

# ACLU NEWS

American Civil Liberties Union of New Hampshire SPRING 2020



## IT'S ELECTION SEASON: MEET THE ACLU VOTER

Elections directly impact our civil rights. From the priorities set by the White House, to the bills introduced by your local representative, to the prosecutorial decisions made by your county attorney. That's why ACLU Voters are making their voices heard this election season.

**ACLU VOTER**  
**2020**

Our *Rights for All* Campaign recently concluded with the holding of the New Hampshire primary. This campaign was the first of its kind for the ACLU of NH, and we were blown away by the results. Hundreds of people signed up for the first time to volunteer with us, and thousands of Granite Staters pledged to vote like their

rights depend on it. Thanks to our volunteers, called ACLU Voters, presidential candidates are on the record committing to repealing the Hyde Amendment, reducing mass incarceration by fifty percent, ending the use of ICE detainers, and more.

And those issues drove local and national headlines. An ACLU Voter's question to a presidential candidate about third gender markers on government-issued IDs made national headlines. We saw candidates change their position in direct response to ACLU Voter questions and the press coverage that followed. We thank every single volunteer who made known this primary season that they vote with civil rights in mind.

The presidential primary may be over in New Hampshire, but election season is just beginning. We are excited to announce the *2020 ACLU Voter* Campaign, focused on making civil rights a prominent part of the New Hampshire gubernatorial election. ACLU Voters will be talking to gubernatorial candidates and securing commitments on issues like transgender lived equality, criminal justice reform, and voting rights.

This November, all 400 representatives of the state's House of Representatives, all 24 state senators, all 10 county attorneys, and all 5 executive councilors are up for re-election—and every single one of them has a role in protecting civil rights in the Granite State. We are training voters to engage their local candidates about their most pressing civil rights issues.

If you are running for office or know someone who is, expect to meet ACLU Voters on the campaign trail. And after election results are in, ACLU voters will hold their newly elected officials accountable to their commitments to protect and defend civil rights.



# ACLU

New Hampshire

18 Low Avenue, Concord  
603-225-3080

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## 2020 BILL OF RIGHTS RECEPTION

The ACLU of NH will be celebrating this year's recipients of the annual Bill of Rights Award on Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. These recipients, along with other prominent advocates, will be honored for their leadership, commitment and impact on civil rights in New Hampshire. This year's benefit, our 34th, has a new date, a new format — cocktail reception — and a new location — the Hilton Double Tree Hotel in Manchester. We hope to see you there!

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As the First-in-the-Nation state recovers from the upheaval of the primary season, the ACLU of NH continues to confront head on the persistent threats to our democratic ideals. Through litigation, advocacy, and organizing, we are focusing all of our organizational resources on defending fundamental rights and moving our freedoms forward.

With the start of the legislative session last month, many of our current efforts are centered at the statehouse, pushing for criminal justice reform, protecting reproductive rights, and eliminating gerrymandering. We are in the courthouse on multiple issues, such as standing up for student voting rights and immigrants' rights. And, we are engaging impacted communities throughout the state through two new organizers that we've brought onto the team.

As our Smart Justice organizer, Joseph Lascaze is meeting and coordinating with Granite Staters who have been impacted by mass incarceration. Our new

Racial Justice organizer, Jordan Thompson, is building a critical program that will mobilize young people of color to advocate for policy reforms that directly impact their community. Together, their work will help ensure that the ACLU of NH's advocacy is driven by the experiences of those most directly impacted by the laws and policies we seek to transform.

And the need for transformation is urgent. Here in New Hampshire, the challenges are numerous, such as attacks on our reproductive freedoms, racism that permeates our institutions and deepens inequality, and inhumane immigration policies that separate families and keep over one hundred immigrants behind bars.

We are grateful for your support and your partnership which is critical to making positive change in the Granite State.

Devon Chaffee  
Executive Director

## FIGHTING FOR TRANSGENDER LIVED EQUALITY

We are looking forward to another productive legislative session advancing transgender lived equality in New Hampshire. Our top legislative priority is passing House Bill 1577, which would allow transgender people born in New Hampshire to easily amend their birth records. The current procedure is antiquated and discriminatory, asking transgender individuals to go before a judge for an undefined (and offensively titled) process called a 'court ordered sex change.' In the past, these requests have been denied.

Legislation to allow medical professionals to attest to change of sex on birth records was passed by both legislative chambers in 2019, but was subsequently vetoed by the governor. Getting this legislation passed this session is critical because, after passage of the drivers' license bill in 2019 that allows Granite State residents to use an "X" on their license, the state is now issuing inconsistent identification documents.

This session, we are supporting legislation that will: accommodate non-binary students in public schools, make NH's adoption laws more inclusive, and make pre-exposure HIV prophylaxis more accessible. Also this

session, we are opposing two bills—House Bill 1251 and Senate Bill 480—that would force students, cisgender or transgender, to submit to invasive medical testing if it is suggested that they may have an unfair advantage in competition.

To help advocates get geared up for the session, the ACLU of NH's Trans Justice program is bringing back its Advocacy Academy on Gender Identity for a second year. This program is a one-day workshop designed to help better center people in their advocacy, learn to tell impactful stories, and talk about the issues at hand this legislative session.



## AT THE STATEHOUSE



This session, we are also championing legislation to protect privacy, standing in solidarity with sex workers, advocating for juvenile justice, and continuing the bipartisan effort to achieve nonpartisan redistricting in New Hampshire.

It is another busy legislative session at the New Hampshire statehouse. We are thrilled by the continued momentum behind criminal justice reform, with more than two dozen bills introduced on the issue. Particularly exciting, we are supporting a bill to reduce drivers' license suspensions for non-driving related reasons and multiple bills that would unwind the excessive drug sentencing laws brought about by the failed War on Drugs.

Put your hands in the air for reproductive rights this session! We are rallying with our coalition partners to defeat five bills aimed at restricting reproductive rights, and are proud to be working with Planned Parenthood on legislation regarding insurance coverage for abortion services. New Hampshire has a strong record on reproductive rights, and we intend to keep it that way.

## INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PRISON, REFORMING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

When it comes to criminal justice reform in New Hampshire, our Campaign for Smart Justice has laced up its gloves and taken the lead in the fight to end mass incarceration. We are building new partnerships in pursuit of innovative ways to improve re-entry and advocate for further legislative reforms, including sentencing reform.

Joseph Lascaze, ACLU of NH's Smart Justice organizer, set about this work from day one on the job. In his first weeks, Joseph worked with directly impacted people to address the challenge of transportation for people re-entering their communities. With the help of Lyft and #cut50, he was able to establish a ride-share initiative to provide formerly incarcerated individuals transportation to employment, educational pursuits, and rehabilitative treatment centers.

The ACLU of NH is also excited about our growing collaboration with the New Hampshire Department of Corrections. We are eager about an effort we initiated with them to launch a peer-to-peer mentoring program for people who are about to leave prison and re-enter their communities. This type of program has the potential to positively impact social and behavioral outcomes and lead to a lower recidivism rate.



Joseph Lascaze testifying before a House committee.

One of our Smart Justice Campaign's top priorities is empowering directly and indirectly impacted individuals to advocate for themselves. Joseph, a former incarcerated inmate of the New Hampshire state prison, was recently invited inside the prison to meet with the prison's Resident Communication Committee (RCC). The goal of this collaborative effort is for the RCC to improve the prison system from within.



**Celebrating and advocating for reproductive freedoms on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with Planned Parenthood, Equality Health Center & Loving Health Center.**

## MORE RESTRICTIVE IMMIGRATION RULES

Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration to impose new restrictions on poor immigrants seeking a green card or visas. The Court permitted these controversial public charge rules to go forward while the lower courts sort out legal challenges against them.

Under this policy change, the government is able to deny an immigrant’s application if the person is determined to be dependent on public assistance, such as Medicaid, food stamps, Section 8 Housing or other safety net programs. Moreover, it radically expands the definition of the public charge to include “any immigrant who simply receives one or more public benefit.” The new rules also direct that certain circumstances be weighted negatively on an application, such as having an income of less than 125% of the federal poverty level, being younger than 18 or older than 60, evaluating family size, demonstrating English language proficiency, and health—particularly if an immigrant’s ongoing medical care is not covered by private insurance or private funds.

This new rule needlessly harms immigrant families, including women, children, and those with disabilities. The policy is another way that this administrations is disrupting decades of established immigration policy and would impose harsh and unnecessary discrimination and exclusions on individuals who are otherwise eligible for entry or change of status. The ACLU actively opposed this rule change and will seek every opportunity to permanently stop it.

