



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2023

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A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DEAR ACLU OF ALABAMA SUPPORTER:

In the wake of the country experiencing political unrest and superimposed threats to our rights and freedom, we are working collectively to build the state, region, and nation we want to see.

For the ACLU of Alabama, 2022 has been a year of growth in our office and within our coalitions. Internally, our team and capacity has expanded to accommodate 15 full-time staff members, and externally, our collaborative efforts with other Alabama organizations grow stronger daily. We are more robust, effective, and present as a unified front when facing these increasingly unending attacks against our rights.

This year, in collaboration with our partners, we managed a voter protection hotline, fought for fairer districting for voters in historically

disenfranchised Alabama districts, and opposed the construction of more prisons in Alabama. We also committed to striving to guarantee voting rights for all Alabamians, supporting the reform of Alabama's criminal legal system, and persisting in regaining reproductive freedom statewide.

Together, we're fighting for a more just and equitable Alabama, and we hope to have your continued support as we move onward in this work.

In solidarity,



JATAUNE BOSBY GILCHRIST

Executive Director

OUR TEAM

STAFF

Senior Leadership Team

JaTaune Bosby Gilchrist, *Executive Director*

A.J. Reese, *Director of Finance and Operations*

Tish Gotell Faulks, *Legal Director*

Dillon Nettles, *Policy and Advocacy Director*

Jose Vazquez, *Communications Director*

Communications

Jasmine Peeples, *Digital Media Strategist*

Adam Muhlendorf, *Media Strategist*

Beth Shelburne, *Investigative Reporter*

Development

Elizabeth Shannon, *Development Director*

Alysheia Shaw-Dansby, *Donor and Brand Strategist*

Finance and Operations

Kiesha Favor, *Operations Administrator*

Teresa Galloway, *Accounting Clerk*

Legal

Alison Mollman, *Senior Counsel*

Nichelle Cunningham, *Paralegal*

Organizing

Stef Bernal-Martinez, *Organizing Director*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kira Fonteneau, *President*

Mark Lester, *Immediate Past President*

Glory McLaughlin, *Vice President*

Evan Milligan, *Secretary*

Anil Mujumdar, *Treasurer/Nat'l Rep*

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Monique Okoye

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Finance & Operations Director



TISH GOTELL FAULKS
Legal Director



DILLON NETTLES
Policy & Advocacy Director



STEF BERNAL-MARTINEZ
Organizing Director



ELIZABETH SHANNON
Development Director



ALYSHEA SHAW-DANSBY
Donor and Brand Strategist



KIESHA FAVOR
Operations Administrator



TERESA GALLOWAY
Accounting Clerk



JASMINE PEEPLES
Digital Media Strategist



BETH SHELBURNE
Investigative Reporter

OFFICE UPDATES

LEGAL TEAM EXPANSION



ALISON MOLLMAN
Senior Counsel

Alison Mollman graduated in 2012 from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, where she participated in the death penalty clinic and juvenile hall outreach. Before joining our staff at the ACLU of Alabama, Alison worked as a staff attorney at the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) for ten years. Alison is the 2012 winner of the prestigious Brian M. Sax Prize for Excellence in Clinical Advocacy and the Matthew Shepard Gold Scholarship recipient at the University of Iowa.



NICHELLE CUNNINGHAM
Paralegal

Before joining our team, Nichelle Cunningham provided para-professional support for the legal team at the Atlanta-based firm Kessler & Solomiany, LLC. Nichelle drafted pleadings, managed electronic filings, scheduled depositions and mediations, and supported attorneys preparing for trials and hearings for high-income family law matters.

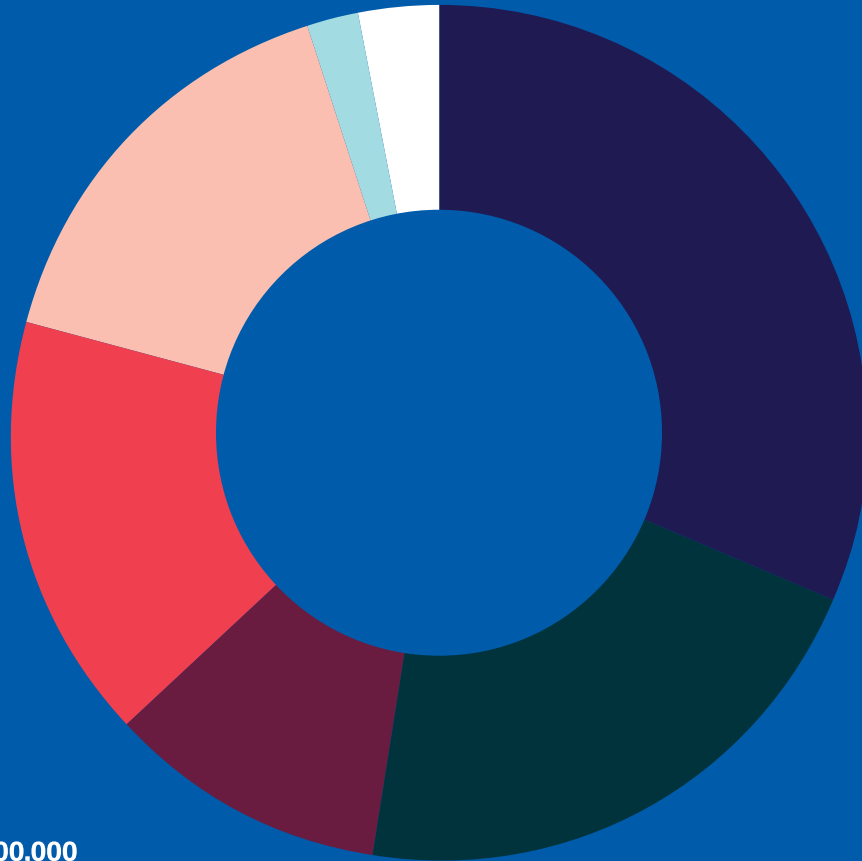
WELCOMING JOSE VAZQUEZ OUR NEW COMMS DIRECTOR



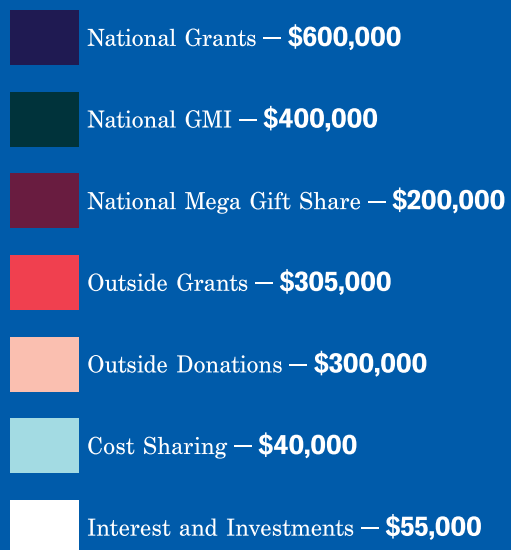
JOSE VAZQUEZ
Communications Director

Jose Vazquez has come to our team with years of marketing and communications experience. Before joining, Jose graduated with a Master of Arts from Columbia University, studying monuments as tools for civic engagement. Jose has also worked in Alabama as Digital Marketing Manager for the Equal Justice Initiative and as President of Montgomery Pride United. Prior to working at EJI, Jose led Social Impact Marketing at Google. Jose was recognized in The Advocate Magazine's 2020 List of Pride Champions and continues to work with LGBTQ+ groups across the South.

2022-23 BUDGET



FY23 Budget — \$1,900,000



VOTING RIGHTS



FIGHTING FOR FAIRER DISTRICT LINES

In *Thomas v. Merrill* and *Milligan v. Merrill*, individuals, civil rights organizations, and faith institutions rallied together to push for more equitable distribution of state legislative and U.S. congressional lines for districts that have historically disenfranchised Black communities by diluting their voting power. Redistricting affects representation, impacting our ability to address our under-resourced public schools, inequitable health care system, and broken criminal legal system. Moreover, Alabama's electoral maps fail to meet the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the laws for citizens of all races and fail the test of fundamental fairness.

Following the U.S. Census, the State created new district maps. Alongside our partners, the ACLU of Alabama contended against the State in the *Milligan v. Merrill* case for a more equitable distribution of political

power and representation for Black Alabama voters. As a result, a three-judge panel unanimously decided that the newly drafted congressional map violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Subsequently, the panel ordered the State to draft a fairer, more equitable map. However, the State of Alabama filed a motion for stay, citing a lack of time before the next election, which the United States Supreme Court granted.

In October, the case went to the United States Supreme Court where our legal team and partners argued the constitutional invalidity of the Alabama congressional district map based on a violation of the Voting Rights Act. A decision by the SCOTUS is currently pending and we expect an opinion in Summer 2023.

2022 ELECTION

Election Protection (E.P.) and Get Out to Vote (GOTV) Election Protection Hotline

866-OUR-VOTE is a national, nonpartisan voter protection hotline dedicated to ensuring voters have accurate information about their rights and an advocate when voters experience problems at any point in the voting process. In preparation for the 2022 election cycle, our affiliate collaborated with national and state partners including the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, University of Alabama School of Law, and grassroots organizations across the state to recruit individuals to assist with escalated calls from Alabama voters on Election Day. We also hosted three training sessions throughout the state on the voter call database Our Vote Live (OVL) to train those interested in assisting with the hotline. On Election Day, we helped manage the hotline to address the concerns of Alabama voters.

Election Protection and GOTV Advertising Campaign

We collaborated with a marketing firm to produce two 30-second commercials and a statewide billboard campaign to amplify our Get Out the Vote (GOTV) messaging and public awareness of the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline. The ads ran throughout the state on television, radio, and digital platforms.



Election Canvassing

Additionally, we partnered with Lift Our Vote, a Huntsville-based GOTV initiative, and collaborated with Faith & Works based in Birmingham to canvass at the Magic City Classic.

Combating Voter Disenfranchisement in Alabama

This year, we expanded our efforts in Mobile by partnering with two organizations for GOTV and election protection efforts: Stand Up Mobile and the Mobile NAACP chapter. We continue to safeguard our voting rights and Alabamians' access to the ballot by building an infrastructure to address the statewide issue of voter disenfranchisement, irrespective of race, gender, native language, or disability status. In addition, we're cultivating a coalition of voting rights advocates who are empowered, resourced, and trained to protect and increase access to the ballot for disenfranchised voters.

Our roots are strong.

Meta fights for reproductive rights
so you have the freedom to choose.

Raise your voice. Cast your vote. Nov. 8



Captions: On the left page: Evan Milligan speaking in D.C. regarding Alabama congressional district maps (left) and Dillon Nettles with JaTaune Bosby Gilchrist at the SCOTUS in D.C. **On the right page:** Tish Gotell Faulks leading the OVL training at the Capital City Club (top) and one in a series of billboard graphics for the 2022 midterm election **Design Credit:** Alysheia Shaw-Dansby

GENDER JUSTICE

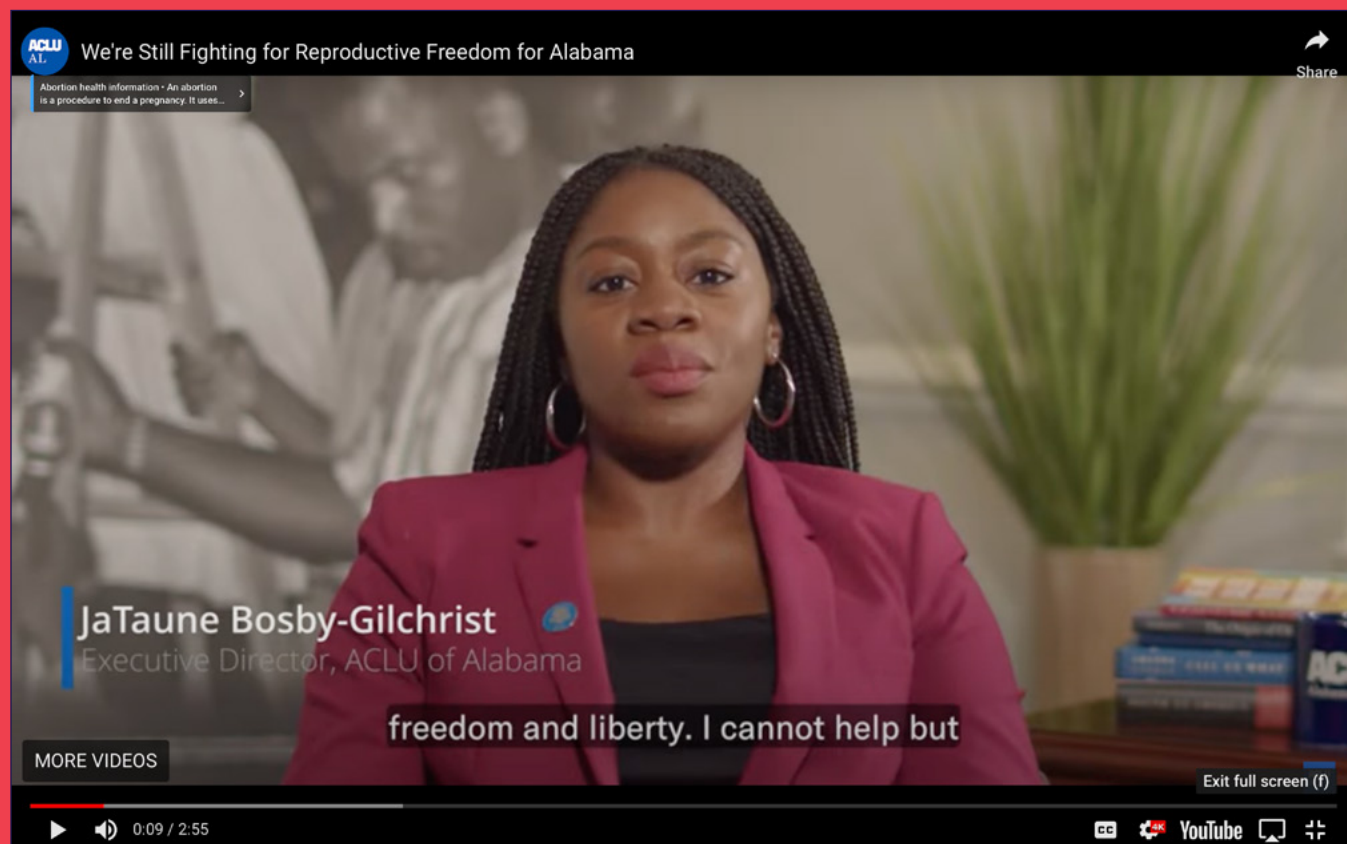
DOBBS V. JACKSON WOMEN'S HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The Dobbs Decision and Overturning of Roe

Abortion access has always been a critical healthcare issue in Alabama. As a result, bills to abolish abortion rights have made their way into the legislative session every year for the past decade. However, compared to the slow and steady chipping away of reproductive rights, this summer's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* set reproductive rights back by at least 50 years.

The United States Supreme Court released its ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* on June 26, 2022. Their decision explicitly overturned *Roe v. Wade* in ruling that there is no longer a constitutional right to an abortion.

Since the Dobbs decision, we have been building an infrastructure to address impending legal concerns. We will hire a Reproductive Rights Policy Strategist to help create our next steps in the continued battle for reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy in Alabama.





BLACK TRANS FUTURES

Black Trans Futures Museum Exhibit

Black Trans Futures is a storytelling collaboration between the ACLU of Alabama and The Knights & Orchids Society (TKO). TKO is a Black, trans-led healthcare organization in Alabama. In the wake of hate legislation against trans people, this collaboration aimed to reject fatalist trans narratives and highlight how Black trans communities manifest better futures in Alabama. Along with photography, interviews, and articles—we hosted an exhibit of this project at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts with coverage from the Montgomery Advertiser and a spotlight on the nightly news.



Smart Justice Organizing School

Smart Justice Organizing School (SJOS) is an 8-month program for all Alabamians committed to addressing the problems of the criminal punishment system. In this community organizing and legislative advocacy program, all participants can learn about the intricate web of the criminal justice system. In our fourth year of this program, we have an incredibly powerful and diverse cohort of formerly incarcerated people, students, activists, movement elders, and Alabamians from all across the State.



Black Trans Futures Organizing School

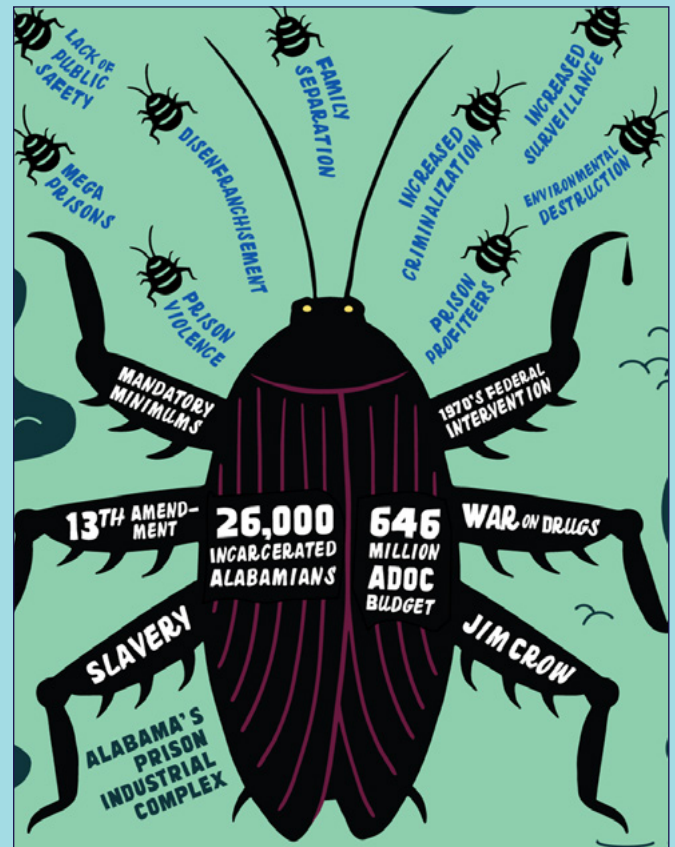
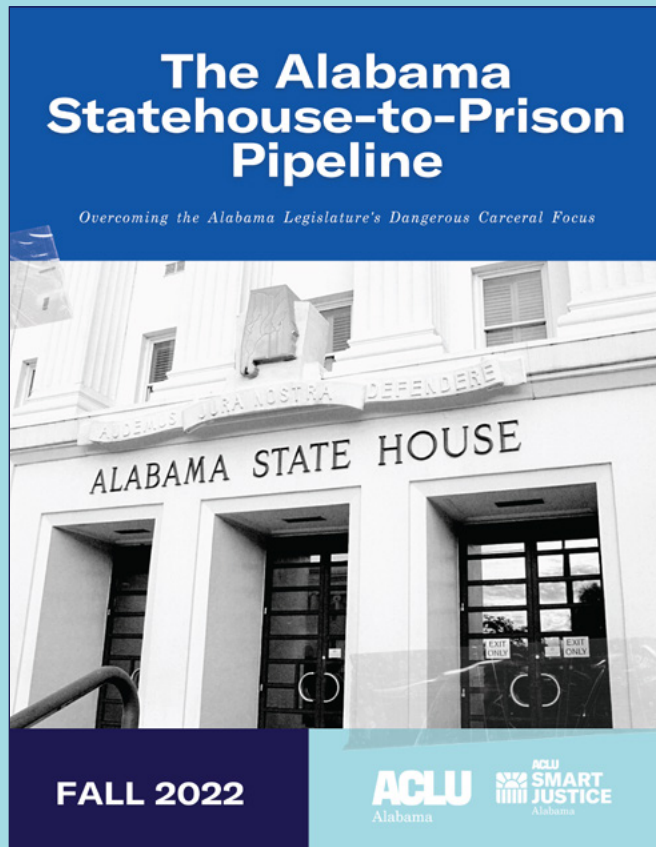
In our fourth year of SJOS, we collaborated with The Knights and Orchids Society to develop and lead a month-long intensive version of the SJOS program exclusively for Black and trans Alabamians. In this year's cohort, we had 10 participants complete the program.



Captions: On the left page: Thumbnail of the video [We're Still Fighting for Reproductive Freedom for Alabama](#) ft. JaTaune Bosby Gilchrist On the right page: Alison Mollman, Stef Bernal-Martinez, Jose Vazquez, Dillon Nettles, and Jasmine Peeples at the Black Trans Futures museum exhibit followed by three photos from the collection. **Photo Credits:** Stef Bernal-Martinez

SMART JUSTICE

CRIMINAL LEGAL REFORM



STATEHOUSE-TO-PRISON PIPELINE REPORT

The affiliate published our Statehouse-to-Prison Pipeline (SHTP) report for the second year on September 19th. Building upon the 2021 report, this year's report demonstrates how the legislature's continued investment in the carceral state has dire consequences for all Alabamians. Through legislation that criminalizes the procurement of healthcare and the ongoing attack on voting accessibility, the Alabama legislature

continues to expand on its draconian policies and the Prison Industrial Complex to the demise of everyday Alabamians' safety, health, and well-being. This year's report identified 148 bills, or 17% percent of the 873 bills introduced by the Alabama Legislature in 2022 that increased penalties for individual behavior, further expanded the reach of law enforcement, or created measures related to state prisons that would add to the already dire prison crisis. The report serves as vehicle for political education and amplifying the affiliate's core policy priorities.



37 YEARS: A LONG ROAD TO FREEDOM

ACLU of Alabama’s Investigative Reporter Beth Shelburne released an article titled “37 Years: A Long Road to Freedom” on December 12 that details Henry Towns’ experience in getting to freedom after spending 37 years in Alabama’s overcrowded and violent prison system. On May 3, 2022, Henry Towns was released from Limestone Correctional Facility after spending nearly 37 years on his two life without parole sentences since being imprisoned on July 9, 1985. Towns received two life without parole sentences under Alabama’s Habitual Felony Offender Act (HFOA) for drug-related robberies with no physical injury.

Throughout his years there, he petitioned the court for relief many times, filing so-called “Kirby” motions, named after a man who won relief in the courts from

a life-without-parole sentence for drug trafficking, but Henry’s motions were denied each time. Then in 2014, Alabama legislators inexplicably passed a bill killing the “Kirby” rule, preventing Henry and others from seeking further help from the courts. Since then, all efforts to overturn or amend the HFOA have been scuttled, despite a Department of Justice lawsuit filed in 2020 demanding that Alabama address its prison overcrowding crisis.

A narrow victory from a two-to-one vote decided Henry’s release at his hearing in Montgomery on April 13, 2022.

To read more about Henry Towns long road to freedom, visit www.alabamasmartjustice.org/stories.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

SOUTHERN COLLECTIVE CONVENING

Four years after the first Southern Collective Convening in Montgomery, Alabama, our staff traveled to New Orleans for the fourth annual Southern Collective Convening. As the affiliate steering the collective's programming and priorities and leading the collaboration between Southern affiliates, our staff continues its dedication to the Southern Collective. It was a powerful three-day session focused on coalition building, winning strategies, and lessons from the Civil Rights Movement. ACLU of Alabama staff members played integral roles in the conference programming. Organizing Director Stef Bernal-Martinez was an essential planning committee member and opening speaker on the second day of the convening, Policy Director Dillon Nettles joined Dr. Bernard Lafayette and Dr. Valda Harris Montgomery for a panel discussing intergenerational movement building, and Executive Director, JaTaune Bosby, was honored to close out the three-day convening with a message titled, "What Does Vision Require." The convening was inspiring and demonstrated the power of Southern affiliates in the ACLU at large and how central the Alabama affiliate is to the success of the Southern Collective.





WE THE PEOPLE defend and protect our civil liberties in **Alabama.**

BECOME A MEMBER.

Members provide flexible financial support allowing us to defend freedom at every turn. For as little as \$20 per year, you will be a card-carrying member of the ACLU, proudly joining our state and national work. From Montgomery to D.C., you will be a part of our movement.

MAKE A DONATION.

The ACLU of Alabama Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Your tax-deductible gift will support a wide range of our work, including litigation, advocacy, and public education. We rely on our donors to support all of our strategic initiatives.

TAKE ACTION.

Lend us your time, your talent, and your voice. Sign up for our email action network so you can find out first about urgent actions, petitions, protests, and other volunteer opportunities. We need an activist core to help us protect civil rights and civil liberties in Alabama.

Next Steps:

If you're interested in learning more about our work, visit aclualabama.org

If you're interested in supporting our work, visit action.aclu.org/give/support-aclu-alabama