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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

ACLU of Texas Executive Director Oni K. Blair and
Board Chair Royce Brooks. | Credit: Vanessa Velazquez



At the ACLU of Texas, we envision a state in which every person can take part in shaping the decisions that impact their lives — a state in which every person can thrive.

Yet, 60 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, on the eve of the 60th anniversaries of the Immigration and Nationality Act and the Voting Rights Act, people living in Texas still struggle to fully realize our civil rights and civil liberties. Executive actions by Texas' elected officials and laws passed by the legislature increasingly seek to criminalize people of color, immigrants, and people who do not conform to stereotypical gender norms.

We at the ACLU of Texas are here to advocate along with the people of Texas for our rights.

While our legal challenge to the state's 2021 voter suppression law volleys back and forth in the federal courts, we are educating Texans about voting rights and recruiting nonpartisan poll monitors to ensure that every eligible vote is counted. Our lawsuit challenging the state's new anti-immigrant law resulted in a preliminary injunction pausing local and state law enforcement's ability to arrest, detain, and remove people without federal authorization. Our litigation has defended trans and nonbinary Texans against unlawful government overreach. Our Free Speech Academy, data-focused reports, legal complaints, and media strategies pressured school districts across the state to end discriminatory dress codes, hair policies, and book bans that erased students' identities and history. Our advocacy efforts have helped Travis County residents access the constitutional right to a lawyer at bail hearings. In West Texas and across the state, our abortion advocacy network has trained hundreds of local residents to block ordinances that would further restrict reproductive health care, even across state lines.

We know there's a long road ahead, yet we press forward. We do this work, and you support this work, because we share a belief in a better future for the people of this state.

In solidarity,

Oni Blair | *Executive Director, ACLU of Texas*

Royce Brooks | *Chair, ACLU of Texas Board of Directors*

BORDER AND IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

The state government is attempting to seize control of immigration — even though this authority resides with the federal government — and is wasting more than \$11 billion to demonize, harass, and detain immigrants. The ACLU of Texas is working to end these cruel policies, restore access to asylum, and nurture thriving border communities.

TOP ACLU of Texas artist-in-residence Kill Joy brings giant 15-foot puppets and protest art to an immigrants' rights rally on the steps of the State Capitol. | Credit: Christopher Lee

BOTTOM ACLU of Texas staff member David Donatti speaks with Spanish-language reporters about our litigation against anti-immigrant law Senate Bill 4.





ACLU of Texas staff lead presentations about anti-immigrant law Senate Bill 4 and our constitutional rights under it.

WE
THE
PEOPLE

“We are heartened by the Fifth Circuit’s decision to keep S.B. 4 from taking effect. Today’s decision is not the end of this legal battle, and immigrants and Texans of color across our state should remain vigilant, know their rights, and have a plan to protect themselves and their families. We will not stop fighting until this law is struck down for good.”

— JENNIFER BABAIE

*Director of Advocacy and Legal Services at Las Americas
Immigrant Advocacy Center and ACLU of Texas client*

SENATE BILL 4

We took bold action against one of the most extreme anti-immigrant laws in the country, Senate Bill 4, which would fuel racial profiling and allow state-led deportations of people suspected of having crossed the border without the appropriate documentation. In addition to securing a preliminary injunction temporarily blocking the law, we reached more than 100,000 people with Know Your Rights information through on-the-ground training, palm-sized cards, digital ads, and bilingual television segments. We also engaged more than 20 local and state officials to oppose this unconstitutional law.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

We empowered border and immigrant communities with crucial information about state and federal laws and our constitutional rights under them. We led 50 presentations to more than 1,260 people, as well as partnered with the Mexican and Guatemalan consulates to distribute information to directly impacted individuals. We also equipped partner organizations with essential tools to protect themselves and their communities.

OPERATION LONE STAR

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and his legislative allies have wasted more than \$11 billion on the state’s massive anti-immigrant program, Operation Lone Star, which is rife with systemic failures and civil rights abuses. After analyzing the state’s own data, we published a damning report that reveals the program racially profiles and arrests people who pose no threat to public safety, then forces them into a separate and unequal criminal legal system. We secured extensive press coverage of these findings and have used them in our testimony at the Senate Homeland Security interim charge hearing and in other advocacy across the state as we work to end this unconstitutional program.

FREE SPEECH AND PLURALISM

State and local officials regularly undermine our First Amendment rights and erode our democracy by trying to silence views they don't like. The ACLU of Texas is proudly defending Texans' right to protest and advocating for inclusive public schools free from censorship and discrimination.

TOP Gainesville community organizers advocate for racial justice and the removal of a Confederate statue in their town.
Credit: Brian Edward

BOTTOM Families receive materials from the ACLU of Texas about students' rights at a back-to-school drive in Houston.



“Eleven minutes. That’s about how long our peaceful march lasted. We spent more than 127 times that long in jail. We should be able to make our voices heard without facing punishment. Together, we will work toward a Texas where all of us, no matter where we are from, can exercise our fundamental rights.”

— AMARA RIDGE, TORREY HENDERSON,
AND JUSTIN THOMPSON

Gainesville community organizers and ACLU of Texas clients



The ACLU of Texas’ report, “Dressed To Express: How Dress Codes Discriminate Against Texas Students and Must Be Changed,” exposes widespread dress code discrimination.

DRESS CODES

Too many Texas schools enforce dress codes that shame and penalize students for simply showing up as their authentic selves. After reviewing 1,178 Texas K-12 public school districts’ 2022-23 policies, we published a report showing that more than half of them were discriminatory. Our findings garnered prominent news coverage, invited supporters across the state to share their personal experiences of discrimination with us, and helped Texans advocate for more inclusive dress codes in their local school districts.

CROWN ACT

Over the summer, we sent letters to 51 public school districts whose 2023-24 dress codes appeared to discriminate against racially and culturally significant hairstyles. In response, nearly half rewrote or pledged to update their policies to be in compliance with the Texas CROWN Act. As students returned to school in the fall, we launched our revised Students’ Rights Hub and participated in back-to-school drives to equip families with tools to advocate for their rights.

DEFENDING PROTEST RIGHTS

As mass protests arose on college campuses nationwide, Texas state and university officials tried to suppress the voices of Texans advocating for Palestinians, at times through violence and arrest. We swiftly supported students’ constitutional rights by distributing Know Your Rights materials, leading presentations, filing Public Information Act requests, and calling on universities to uphold their commitment to academic freedom and free speech for all students. Separately, we petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the convictions of three community organizers in Gainesville, Texas, who were unjustly jailed for peacefully protesting a Confederate monument.



'We got better because of it.' Lubbock-area district responds to CROWN Act compliance

LGBTQIA+ EQUALITY

Across the state, LGBTQIA+ Texans face discrimination, bullying, and violence simply for being who we are. The ACLU of Texas is working to expand protections for all LGBTQIA+ Texans, especially trans youth.

TOP The ACLU of Texas attended Pride celebrations and other events across the state to distribute Know Your Rights information about the slate of anti-LGBTQIA+ laws that recently took effect. Credit: Nicole Hopwood

BOTTOM ACLU of Texas staff member Ash Hall speaks to community members at an Austin pride event.



ACLU of Texas staff and co-counsel defend PFLAG and LGBTQIA+ families against government overreach. | Credit: Lambda Legal



“The actions of the Texas attorney general to silence PFLAG families with transgender loved ones fail — and will continue to fail — because our love is louder.”

— BRIAN K. BOND
CEO of PFLAG and ACLU of Texas client

TRANS TEXANS

This year, the state government has repeatedly targeted trans Texans — from the Texas Supreme Court’s upholding of the ban on gender-affirming care for trans youth to state agencies arbitrarily denying gender marker updates on IDs. We swiftly responded by providing critical Know Your Rights resources to those directly impacted and secured important appellate court victories blocking unlawful efforts to label gender-affirming care for trans youth as child abuse. In close partnership with the All in for Equality Coalition, we remain unwavering in our defense of trans rights.

DRAG

Last year, a federal district court prevented Texas’ drag ban from taking effect after a two-day trial. We are now defending that victory before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit to protect Texans’ artistic freedom and self-expression, as well as to ensure that LGBTQIA+ Texans can joyfully, courageously, and unapologetically celebrate Pride. We remain hopeful that the court will uphold the trial court’s decision and ensure that drag is here to stay (and slay!).

PFLAG

After Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton misused his office’s investigatory power to demand sensitive information from PFLAG about families seeking gender-affirming care for trans youth, we defended the national LGBTQIA+ organization and its impacted families. With co-counsel, we successfully defended the privacy and constitutional rights of PFLAG and its members.

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

Extremist politicians in Texas have passed civil and criminal laws banning abortion care and putting our communities at risk. The ACLU of Texas is working to destigmatize abortion and expand reproductive rights for everybody in our state.

TOP ACLU of Texas staff and members of the Amarillo Reproductive Freedom Alliance celebrate the successful defeat of Amarillo's proposed abortion travel ban.

BOTTOM Temecia and Rodney Jackson were eventually reunited with their newborn baby, Mila, after the state unjustly took her from their home. | Credit: Toluwani Osibamowo, KERA News



Alumni of the Texas Abortion Advocacy Network gather in Austin for the program's inaugural conference.



“I appreciate the open, unembarrassed discussion of abortion and unwavering support for abortion access through the Texas Abortion Advocacy Network. It’s also been incredible to meet and learn from the people doing this work every day.”

— MARIN H.

Member of the Texas Abortion Advocacy Network

TEXAS ABORTION ADVOCACY NETWORK

With abortion banned, we have connected and trained hundreds of Texans across the state to advocate in their local communities for reproductive freedom. The Texas Abortion Advocacy Network Academy completed its fifth cohort earlier this year with 63 participants and launched its sixth cohort with 196 registrants this fall. The network also held its first annual conference for program alumni, who are organizing against abortion travel bans, mobilizing their communities in support of abortion access, and volunteering with abortion funds.

ABORTION TRAVEL BANS

Anti-abortion extremists in Amarillo tried to create a law restricting out-of-state travel for abortion care. We provided strategy, messaging, and media support to local advocates, including Texas Abortion Advocacy Network alumni, who successfully blocked the city council from passing the travel ban. After months of local organizing, Amarillo voters resoundingly rejected the city’s abortion travel ban in the November election.

THE JACKSON FAMILY

After the Jackson family chose to give birth and treat their baby’s jaundice at home under the guidance of a midwife, their doctor unjustly reported it as abuse. Police subsequently invaded their home, forcibly took their newborn, and placed them on the child abuse registry. We intervened to help reunify the family and clear their names from the registry. We will continue to challenge anti-Black racism in reproductive health care and defend the right of all Texans to have children on their own terms.

SMART JUSTICE

Texas locks up more people than any other state and racism is evident at every stage of the criminal legal system. The ACLU of Texas is challenging systemic discrimination by working to reduce racial disparities and lower incarceration and arrest rates.



IMAGES Anthony Graves and ACLU of Texas staff member Nikki Luellen co-moderate a forum where Harris County district attorney candidates answer questions from community members.

“I asked for a court-appointed lawyer, but no lawyer had been appointed. I don’t know what I’m doing when I go into the courtroom. These are life decisions. I’m excited to be a voice for other people [on this issue].”

— SKYLOR JOHNSON
ACLU of Texas client

12 I don't know what I'm doing when I go
into the courtroom. These are life decisions

I'm excited to be a voice for other people

I am committed to this responsibility

13
Skylor

Skylor Johnson



HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Our locally elected district attorneys have the power to decide who faces criminal charges and who gets a second chance. During the primary race for district attorney in Harris County, the third-most-populous county in the United States, we surveyed and published candidates’ positions, hosted workshops with more than 100 attendees, and placed an op-ed in the Houston Chronicle by death row exoneree Anthony Graves about the importance of the role. We also organized a filled-to-capacity forum where Black and Brown-led groups questioned candidates and challenged them to commit to meaningful reforms.

COUNSEL AT FIRST APPEARANCE

Travis County was violating residents’ constitutional rights by denying them a lawyer at initial bail hearings. In response, we, alongside nearly 40 organizations, demanded immediate action in a letter to county officials. We also partnered to launch a court-watching program in which law students observed almost 700 magistration hearings over three months. Based on the findings, we released a report on the harms of inadequate legal counsel and filed a lawsuit on behalf of those jailed without representation. The Austin City Council subsequently passed a resolution supporting access to lawyers, and Travis County has committed funding to begin to access counsel at first appearance.

FORCED REMOVAL OF RELIGIOUS HEADWEAR

After mass arrests during pro-Palestine protests at The University of Texas at Austin, local law enforcement officials forced the detained individuals to remove their religious clothing. Partnering with the Austin chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, we sent a letter to the Travis County Sheriff’s Office urging it to protect the religious rights of those in custody. After meeting with the sheriff, we successfully pressured the county to revise its policy. With this victory, we remain committed to pushing for statewide reform to safeguard the religious rights of all people in detention in Texas.

VOTING RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Texas is one of the most difficult places in the country to vote — and state politicians continue to make voting even harder. The ACLU of Texas is working toward a future where registering to vote is easy, casting a ballot is simple and convenient, and historically disenfranchised communities can fully participate in the democratic process.

TOP Lucha libre legend Black Star Reynosa and his family pose in front of an ACLU of Texas mural painted by El Cimi that depicts the luchador calling on Houstonians to “lucha por tu voto.”
Credit: Right Time Solutions

BOTTOM ACLU of Texas election protection organizers provide voter education to Texans across the state.



ACLU of Texas staff and co-counsel challenge Texas' anti-voter law Senate Bill 1 in a six-week federal trial in San Antonio.



**VOTE YOUR
RIGHTS** ★

“I was thrown into this fight for voting rights and will keep swinging to ensure no one else has to face what I’ve endured for over six years: a political ploy where minority voting rights are under attack.”

— CRYSTAL MASON

Voting rights advocate and ACLU of Texas client

ELECTIONS

To help ensure that every eligible Texan could vote in the general election, the ACLU of Texas had eight organizers conducting voter education at more than 55 events across the state. In coalition, we trained hundreds of poll monitors and staffed the Election Protection Hotline to address urgent questions at polling sites. Our multilingual billboards in Dallas and San Antonio highlighted important issues on the ballot, while we continued to expand voting access for people in jail. Additionally, we connected nearly 40,000 Texans with voting resources through our English and Spanish election hubs, reached more than 7 million Texans with digital ads, and encouraged Houstonians to vote with a giant mural and street art campaign.

CRYSTAL MASON

The Texas Second Court of Appeals acquitted our client Crystal Mason, a Black mother of three from Fort Worth, who faced five years in prison for submitting a provisional ballot that was never counted. Her lengthy ordeal has gained international attention as an example of the state’s aggressive charges, especially against voters of color. Ms. Mason’s case is now under review by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

SENATE BILL 1

In a win for the organizations that help keep elections accessible, a federal district court struck down a provision of Senate Bill 1 that restricted crucial get-out-the-vote efforts. The ACLU of Texas and co-counsel filed a lawsuit in 2021 against the sweeping anti-voter law, which criminalizes civic participation and makes it exceedingly difficult for certain Texans to vote — especially voters whose primary language is not English, voters with disabilities, and voters who need to vote by mail. Last year, a district court ruled that the ID-matching provisions for mail ballots violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Our challenge to the law is currently on appeal.



DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS

INTERNSHIPS

We revamped our official internship program in May. In addition to working on meaningful assignments, interns at the ACLU of Texas have the unique opportunity to interact with other interns and staff across departments during their term. Over the summer, we received 397 applications and hosted 12 interns. This fall, 239 candidates applied and we hosted five interns.

STAFF INVESTMENTS

We remain committed to nurturing talent, fostering continuous learning, and empowering our staff in their career growth. Our total headcount reached 71 employees this summer, including interns and election protection organizers. Our permanent staff increased from 44 to 51 this fiscal year with no turnover as of this fall. We've also allocated funding for every staff member to pursue professional development opportunities.

DONOR SALONS

Over the past year, we've hosted donor salons in Austin, Dallas, Odessa, and San Antonio. These intimate gatherings have enabled our supporters to connect directly with ACLU of Texas leaders, legal and policy experts, and other advocates, thereby deepening their understanding of the urgent challenges facing our state. By connecting donors with the organization's critical work, the salons have catalyzed new support, driving both financial contributions and strengthening key partnerships that are essential to our work of defending the rights of all Texans.

IMAGES FROM TOP

Donors gather to connect with ACLU of Texas staff, leadership, and board members in Austin.

ACLU of Texas 2024 summer interns.





IMAGES FROM TOP

ACLU of Texas supporters gather for our annual meeting in San Antonio. Credit: Vanessa Velazquez

ACLU of Texas staff members Ashley Harris and Sarah Cruz join Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Maria Hinojosa for a panel discussion on voting and immigrants' rights. | Credit: Vanessa Velazquez

ANNUAL MEETING

The ACLU of Texas hosted its annual meeting in San Antonio with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Maria Hinojosa and San Antonio Poet Laureate Eddie Vega. Hinojosa also facilitated a panel with legal and policy experts from the affiliate about voting rights and immigrants' rights ahead of the general election. Attendees met fellow ACLU of Texas supporters and staff, screen-printed posters and picked up swag, and learned about how to help protect our democracy.

SOUTHERN COLLECTIVE

This year, the ACLU of Texas joined the ACLU's Southern Collective, a coalition of 13 affiliates working together to address challenges in the South rooted in the region's unique history of racial oppression and equally remarkable history of civil rights struggles and victories. By joining this collective, we gain shared opportunities for leadership training, capacity building, regional advocacy, key insights and strategy, as well as grants to support our work.



ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Social movements throughout U.S. history have used the arts to secure civil rights and civil liberties. The ACLU of Texas works with cultural leaders and institutions to build power, shape narratives, and advance our strategic advocacy across issue areas.

From 2022 to 2023, we piloted what would become our artist-in-residence program with Mathieu JN Baptiste, a Houston-based artist of Haitian ancestry. Baptiste worked to advance voting rights among historically disenfranchised Texans during two election cycles by painting a 28-by-24-foot mural in Houston's historic Third Ward and a portable mural in Gulfton, one of the city's most diverse immigrant neighborhoods.

This year, we launched our artist-in-residence program with Kill Joy, a Houston-based Filipino American street artist. Kill Joy worked to defend border and immigrants' rights at the State Capitol by activating more than 100 volunteers to create giant 15-foot puppets celebrating Texas' diverse immigrant communities. In the coming months, Kill Joy and her Kitchen Table Puppets & Press team will collaborate with the ACLU of Texas and local organizers to tour this educational spectacle along the border.

Learn more about the artist-in-residence program: aclutx.org/art



"Art has the ability to offer windows into more beautiful, more just, and more compassionate worlds." — KILL JOY



TOP Mathieu JN Baptiste unveils his voting rights mural in Houston's Third Ward alongside local business owners and ACLU of Texas Executive Director Oni K. Blair. Credit: Right Time Solutions

BOTTOM Kill Joy brings giant puppets to an immigrants' rights event in El Paso. Credit: Christian Toledo

Kill Joy and a volunteer with Kitchen Table Puppet & Press prepare one of the 15-foot puppets for an immigrants' rights rally in Austin. | Credit: Christopher Lee

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

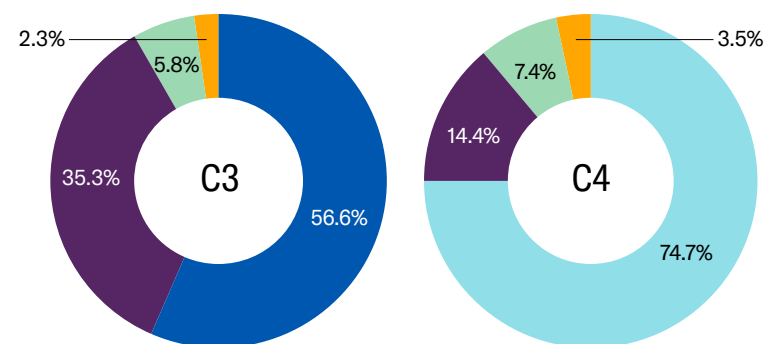
Texas is the country's second-most-populous state and we face some of the most egregious civil rights violations in the nation. The ACLU of Texas operates with just 51 staff members and constrained resources to work on these critical issues across the entire state. Despite these challenges, we remain one of the largest and most trusted civil rights organizations in the Lone Star state.

SUPPORT & REVENUE	C3	C4
■ Individuals & Leadership Gifts	56.6%	N/A
■ Memberships	N/A	74.7%
■ ACLU National & Foundation Grants	35.3%	14.4%
■ Revenue Share with National ACLU	5.8%	7.4%
■ Investment Income	2.3%	3.5%

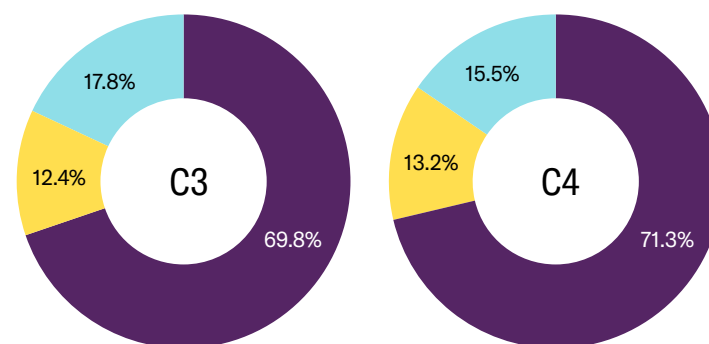
EXPENSES	C3	C4
■ Program	69.8%	71.3%
■ Fundraising	12.4%	13.2%
■ Management and General	17.8%	15.5%

FISCAL YEAR 2024 (APRIL 1, 2023—MARCH 31, 2024)

SUPPORT & REVENUE



EXPENSES





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 future 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. It 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. It 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 impact litigation.

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



GET INVOLVED WITH THE ACLU OF TEXAS

ACLU
Texas

ACLU of Texas staff. | Credit: Right Time Solutions

COVER IMAGE

Mural painted in the ACLU of Texas' Houston office by Kill Joy and Rebo of Kitchen Table Puppets & Press

REPORT DESIGN

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Jill Jaroff

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