim Texans as we move into the next legislative session.

Defending Students' Freedom to Learn

Back to School

We participated in seven back-to-school drives across Texas, connecting directly with students and families, distributing school supplies, and sharing Know Your Rights resources. These events gave us an opportunity to explain new state laws while building relationships with communities most directly affected by them.





Texas Education Advocacy Series

In partnership with the Texas Freedom Network, we launched the Texas Education Advocacy Series (TEAS) to equip advocates to resist book bans, curricular censorship, and state-sponsored religion in their communities. The inaugural cohort welcomed 228 advocates for inclusive education in Texas public schools.



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Justice System & Carceral Reform







Guaranteeing Legal Representation

We continued to implement the legal settlement that guarantees counsel at first appearance in Travis County, with more than 99% of people now receiving representation at their initial court appearance. This effort has secured counsel for more than 4,000 people at magistration in Travis County during the first three months of settlement agreement implementation, with 100% of shifts staffed, ensuring representation regardless of financial means.

Challenging Pretrial Detention

End Cash Bail Exhibit

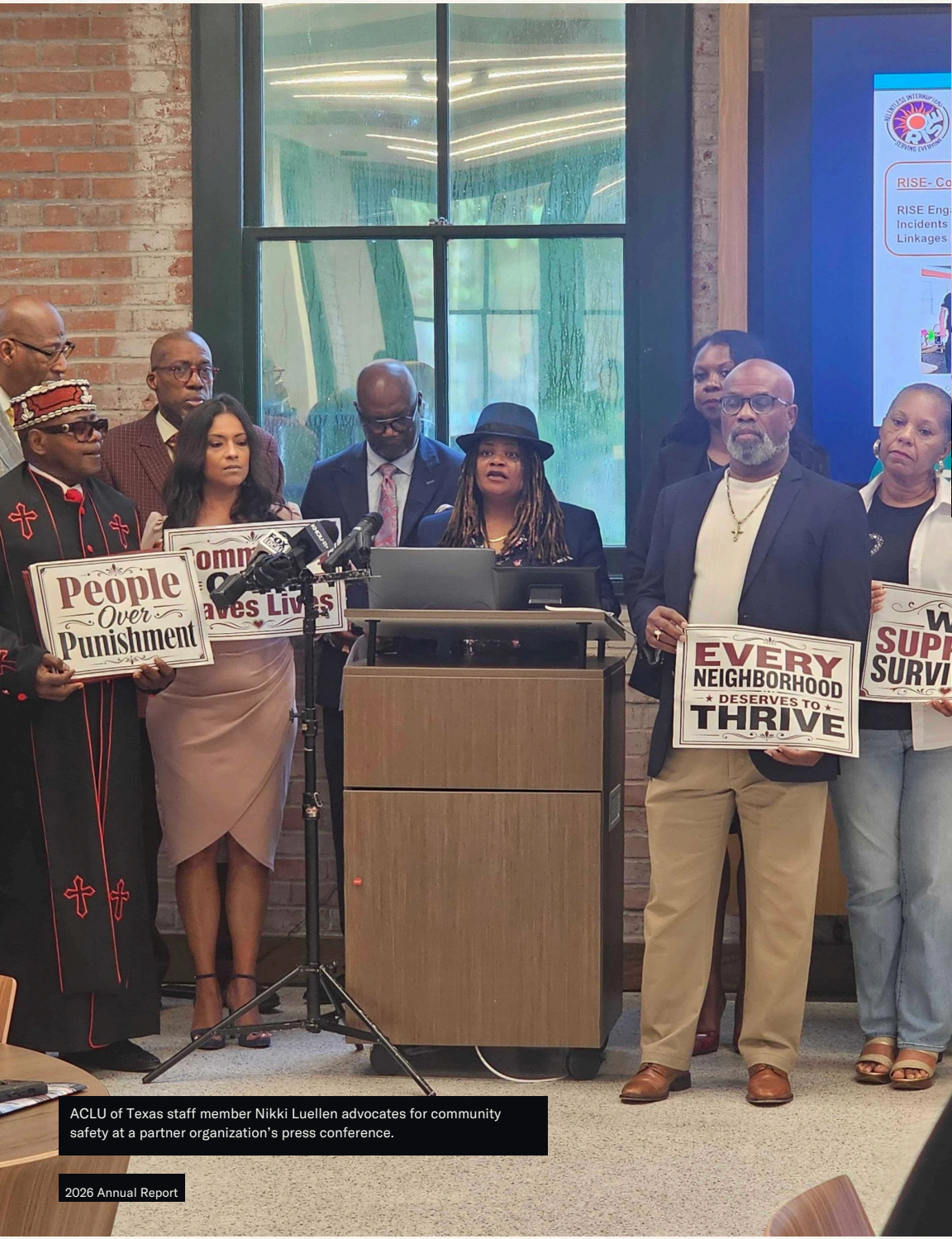
We supported artist-in-residence KB Brookins in presenting an exhibition in Houston exploring the human impact of pretrial detention. Between 200 and 300 people attended the launch event to witness visual art and poetry created by people directly impacted by the legal system.

Pretrial Justice Convening

We organized local and legislative advocacy at the Pretrial Coalition Convening, uniting advocates to strengthen the campaign for a fairer pretrial system.







ACLU of Texas staff member Nikki Luellen advocates for community safety at a partner organization's press conference.



Opposing Surveillance

Surveillance Toolkit

In partnership with the Civil Rights Clinic at the University of Texas School of Law, we created a toolkit to help communities challenge local ordinances that require private businesses to install surveillance cameras and hand over footage to law enforcement without a warrant. These policies could allow law enforcement to track people's movements and activities without first getting permission from a judge or demonstrating a specific reason to search for their information — raising serious concerns about due process.

Advocacy Against Flock

We continued to challenge the growing use of Flock automated license plate readers across Texas, partnering with advocates and community members in cities across the state. In El Paso and beyond, we raised concerns about surveillance technologies that can track people's movements and work to ensure they do not become unchecked tools for government monitoring.

LGBTQIA+ Equality











Protecting LGBTQIA+ Youth in Schools

Gender & Sexualities Alliance Network v. Morath

We secured a preliminary injunction blocking Senate Bill 12 (2025) — the state law targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in K-12 public schools — from taking effect in Houston, Katy, and Plano ISDs. The ruling ensures thousands of students — regardless of their race, gender, or background — can continue to access vital programs, clubs, and support systems that help LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown, and other students of color thrive while litigation continues.



Groesbeck ISD Settlement

We secured a settlement in our case against Groesbeck ISD, protecting a transgender student's right to dress authentically at school. The case also challenged the constitutionality of the district's discriminatory dress code policy.

Defending the Free Expression of LGBTQIA+ Texans

Drag Ban

We won a major victory for free expression and LGBTQIA+ Texans. A federal court again ruled Texas' drag ban unconstitutional, blocking the state from enforcing a law that threatened drag performers and other forms of expression.



Empowering Trans & Queer Texans

Pride

We participated in multiple Pride events across the state — connecting with local advocates, sharing resources on new and changing laws, and inviting supporters to deepen their connection to our advocacy work. We also celebrated Pride through digital storytelling, creator partnerships, and a sticker design honoring the late Black trans advocate Monica Roberts.


IMAGE CREDIT Levi Thompson

Passing Pro-LGBTQIA+ Policies with City Councils

We worked with the Austin City Council to pass a pro-LGBTQIA+ resolution and encouraged similar protections in communities such as El Paso and Edinburg. Local victories like these demonstrate the power of community advocacy to create lasting change.

Expanding Access to Trans Resources

We launched a new, all-ages Trans Rights Hub — making trusted information, resources, and Know Your Rights information more accessible for transgender Texans and their loved ones.



2026 Annual Report IMAGE CREDIT Levi Thompson

Reproductive Freedom



Defending Texans' Reproductive Freedom in the Courts

Jackson Family

We won a lawsuit against the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on behalf of Rodney and Temecia Jackson, whose newborn daughter was wrongfully taken from them. The victory protects the Jacksons' parental rights and affirms Texas families deserve due process when the government makes life-altering decisions about their children.



ACLU of Texas legal staff challenge systemic racism and lack of due process in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services procedures at a court hearing.

Stopping Pregnancy Discrimination and Criminalization

From college campuses to local governments, we worked with Texans targeted because of their pregnancy status. We continued representing Lizelle Gonzalez, who was wrongfully arrested and charged with murder after having a medication abortion. Our lawsuit seeks accountability for the Starr County officials who violated her constitutional rights and reinforces that no one is above the law.

Building Power for Reproductive Justice Advocacy

Texas Abortion Advocacy Network

We expanded the Texas Abortion Advocacy Network (TAAN), welcoming more than 50 new advocates through our 9th and 10th Academy cohorts and introducing Spanish-language interpretation to increase access. We also brought together more than 60 advocates and more than a dozen partners for our third annual TAAN convening, strengthening connections, sharing resources, and building organizing power across Texas.





Dr. Robyn B. Adams

Artist-in-residence Dr. Robyn B. Adams facilitated storytelling circles with more than 45 Black queer and trans Texans and community organizations to rest, gather, create, and answer questions about the future of reproduction. They will draw on these stories to produce a mixtape, chapbook, and documentary in the upcoming year.



Community members gather for a pool party at the tbh tour stop in Austin.

Statewide Community Tours

tbh (to be honest) Campaign and Tour

We launched tbh... / La Mera Verdad, a statewide community education initiative providing trusted reproductive health information in English and Spanish. Through community trainings, promotional materials, and local outreach, we deepened partnerships with reproductive justice organizations to deliver community-centered programming and expanded access to evidence-based information while challenging reproductive health misinformation.

TAANHalls

Through the TAANHall series, we brought reproductive rights education and organizing directly into communities across the state.

The series offered over 100 Texans a safe space to share their concerns regarding reproductive healthcare in the state and access Know Your Rights information, reproductive health experts, and local advocates.



Voting Rights & Democracy



Promoting Civic Engagement

Race to the Polls

We piloted the Race to the Polls campaign in five Texas cities, partnering with local run clubs to promote participation in the March primaries and build familiarity with voting rights among younger audiences. We also did a second wave of the campaign ahead of the November midterm elections, reaching more than 600 Texans.



ACLU of Texas staff members Kristi Gross and Ayania Hicks share voting rights information with Houstonians at our Race to the Polls event in collaboration with the ZFT Run Club.

Vincent Valdez

Artist-in-residence and MacArthur "genius grant" awardee Vincent Valdez culminated his residency with a pop-up tour through Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio to promote civic engagement ahead of the November election. He distributed free prints of his pencil-and-ink drawings depicting the power of the people to build a more just, inclusive future. The tour began at Houston's Rothko Chapel with a sold-out event featuring Lonnie Ali, who leads the Muhammad Ali Center.



Artist-in-residence Vincent Valdez and ACLU of Texas staff member Mary Ibarra share prints and voting rights resources with community members in San Antonio.

Defending the Right to Vote

Election Protection

We recruited 2,500 volunteers for a targeted poll monitor program during the primary, runoff, and midterm elections and operated the Election Protection Hotline all election season. We also reached more than 5.5 million Texans with English- and Spanish-language voting rights information through social media, media interviews, digital ads, and community events.

Crystal Mason

Texas' highest criminal court upheld Crystal Mason's acquittal, bringing a nearly decade-long wrongful prosecution to an end. Mason, a Black mother of three, no longer faces prison time for casting a provisional ballot — that was not even counted — while unaware that she was ineligible to vote.

Expanding Jail-Based Voting

Bexar and Johnson Counties

We placed Bexar County on notice ahead of the primary runoff that failing to provide voting options for eligible incarcerated individuals would violate federal law. We also secured a victory in Johnson County, advancing voting access for people in jail.



ACLU of Texas staff members Savannah Kumar and Tommy Buser-Clancy rejoice after learning of our victory in the decade-long legal battle defending Crystal Mason.

07

Development & Operations



ACLU of Texas staff gather in Galveston.

Internships

We continued to strengthen our internship program by creating department-specific learning opportunities for students with focused interests. Over the past year, we welcomed three cohorts of paid interns: nine interns who joined us for the fall 2025 and spring 2026 semesters, eight interns who joined us in summer 2026, and 11 interns who joined us for the fall 2026 and spring 2027 semesters. Across all three cohorts, interns gained hands-on experience by contributing to meaningful departmental projects and receiving training with relevant tools and software.

Staff Investments

Our staff are the engine of this work, and we continued investing in their growth and success. This year, we welcomed 10 full-time staff members across Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, and Houston. We also increased professional development allocations for every staff member.

Supporter Events

From livestreamed U.S. Supreme Court arguments to intimate home dinners and family-friendly fundraisers, we brought supporters together in Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. These gatherings connected people directly with ACLU of Texas leaders, legal and policy experts, and advocates. They also catalyzed new support, drove financial contributions, and strengthened key partnerships that are essential to our work of defending the rights of all Texans.



08

Advocacy Summit



Political strategist and commentator Angela Rye and moderator Carlos Huerta Sr. discuss civic participation and life in border communities.

250 Years Later

On June 12, 2026, we hosted our annual Advocacy Summit at the Philanthropy Theatre in downtown El Paso, placing a border community at the center of a statewide conversation about democracy. Under the theme “250 Years Later: Where’s Democracy?,” attendees examined the gap between the nation’s founding promises and the realities Texans face today.

Executive Director Oni K. Blair opened the evening, followed by a powerful spoken word performance from Richie Marrufo. Political strategist and commentator Angela Rye joined moderator Carlos Huerta Sr. for a keynote conversation that connected national questions about democracy and civic participation to the lived realities of communities in El Paso and along the border, culminating with a call to action. Board President Royce Brooks closed out the program alongside our El Paso board members. The event also included Spanish-language interpretation to ensure the evening’s conversations reached and resonated with a broader audience.

Community partners — including the Border Network for Human Rights, League of Women Voters, and Texas Rising — provided opportunities for attendees to get involved. Representatives from NAACP El Paso and Black El Paso Voice also joined us, while on-site membership opportunities helped turn inspiration into action.

The evening continued with “Summer Nights in El Paso,” bringing together supporters, staff, board members, partners, and alumni of our advocacy programs. More than 125 people attended the Advocacy Summit, making it a powerful opportunity to build community and strengthen the statewide civil liberties movement.

09

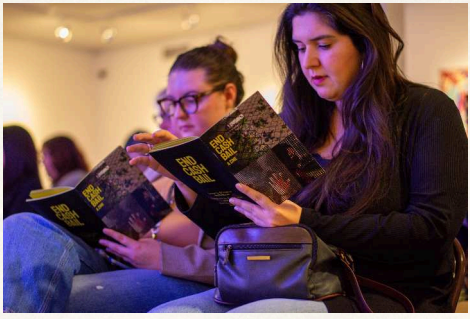
Advocacy Through the Arts



We work with cultural leaders and institutions to advance our strategic advocacy through the arts. Learn more at aclutx.org/art .

2025–2026 Artists-in-Residence: KB Brookins & Vincent Valdez

Black trans author KB Brookins culminated their residency with a visual and literary art exhibit at Lawndale Art Center in Houston, which focused on the human impact of the cash bail system in Texas. They opened the exhibit with a standing-room-only event that featured live performances and garnered media attention. Attendees left with an original zine about Texas' mass incarceration crisis that is also available online.



Latino painter Vincent Valdez culminated his residency with pop-up events in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio that promoted civic engagement ahead of the November election.

He distributed free poster packets with pencil-and-ink drawings depicting our contemporary political moment and those working for a better tomorrow, today. The tour kicked off with a moderated conversation at Rothko Chapel in Houston between Valdez and Lonnie Ali, who leads the Muhammad Ali Center.



Artist-in-residence Vincent Valdez unveils surprise portraits of Oni K. Blair and Lonnie Ali as final drawings in "The New Americans" series at his tour stop in Houston.





Dr. Robyn B. Adams facilitates a storytelling circle for Black queer and trans folks.

2026–2027 Artist-in-Residence: Dr. Robyn B. Adams

Through a statewide open call with nearly 300 applicants, we selected Black, transmasculine, nonbinary, lesbian, and multihyphenate artist Dr. Robyn B. Adams as our next artist-in-residence. Their work explores Black queer and trans experiences of reproduction through poetry, music, and community-based art. Over the summer, they facilitated storytelling circles in Austin, Dallas, and Houston with more than 45 Black queer folks.

They will draw on these stories to produce a mixtape, chapbook, and documentary that, in Dr. Adams' words, "can not only be archived but also be used as a political strategy in the face of political erasure."



2026 Annual Report IMAGE CREDIT Kelsey Reid



HOUSTON COMMUNITY

Additional Highlights







Expanding Work in El Paso

We continue to expand our presence in El Paso, building relationships with local advocates and ensuring that the voices of border communities remain central to our statewide work.



ACLU of Texas staff members Ivonne Rodriguez and Maria Cordero receive an award from a partner organization.

In the Margins Book Club

We launched our banned book club, In the Margins, in March 2026. This community program fosters connection with Texans across the state and amplifies stories that are uniquely targeted by Texas' censorship laws. Each month, the book club has partnered with a Texas-based organization to inform participants about the most pertinent issues affecting Texans. The book club hosted its first in-person gathering in Houston in partnership with reproductive justice organization Hoochies of Houston and Harris County Public Library. Since launching in March, In the Margins has engaged over 100 people committed to resisting book bans and censorship.



The "In the Margins" in-person gathering was held in Houston in collaboration with the Hoochies of Houston and Harris County Public Library.



2026 Annual Report IMAGE CREDIT Harris County Public Library

Dr. Kendi Author Talk

We brought community members together for a conversation with Dr. Ibram X. Kendi about his book “Chain of Ideas,” facilitating shared reflection on race, democracy, and the work required to build a more just future.



Dr. Ibram X. Kendi joined us for a conversation in Houston about his book “Chain of Ideas” in partnership with Kindred Stories and the Harris County Public Library.

Southern Collective Selma Jubilee

We joined other ACLU Southern Collective affiliates in celebrating the Selma Jubilee by marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. — honoring the generations of organizers whose work continues to shape the struggle for voting rights and democracy.



ACLU of Texas staff joined the ACLU Southern Collective in marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. to commemorate the 61st anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

Fund This Work

From Amarillo to Brownsville and Beaumont to El Paso, we believe in a Texas that works for all of us — a Texas where each person has an equal say in the decisions that shape our futures and where everyone can build a good life.

To realize this vision, we need the support of every Texan who cares about protecting our civil rights and civil liberties.

Join or Renew Membership

When you make a one-time contribution to our 501(c)(4) nonprofit, you become a "card-carrying" member of the ACLU and the ACLU of Texas. Because of our steadfast lobbying, your donation is not tax deductible.

aclutx.org/membership

Become a Guardian of Liberty

When you make a monthly contribution to our 501(c)(4) nonprofit, you become a Guardian of Liberty with the ACLU and the ACLU of Texas. Because of our steadfast lobbying, your donation is not tax deductible.

aclutx.org/guardian

Make a Tax-Deductible Donation

Donate to our 501(c)(3) affiliate organization, the ACLU Foundation of Texas, to support our public education programs and litigation efforts.

There are other ways to make a tax-deductible gift:
- Make a tribute gift in honor or in memory of someone
- Make a gift of stock
- Give through your IRA
- Give through your will

aclutx.org/donate

If you'd like to speak with someone about your giving plan, please email us at development@aclutx.org .



IMAGE CREDIT Nora Dayton



IMAGE CREDIT Levi Thompson



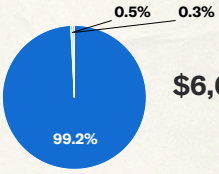
Financial Summary

Texas is the country's second-most-populous state, and we face some of the most egregious civil rights violations in the nation. The ACLU of Texas operates with constrained resources to work on these critical issues across the entire state. Despite these challenges, we remain one of the largest and most trusted civil rights organizations in the Lone Star State.

For the year ended March 31, 2026

Support & Revenue

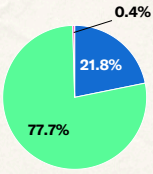
Foundation · C3



$6,673,784

- Contributions: $6,619,397 (99.2%)
- Pooled investments: $32,270 (0.5%)
- Interest & other: $22,117 (0.3%)

ACLU of Texas, Inc. · C4

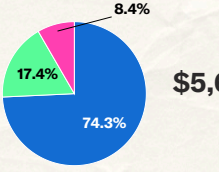


$4,749,398

- Contributions: $1,036,871 (21.8%)
- Membership: $3,692,050 (77.7%)
- Interest & other: $20,477 (0.4%)

Expenses

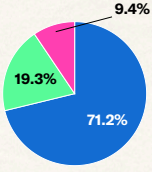
Foundation · C3



$5,637,025

- Program services: $4,185,915 (74.3%)
- Management & general: $980,247 (17.4%)
- Fundraising: $470,863 (8.4%)

ACLU of Texas, Inc. · C4



$2,951,939

- Program services: $2,101,890 (71.2%)
- Management & general: $571,165 (19.3%)
- Fundraising: $278,884 (9.4%)

C3 / C4 net assets

Change: $1,036,759 / $1,797,459

Beginning: $5,193,247 / $4,490,922

Ending: $6,230,006 / $6,288,381

Credits

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Protecting our rights. Preparing our future.

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ACLU Texas