

DEFENDING LIBERTY

HAND-IN-HAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



OUR MISSION & IDENTITY

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership organization that serves as an enduring guardian of justice, fairness, and freedom, working to protect civil liberties and advance equity for all.

ACLU-PA defends and promotes the fundamental principles and values protected by the constitutions of the United States and of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as by national, state, and local civil rights laws. For more than 100 years, the ACLU has sought in particular to protect and expand the freedoms of expression, belief and association; voting rights; the separation of church and state; the right to privacy, including reproductive freedom; due process of law, including the rights of the accused and of immigrants; limitations on the power of police; and the right to equal protection for all, including marginalized and historically disadvantaged individuals and

groups. In advancing these rights, ACLU-PA strives always to acknowledge and remedy the pervasive and persistent harms of systemic racism.

Integrating litigation, legislative and policy advocacy, organizing, and communications, ACLU-PA's staff and volunteers work both independently and in coalition with those most affected by the issues we address to ensure that threats to liberty and the civil rights of all persons in Pennsylvania are met with stark resistance as we progress toward a more genuine multiracial, multicultural democracy.

OUR VISION

We are working for a future where individuals and communities can thrive in the security of knowing that, regardless of who they are or what they believe, their civil liberties and civil rights are ensured, and that freedom, equality, equity, and justice are guaranteed for all.



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friend:

We find ourselves more than two years into this pandemic. In 2020, I remember some of my colleagues saying that this would blow over in a few weeks, and then we would be back to the office, back to “normal.” Well, here we are two and a half years later, and it is fair to ask: Will we ever be back in the office five days a week? Or back to normal? None of us could have predicted where we are today.

The last few years have caused us to reimagine a lot of things, including the way we work and find community with one another. We’ve had to pivot, adapt, be flexible, and provide grace for one another as we continue to make our way through these unprecedented times. We’ve had to be creative in the ways we connect with our members and supporters like you. But time and again, I’m shown that we’re a resilient bunch. As a practitioner

of gratitude, not a day goes by that I’m not grateful for our staff, board, clients, volunteers, members, and donors who make our work possible. All of you have stuck with us through thick and thin; your commitment is unwavering.

We could not have kept up the fight without you - members of our community and partners in the fight for justice for all. The threats we face are dire, but we are ready. In last year’s report, I mentioned we had just finalized our strategic plan to make us a stronger version of the ACLU of Pennsylvania. Now, one year in, the focus has been on execution and implementation. We’ve homed in on our priority issue areas—decarceration, police reform, voting rights—while allocating 20-30% of our time to respond to other emerging threats to reproductive rights, LGBTQ&T+ rights, immigrants’ rights, freedom of speech, and more.

The foundation of our strategic plan is to continue to build and sustain an equitable, antiracist organization that centers the voices and experiences of marginalized and directly impacted people and communities, while fostering an environment where all people feel valued, trusted, and respected. At the ACLU of Pennsylvania, we are committed to cultivating authentic belonging,



inclusion, diversity, and equity (ABIDE) and having a workforce and board of directors that reflect the populations that we serve, including, but not limited to, people of color, formerly incarcerated people, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ&T+ people.

The oppressive systems at the foundation of our nation, which have been in place for centuries, can only be undone with conscious effort, creative complementary tactics, and persistence. This is why we are committed to embedding ABIDE at every level of our organization. This includes our work in fundraising and moving towards a community-centered approach. It requires understanding where we can make the greatest impact and recognizing that we can't do it all. This work is not done in a silo! We rely

on robust partnerships with community organizers and other non-profits. It's important to lift up those voices, too.

In this issue, you'll see some of what it means to be a community-centered fundraising organization and a snapshot of the work we've undertaken this last year, while highlighting a few partners we lean on to get it done. That includes all that our members and donors do to advance our work toward a more just society. So, thank you for continuing to be a part of the intentional community we are building. We appreciate you!

In liberty,



Reggie Shuford
ACLU-PA Executive Director

Photo credit: Rick Urbanowski



FISCAL YEAR
HIGHLIGHTS
4.1.2021—3.31.2022

VOLUNTEERS

24

TRAINING SESSIONS

220

NEW VOLUNTEERS ONBOARDED

LEGAL

ACLU-PA RESPONDED TO

1,386

ELECTRONIC INTAKE REQUESTS

95

CASES ON DOCKET

2

U.S. SUPREME COURT CASES

22

PA SUPREME COURT CASES

32

AMICUS BRIEFS

112

COOPERATING
ATTORNEYS DONATED

9,500

HOURS OF THEIR TIME

What Does It Mean To Be A Community-Centered Fundraising Organization?

Here at the ACLU of Pennsylvania, we often reflect on the power philanthropy can hold. We cannot speak of this power without acknowledging how it can be used to perpetuate and deepen harm. During a time when our work is ever more critical, we believe that, through education and understanding, we can harness this power towards healing.

So, what does this mean in practice? This is a question we will continue to ask ourselves, and the answers will expand and evolve. To cultivate a culture of equity, we will continue to uplift and center the communities we serve by including their voices at the table, whether they be staff, members, or volunteers. We will continue to examine structural racism in our work, identify ways to reduce harm, and advance the conversation with all donors and funders. The goal? To push forward social justice and healing through philanthropy.

While we are making this effort as an organization, we are certainly not alone in this endeavor. There are others excelling at this work and giving us the framework for our own approach. Community-Centric Fundraising (CCF) is a movement by a group of professional fundraisers of color with the intent of evolving traditional fundraising practices to create more equity within the sector. Through frequent dialogue, education, and advocacy for social justice, they support professionals in working to implement the CCF 10 Core Principles:

1. Fundraising must be grounded in race, equity, and social justice.
2. Individual organizational missions are not as important as the collective community.
3. Nonprofits are generous with and mutually supportive of one another.
4. All who engage in strengthening the community are equally valued, whether volunteer, staff, donor, or board member.
5. Time is valued equally to money.
6. We treat donors as partners, and this means that we are transparent and occasionally have difficult conversations.
7. We foster a sense of belonging, not othering.
8. We promote the understanding that everyone (donors, staff, funders, board members, volunteers) personally benefits from engaging in the work of social justice – it's not just charity and compassion.
9. We see the work of social justice as holistic and transformative, not transactional.
10. We recognize that healing and liberation require a commitment to economic justice.

We have already begun infusing the above core principles in our daily work, and we will continue to explore our role in the CCF movement as we venture down this path. This includes working to educate our donors on the intersection of philanthropy and racial justice - the underpinning of all our work. It also includes examining the ways in which we can embody the core principles internally as an organization. More information on CCF can be found at communitycentricfundraising.org. If you have questions about our fundraising approach, please email Sarah Johnson, director of philanthropy at sjohnson@aclupa.org. ■

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

4.1.2021—3.31.2022

PROGRAMS

>300
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

PARTICIPATED IN
14
COALITIONS

4,216
ACTIONS TAKEN

LEGISLATIVE

960
BILLS TRACKED

STAFF MET WITH
73
LEGISLATORS

161
ADVOCATE ACADEMY
MEMBERS



YOUR IMPACT

It takes incredible resources to sustain this work. Your treasures, talents, time, and ties impact advancing civil liberties for all Pennsylvanians.

Thank you.

Join us in celebrating our collective impact as we continue to work together to ensure these rights for all.

FUNDRAISING

48,500

MEMBER-DONORS

400,000

SUPPORTERS
(EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS,
VOLUNTEERS, AND
MEMBER-DONORS)

128,091

GIFTS REALIZED
BETWEEN APRIL 1, 2021
AND MARCH 31, 2022

29

NEW DESILVER LEGACY
SOCIETY MEMBERS

SUPPORT

\$1.5M

IN FOUNDATIONAL
SUPPORT

\$2.5M

IN UNION

\$1M

ATTORNEY FEES

\$775K

GRANTS AWARDED

PRO BONO PARTNERS

Arnold & Porter

Blank Rome LLP

Dechert LLP

Faegre, Drinker, Biddle & Reath LLP

Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin &
Schiller LLC

Hogan Lovells

Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing, Feinberg &
Lin LLP

Langer, Grogan & Diver

LeVan Stapleton Segal Cochran LLC

Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp.

O'Brien Law Firm

Offit Kurman

Sara Jacobson

Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP

Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP

Troutman Pepper

University of Pennsylvania Law School

Wilmer Hale



DECARCERATION

The Long-Term Work of Winning Real Probation Reform

When the Pennsylvania General Assembly crafts legislation, lawmakers have an obligation to consider feedback from the people impacted by that issue.

If only it worked that way.

Since 2018, the ACLU of Pennsylvania has been advocating for legislative changes to the commonwealth's probation system. We've made great progress in convincing a bipartisan group of lawmakers that there are real problems with the existing system. Probation comes with dozens of conditions that people must follow that act as a maze of tripwires, inevitably sending many to jail. People on probation must meet with their probation officer on demand, even if they're in the middle of a work shift. They can't travel across state or even county lines without their probation officer's permission, regardless of the reason, whether it's for family or work or healthcare or any reason at all. No alcohol. No socializing with others with a criminal record. Curfews. Report every address change. Meet financial obligations to the state.

The conditions that people on probation must follow are so burdensome that, inevitably, many will fail and spend years or decades under legal supervision.

Despite this, the goal of passing meaningful probation reform legislation that will reduce mass incarceration has remained elusive.

It hasn't been due to a lack of trying. ACLU-PA has teamed up with numerous

organizations that are led by and serve people who have had direct experience with the criminal legal system, including Straight Ahead (the lobbying arm of the Abolitionist Law Center), Dignity and Power Now, and Color of Change.

The Legislature has considered several bills that would rewrite probation rules. But those bills fall woefully short of what is needed. In fact, a bill that passed the state Senate in 2021 would actually make probation worse. That's why more than 50 organizations came out in opposition to it.

ACLU-PA and our partners are advocating for real reforms to the probation system:

- Caps on how long a person can be kept on probation, as most states do;
- An end to the practice of "stack" and "split" probation sentences, in

ACLU-PA and
our partners are
advocating for real
reforms to the
probation system.



Photo credit: Andy Hoover

which a person serves one sentence consecutively after another and can be on probation even after a period of incarceration and parole supervision;

- Keeping people out of jail for violations of technical probation rules that are not new crimes.

We have joined our partners in lobbying legislators, telling them that the legislation under consideration would have had no impact on those who were formerly on probation. The Defender Association of Philadelphia has also noted that most of their clients would not be helped by the Senate's bill.

Here's the thing about how we do this work: we're not here for a quick win. We're not going to disingenuously claim victory for an initiative that has no real impact. ACLU-PA and our partners are here for the long haul. And even if we lose in the short term, we always have our eyes on the long-term goal. We're creating the conditions today to win tomorrow.

We have multiple tools in our toolbox. In October 2021, ACLU-PA filed a class action lawsuit against Montgomery County for unlawfully keeping people in jail for violations of probation. People were incarcerated for months before they had a chance for their cases to be heard and for the government to prove its charges against them. As a routine practice, Montgomery County courts jailed nearly everyone accused of probation violations, disrupting lives, separating people from their families, their livelihoods, and their homes, without providing the constitutionally required due process hearings that protect people from government overreach.

The goal here isn't merely to win in Montgomery County. ACLU-PA wants every county in the commonwealth to be on notice that probation departments and courts have a duty to the Constitution and an obligation to treat people fairly and humanely in the criminal legal system. ■

Your Freedom, At a Cost

“It shouldn’t require a class-action lawsuit to ensure that people get a fair shake at bail hearings in Lancaster County.”

Michelle Batt of Lancaster Bail Fund and Jeff Hawkes of the Dismantling Racism Committee of the Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster wrote these words in an op-ed published in LNP | Lancasteronline.com after the ACLU of Pennsylvania filed *H.C., et al. v. Chudzik, et al.* In the lawsuit, seven people challenged their detentions at Lancaster County Prison. Presumed innocent, they were only there because they could not afford the cash bail necessary to purchase their freedom.

During our investigation, we found that magisterial district judges, or MDJs, in Lancaster County typically do not consider a person’s ability to pay when issuing cash bail orders, in violation of both the U.S. Constitution and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Rules of Criminal Procedure. Preliminary arraignments - the hearings where MDJs consider whether or not to order a person’s release before their criminal trial - typically last minutes, and the accused people don’t even have a defense attorney present to represent them.

ACLU-PA’s lawsuit asked the federal court to order the county to provide representation to people at these arraignment hearings and asked the Lancaster County Prison to stop detaining people when MDJs issue bail orders that don’t meet the requirements of the Constitution.

But here’s the thing: the Lancaster Bail Fund and numerous community partners advocated for these same changes for more than a year. As Michelle and Jeff tell it, “We’ve requested meetings, addressed the county prison board and packed the board’s meeting room with concerned citizens.

“Our efforts went nowhere.”

This issue is not isolated to Lancaster County. Every day in Pennsylvania, more than 30,000 people are

held in the commonwealth’s county jails. A majority of them have not been convicted of a crime, and many of them are detained because they cannot afford their cash bail.

In December 2021, ACLU-PA released a new report, *Broken Rules: How Pennsylvania Courts Use Cash Bail to Incarcerate People Before Trial*. The report found that, in 2016-17, cash bail was the most common form of bail ordered in Pennsylvania, that a majority of people could not afford to post their bail, and that courts ordered cash bail more frequently and in higher amounts for Black defendants.

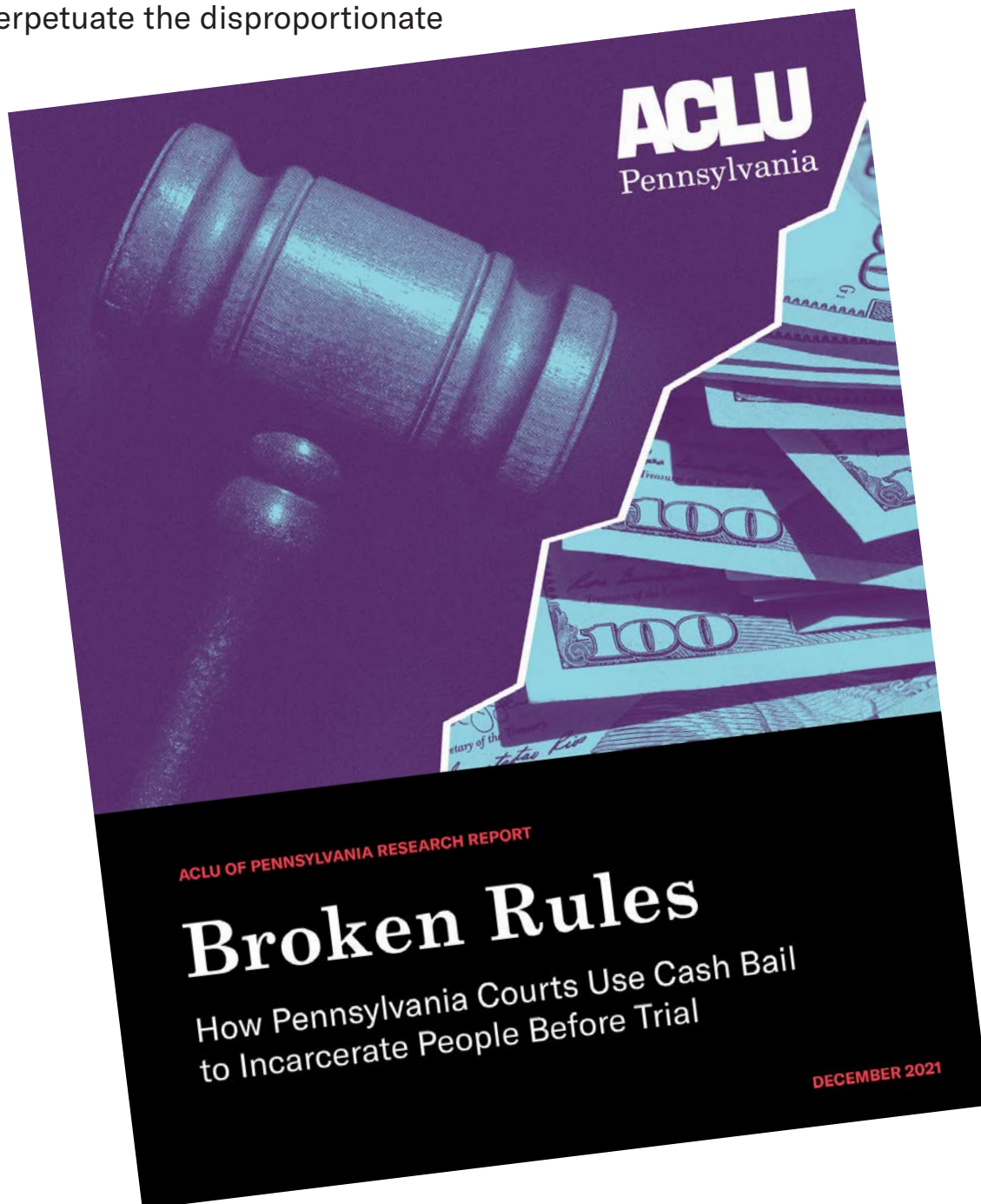
Cash bail was
never meant to
be a mechanism
for keeping
people in jail.

This is how mass incarceration works; it's structural racism in action.

Cash bail was never meant to be a mechanism for keeping people in jail. It was intended to incentivize people to return for their court dates. When courts order people to pay bail amounts that they cannot afford, they are undermining the right to due process and the presumption of innocence. And when MDJs order Black people to pay cash bail more frequently and in higher amounts than white people, they perpetuate the disproportionate

impact on Black people that plagues our criminal legal system.

Michelle and Jeff were right: it shouldn't take a lawsuit to bring these courts in line with the Constitution and the rules MDJs are supposed to follow. That's the least that we should expect from them. But we know that America's values on paper don't always match its behavior. So, the ACLU does what is necessary to demand that the government live up to its own stated values. ■



POLICE REFORM

Changing policing is a generational struggle

When ACLU-PA identified policing as one of our priority issues in our 2021-24 strategic framework, we were under no illusions that there would be a quick fix to solving the problems with law enforcement in Pennsylvania. Eradicating abusive, racist policing won't happen by 2024; it will be the work of a generation.

The ACLU's goal is to shrink the shadow of police in our daily lives. As a society, we ask the police to do too much. There is a wide range of duties where police are not necessary, from aiding unhoused people to intervention for people with substance use disorders or mental health crises to traffic control. When we give responsibilities better suited for other trained professionals to an entity with a penchant for violence and a history of abusing Black, brown, and LGBTQ&T people, it leads to the widespread belief that officers are not partners, but occupiers of our neighborhoods.

Since 2011, ACLU-PA has been party to enforcing a settlement against the

city of Philadelphia over the racist, unconstitutional practice of stop-and-frisk by the Philadelphia Police Department. When we filed the lawsuit in 2010 on behalf of eight Black and Latino men, Philly had stopped more than a quarter of a million pedestrians the year before, and 72 percent of them were Black. Less than nine percent of those stops led to an arrest.

Fast forward ten years, and there has been a significant decrease in the actual number

of illegal stops and frisks. Nevertheless, racial disparities persist among those who are stopped, and the percentage of both stops and frisks that are illegal—that is, those that occur without any suspicion that the person may have committed a crime—remains stubbornly high. Nearly half of the stops were for minor, quality-of-life offenses, such as open containers of alcohol, littering, spitting, gambling, and open smoking of marijuana,

and those stops were even more racially disparate than stops for more serious offenses.

Even with the number of stops dropping, the illegal stops still affect thousands of innocent Philadelphians every year. That's a traumatic experience. For people on

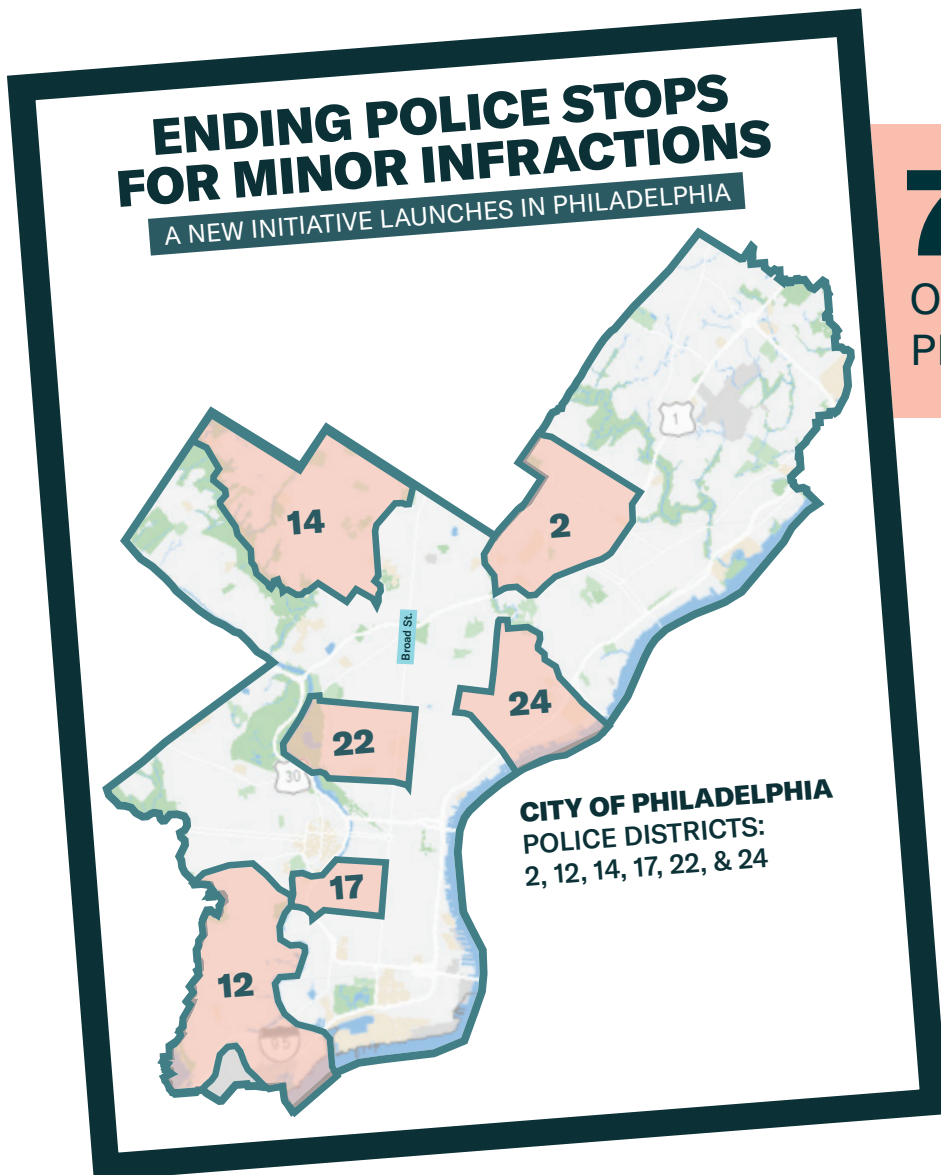
Even with the number of stops dropping, the illegal stops still affect thousands of innocent Philadelphians every year.

probation or parole or who have bench warrants, including for minor issues like failure to pay fines, the stakes are massive. A minor violation can mean days, weeks, or even months in jail waiting for their case to be resolved.

So, in August 2021, the city agreed to a new pilot program in which police would cease detaining people for a long list of minor offenses. Instead, they would ask them to end the activity and, if applicable,

to move along. The program launched first in one police district in Northwest Philly, where, by all reports, it ran smoothly. In May, it expanded to five more districts throughout the city.

The ultimate goal is for this practice to go citywide. This matters because it is a disruption of one of the ways in which people enter the criminal legal system. It's one program in one city but illustrates what the generational struggle looks like. ■



72%

OF STOPPED PEDESTRIANS IN PHILADELPHIA WERE BLACK.

When police disrupt children's education

The many ways in which policing impacts our lives are almost incalculable. Law enforcement can even interfere with students' opportunity to get a quality education, especially if those students are Black and/or have disabilities.

After high-profile, tragic school shootings, education leaders are often pressed to "harden" schools, which is shorthand

for creating security states in school buildings.

The reflex is understandable; we all want students attending schools in a safe environment.

However, research shows that the presence of police in schools provides no measurable deterrence against school shootings, nor does it decrease lower-

level violence, like fights. Most damning, though, is that students in schools with a full-time police presence are far more likely to be arrested on campus than students without police in the building. Those students are more likely to be Black or have disabilities, and that interaction with law enforcement increases the

likelihood that those students will not earn their high school diploma. The record of a student's arrest can follow them for years, even decades, making it harder to find employment, housing, and more.

In January, ACLU-PA released a new report, *Student Arrests in Allegheny County: The Need for Transparency and Accountability*, that analyzed in-school arrest data in public schools in Allegheny County in 2018-19. What our team found was disturbing. Public school students in Allegheny County were more than twice as likely as students elsewhere in

Pennsylvania to be arrested on campus and more than three times as likely as students in Philadelphia, the only county in the state that is larger than Allegheny. Like past research, the ACLU-PA report found that those students arrested were disproportionately Black or had disabilities. And, by comparing data reported by school districts to the

state and federal government with data in the county court system, the analysis showed that numerous districts failed to report their in-school arrests, as required by law.

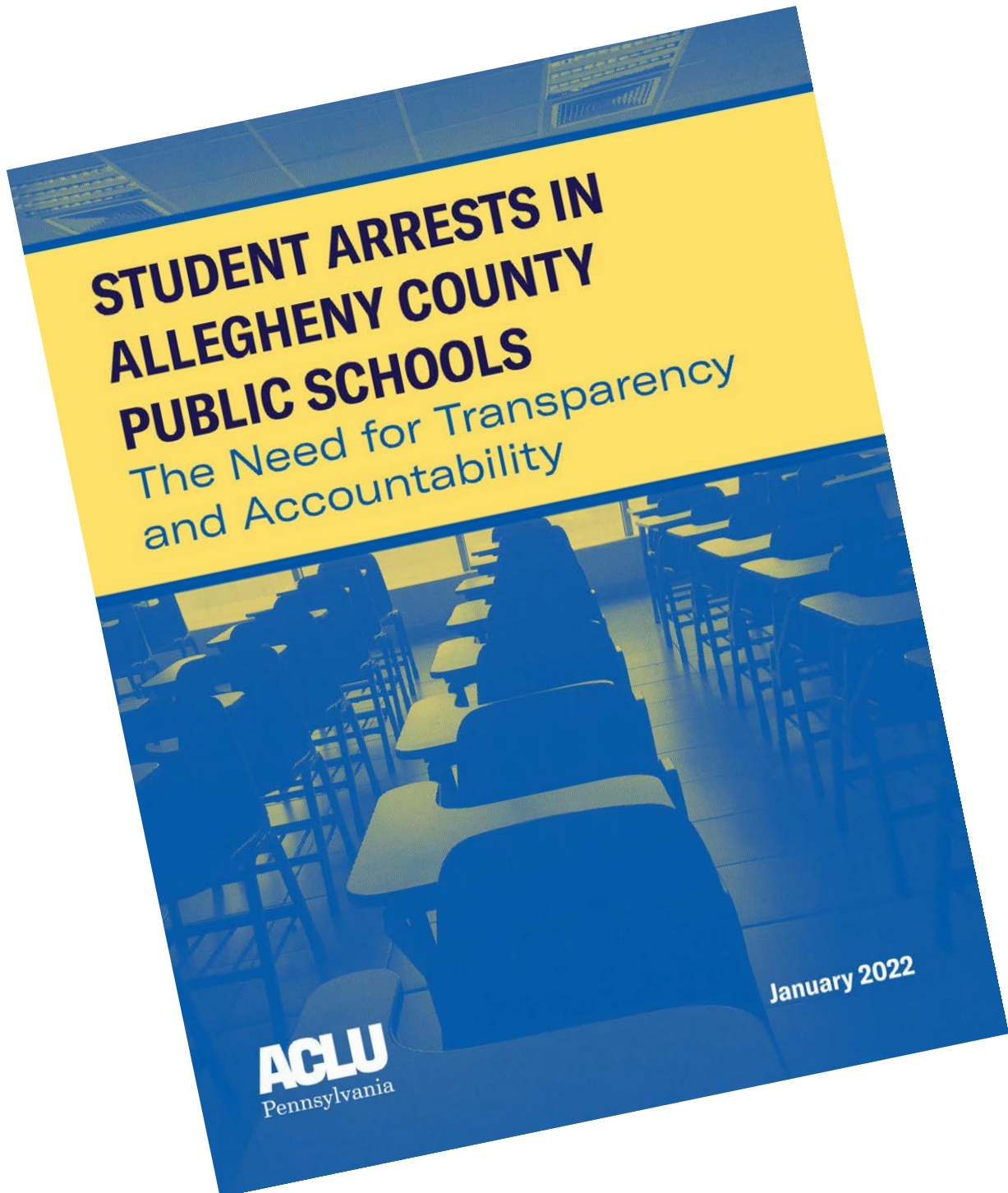
Analyzing data is an important step toward policy change. By producing a

Research shows that the presence of police in schools provides no measurable deterrence against school shootings, nor does it decrease lower-level violence, like fights.

report like this, ACLU-PA and our partners can shatter the myth that school-based police are a net positive for students in their pursuit of education and energize students, parents, and school leaders to create real, positive change. This particular report was supported by funding from the FISA Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and the Pittsburgh Foundation.

The history of policing in this country is

one of abuse and persecution, starting with the slave patrols. Changing it will take a broad-based, often local, effort, and we are grateful for our many partners in this work, including the Alliance for Police Accountability, Black Girls Equity Alliance, 1Hood Media, POWER, and Take Action Mon Valley, to name a few. ACLU-PA is dedicated to doing our part; this is where change starts. ■



VOTING RIGHTS

Democracy on the Brink

It's been said that American democracy didn't start to fulfill its promise until 1965. The passage of the Voting Rights Act began a national reckoning with the disenfranchisement of Black voters and gave the promise of the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments real teeth.

In some ways, democracy in the United States has never been stronger. More people voted in the 2020 general election than in any previous election.

Online voter registration is a 21st-century innovation that makes registering and changing your registration easy. Vote-by-mail, sometimes known as no-excuse absentee balloting, fits our modern lives. Early voting and Election Day voter registration are relatively recent improvements to the process. Access for non-English speakers and disabled people continues to evolve in ways that did not exist decades ago, ensuring their ability to cast their vote.

And yet...

Democracy in America also appears to be teetering on the brink. Our system of free and fair elections depends upon defeated candidates accepting their losses. The horrific images at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, showed that there were people unwilling to acknowledge the

legitimate winner of the 2020 election and would even resort to orchestrated violence against their own government over their grievance. Elected officials in the highest offices, including some from Pennsylvania, were part of the effort to overturn a legitimate election.

January 6 wasn't the end. Far from it. Election deniers are positioning themselves as judges of elections and poll watchers. Fervent conspiracy theorists in some Pennsylvania counties undertook what they described as "audits" of the

January 6
wasn't the end.
Far from it.

2020 election, going door-to-door to survey voters and using research methods that would lead any academic to laugh them out of the classroom. And, while the ACLU is proudly non-partisan, the

truth is that Republican state senators have attempted their own sham election review of the 2020 general election and the 2021 primary election, in which they want to capture the personally identifying information of every registered voter in the commonwealth. Their boondoggle was met with resistance in court, including by the ACLU of Pennsylvania, representing eight voters and our friends at Common Cause Pa., League of Women Voters of Pa., and Make The Road Pa.

Where does all of this leave the ACLU? What is our role in this fight? National ACLU is in the process of creating a multi-year infrastructure to defend democracy and has identified 16 battleground states,

including Pennsylvania, where the politics are fraught enough that the results of a legitimate election could be undermined and maybe even overturned unless the election deniers face fierce intervention.

To that end, ACLU-PA is building our own democracy defense campaign. We're hiring a campaign director, which is a new position, and potentially shifting the work priorities of existing staff to include more time spent on protecting the right to vote.

For two decades, ACLU-PA has been a part of the wider effort of election protection. That work takes a village, and we have long collaborated with numerous fellow advocates working toward the protection of the right to vote, including Common Cause and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Our friends at Make The Road, Ceiba, and CASA lead the way on helping Spanish-speaking voters. Disability Rights Pennsylvania is a trusted partner in protecting the franchise for disabled people. All Voting Is Local energizes and assists groups who are engaging with their county boards of elections. Many of these organizations come together under the umbrella coalition Keystone Votes, led by Pennsylvania Voice. ACLU-PA joins in collaboration with all of them.

In the last year alone, we've successfully delayed the state Senate's sham election review. Representing five voters, we successfully challenged the disqualification of mail ballots in Lehigh County in the 2021 election after eligible voters returned their ballots by the deadline but simply forgot to handwrite a



Photo credit: ACLU

date on their return envelope. That case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court before we emerged victorious.

Our advocacy team was part of the effort to oppose legislation that would have implemented new voter ID requirements, earlier registration and absentee voting deadlines, and onerous signature-matching mandates for mail-in voters, a measure that was ultimately vetoed by Governor Wolf. And the ACLU-PA team is recognizing the reality that more of our staff time has to be dedicated to educating voters and organizing activists to be the counter voice to election deniers.

Throughout our country's history, the defense and expansion of democracy has always been a struggle that has required the energy of normal, often-unnamed Americans who cherish the best of what America can be. Today is no different. We're in the struggle with you, hand-in-hand. ■

ABORTION ACCESS

Abortion is healthcare

Ignoring 49 years of precedent, the United States Supreme Court destabilized and severely disrupted reproductive healthcare systems throughout the country, including in Pennsylvania, when it ruled in June that the Constitution does not guarantee the right to have an abortion.

This ruling was demoralizing but not entirely surprising, as anti-abortion extremists have been working toward this day for decades. Nevertheless, the landscape for abortion access changed overnight, as states rushed to ban or restrict abortion. While the procedure remains legal in Pennsylvania, bans in other states have had a spillover effect here, as patients travel to states like ours where they can access abortion care.

In January, ACLU-PA joined several abortion access advocates in creating the coalition Pennsylvania for Abortion Liberation+. Our partners in this effort are Keystone Progress Education Fund, The Women's Centers, and the Abortion Liberation Fund of Pennsylvania. We

envision a world in which a person who wants to have an abortion can get one, regardless of their income, where they live, or who they are. We approach this work through a racial equity lens, recognizing that abortion restrictions - like so much of the U.S. healthcare system - disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.

For too long, women and people who have abortions have been unfairly stigmatized and shamed. That has to change, and that's part of our long-term work. We must change the conversation about abortion.

Protecting access to abortion and ultimately winning back these rights will be a comprehensive, years-long effort. Extremist, anti-abortion politicians have to be challenged everywhere they are, including at

the ballot box. Lawyers will have to do heavy lifting to defend what we still have and also use the law to expand abortion access and rights. Clinics and patients will need financial and moral support. And we need to build a culture where abortion is recognized for exactly what it is - an essential part of reproductive healthcare, personal autonomy and liberty.

We envision a world in which a person who wants to have an abortion can get one, regardless of their income, where they live, or who they are.

When ACLU-PA adopted our three-year strategic plan in 2021, we prioritized decarceration, voting rights, and policing, but we also understood that we had to give ourselves flexibility to respond to emerging issues. That’s why we explicitly stated that 20-30% of our time and resources would be dedicated to civil liberties issues beyond the three identified priorities. Our investment into protecting and expanding abortion access falls into that category.

And, much to our chagrin, there is now greater overlap between abortion access and the criminal legal system.

On the day of the Supreme Court’s decision, national ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero told a nationwide gathering of staff, “We’re going to win these rights back. I might not be here for it, but the ACLU will be.” However long the struggle takes, we are in it to win it. ■



Photo credit: ACLU

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friend of the ACLU-PA:

The 2021-2022 fiscal year saw the ACLU of Pennsylvania once again rise to a variety of challenges, whether from the lingering pandemic or from relentless and varied challenges to our civil liberties. I could not be more grateful to our members and contributors for their steadfast support.

As you know, the presidential election of 2016 triggered an enormous upsurge in support for our work, allowing an unprecedented increase in staff size and the corresponding expansion of our efforts over the following four years. Some of us feared the election results in 2020 might lead to complacency, a reduction in support, and a resulting need to cut back. But not so. **You have stood with us and recognized that challenges to freedom and equality remain.** Our staff and its work continue to expand and diversify. My heartfelt thanks go out to all of our supporters – the volunteers, the board members and chapter leaders, the donors and other funders, and especially our amazing staff, for keeping up the fight. There is no other organization like the ACLU, which stands for the full panoply of personal rights and the need to defend them for all. Your steadfast and continuing membership and support mean so much to the many Pennsylvanians who need our



Photo provided by
Peter Goldberger

assistance in defending their rights.

The heartbreaking decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the constitutional right to abortion only underscores the critical importance of work at the state and local levels. In the past year, ACLU-PA argued more than 20 cases at the state

Supreme Court. Our efforts in Harrisburg with the Legislature and the governor have been critical. Public education and organizing are ongoing, often with partner organizations at the grassroots level, on issues ranging from voting rights to LGBTQ&T+ equality, reproductive choice, First Amendment rights, criminal legal reform and decarceration, and police misconduct.

The board of directors will continue to do all we can to support the staff in advancing the fight for civil liberties, and we know you will do the same with your contributions and volunteering. While adhering to our strict nonpartisan stance, we will fight for the right of every eligible Pennsylvanian to vote without interference and to have their vote counted. We will encourage everyone to vote as if their rights depend on it, perhaps now more than ever. Visit us online to find out the many ways you can stay involved. And thanks again for standing with us.

Peter Goldberger

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Goldberger".

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ACLU-PA

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JOIN ADVOCATE ACADEMY

The legislative department is recruiting for our Advocate Academy — a virtual training program that will help you become a stronger, smarter, and savvier advocate on behalf of civil liberties. This training helps supporters build their advocacy skills and have opportunities to deepen their policy knowledge through issue briefings. Email Policy and Engagement Advocate Rebecca Cusumano-Seidel at rcusumano-seidel@aclupa.org for more information.

VOLUNTEER

Donate your time and join the fight for civil liberties by volunteering at an ACLU regional office or chapter near you! For more information, visit www.aclupa.org/volunteer.



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