



FEDERAL WORKERS FIGHT BACK

CHALLENGING THE UNLAWFUL TARGETING OF EMPLOYEES FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ACTIVITIES

Mahri Stáinnak remembers the day they got the phone call that would change everything. Mahri was eating dinner with their family when a Human Resources representative called to tell Mahri that they were being put on administrative leave after over sixteen years of successful service in the federal government.

In those years of service, Mahri helped dozens of cities across the country make critical updates to their sewer systems, preventing millions of gallons of raw sewage from overflowing into America's lakes and rivers. They also managed a team that helped veterans, disabled people, and recent graduates learn about federal government jobs.

Mahri didn't need to ask why they were being put on leave. The caller said it plainly: it was because of their work



Stefanie and Sherrell

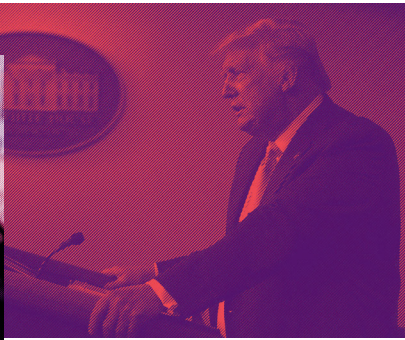


Mahri



on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This answer confused Mahri even more than the call itself because at the time, they were working at the Office of Personnel Management in a position not related to diversity, equity, and inclusion at all. Mahri realized that they were being targeted by the Trump administration for work they had once done. That felt shocking—and wrong.

Many other federal employees got similar notices. Sherrell Pyatt— a fourth-generation civil servant—got her notice after years of dedicated service at the U.S. Postal Service and the Department of Homeland Security. Stefanie Anderson was put on administrative leave from the Centers for Disease Control after effectively responding to public health emergencies for over a decade.



On March 26, alongside our legal partners, we filed a class-action complaint against the Trump administration for unlawfully targeting federal employees like Mahri, Sherrell, and Stefanie for their participation in diversity, equity, and inclusion activities.

NEED LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR A CIVIL RIGHTS OR CIVIL LIBERTIES VIOLATION?



If your civil liberties or civil rights were violated, the best way to request help from the ACLU-D.C. is online at www.acludc.org/help. You may also leave a voicemail at 202-601-4269, although response times are slower for voicemails.

Unfortunately, our office has limited resources, so we cannot take every case we are contacted about, even if a grave injustice has occurred. We take cases that we think will help clarify the law, so that civil liberties are better protected across the board. For examples of cases we do not take, please visit www.acludc.org/help.

If we cannot help you, we will do our best to suggest a different organization or law firm that might be able to assist. *(Note that we cannot guarantee that they will be able to take your case.)*

If you have a case not involving civil liberties or civil rights, please see our resource guide for help with other legal problems in the D.C. area: www.acludc.org/resource-guide.

Also, visit our website to learn more about your constitutional rights! Check out ACLU-D.C.'s easy-to-use resources: www.acludc.org/kyr.



SCAN TO SEEK
LEGAL HELP



SCAN FOR
RESOURCES

Since Trump issued his Executive Orders aimed at dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in January, his administration has unlawfully targeted any federal employees with any connection to this idea. At the time that many of these employees were fired or placed on leave, they were no longer in positions that performed any diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Some targeted employees had never held such positions but had only participated in related trainings or presentations. This shows the administration's true motive: to punish people for what the administration perceived as their political views. This kind of retaliation is a violation of federal employees' fundamental rights under the First Amendment.

In practice, this targeting has had an outsized impact on federal employees who are women, non-binary, and people of color. This is employment discrimination and violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

The Trump administration fired or punished experienced professionals like our clients with enormous talents and knowledge who excelled at providing critical services in public health, public safety, and other important areas.

These federal workers were targeted not because they did anything wrong, but because President Trump did not like a belief he associated with them. Ultimately, this kind of targeting harms the American people and the government services we all rely on.

In April, we took our challenge to the streets and rallied outside the Office of Personnel Management to call on officials to stop the political purge and reinstate federal employees. Workers and advocates shared moving accounts of their important work, their unwavering dedication, and the critical services that they provided.

We will keep fighting to get these dedicated public servants back to work for the American people. And we'll keep fighting to defend all our civil rights and liberties from authoritarian attacks.

Learn more and join our fight at www.acludc.org.

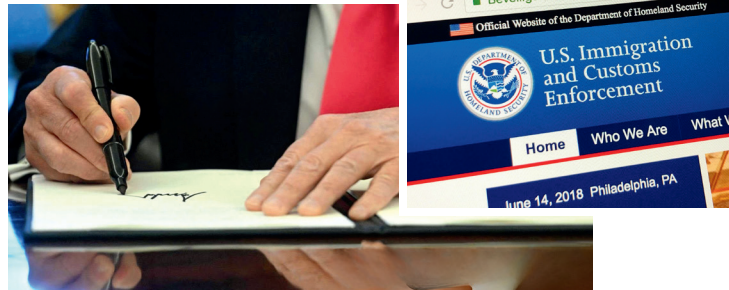


CHALLENGING TRUMP'S ACTIONS ON IMMIGRATION

The fundamental constitutional protection of due process applies to every person, regardless of immigration status. **When the Trump administration denies due process to immigrants, everyone's rights are at risk.**

Since January, the ACLU-D.C. has filed numerous lawsuits to protect immigrants' rights. For example, we've been in court challenging the Trump administration for transferring immigrants to Guantánamo Bay and denying them legal representation and communication with their families.

We have also been in court challenging President Trump's unlawful and unprecedented invocation of a wartime act to deport people without due process.



The Alien Enemies Act, passed in 1798, allows the president to detain and deport citizens of countries that have invaded or are at war with the U.S. The act has only been used during three declared international wars—until Trump invoked it during peacetime to fast-track deportations and side-step due process rights.

On March 15 President Trump declared the Nicaraguan gang Tren de Aragua to be a foreign adversary engaged in an "invasion" or "incursion" against the U.S. and ordered the Department of Homeland Security to promptly deport alleged members of the gang. Our lawsuit charges that President Trump invoked the centuries-old wartime act unlawfully during peacetime to accelerate mass deportations. Since March 15, much has happened in this rapidly evolving case.

Visit www.acludc.org to stay updated on these and other immigration cases.

IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS & RESOURCES HUB

The second Trump administration has implemented sweeping policies targeting immigrant families and communities.



Regardless of your immigration status, you have guaranteed rights under the U.S.

Constitution. Knowing your rights is critical for protecting yourself and your community.

You do not have to let law enforcement or immigration agents (ICE or CBP) into your home without a warrant.

Immigration officers or agents generally must have a warrant signed by a judge or a magistrate judge to enter your home without consent, not a warrant issued by a federal agency (like DHS) and signed by an immigration judge.

You can ask the officer to slip the warrant under the door or show it to you through a window.

A valid warrant must name a person in your residence and/or areas to be searched at your address and must be executed within the period of time in the warrant.

If these requirements are not met, you may likely refuse to comply by not opening the door and asking agents to leave. If immigration officers enter without a valid warrant, say that you do not consent to the search, ask for an interpreter if needed, and assert your right to remain silent.

If ICE has a valid warrant for you and you live with undocumented folks who are not on the warrant, it may be best to exit and close the door behind you.

Visit our Immigrants' Rights and Resources Hub for more information available in seven languages: www.acludc.org/en/immigrants-rights-and-resources-hub.



CIVIL LIBERTIES 101:

D.C. HOME RULE

Chances are that D.C. home rule has been on your mind. It certainly has been in the news.

In March, Congress dictated that D.C. could not use \$1.1 billion of our own local tax dollars in a budget that Congress itself had already approved and that had already been in effect for six months.

Our local officials managed to use a different law to offset most of this senseless limit, but were still forced to make more than \$400 million cuts that affect essential services.

President Trump recently targeted D.C. in an Executive Order that attempts to limit free speech and assembly, targets vulnerable communities, and creates a taskforce to micromanage D.C. that does not include any local representatives. And Members of Congress—representing Utah and Tennessee—introduced a bill to repeal D.C. home rule.

Such news has left people with a lot of questions. What is D.C. home rule? How does it work? And why does it matter? **Here are some answers to these pressing questions.**

WHAT IS D.C. HOME RULE?

D.C. home rule is shorthand for the D.C. Home Rule Act of 1973, which allows D.C. residents to elect a local government that runs day-to-day affairs in the District. Before this act,



federally appointed commissioners and members of Congress—never elected by D.C. residents—shared the responsibility of running the District.

Congressional offices fielded calls about local D.C. issues like potholes, trash pickup, schools, and crime, in addition to calls from their constituents in their home states. History suggests that Congress struggled to govern D.C. and that District residents regularly demanded improvements.



The D.C. Home Rule Act of 1973 ultimately passed as a compromise between D.C. residents who wanted

full democratic rights and members of Congress who wanted to give up their day-to-day management responsibility but wanted to maintain power over D.C. and its majority Black population.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Under home rule, District residents elect a mayor, D.C. Councilmembers, and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners. D.C.'s local government handles the local laws and budget. But because D.C. is not a state, Congress—where District residents have no voting representatives—and the president have the legal ability to micromanage local affairs.

For example, all non-emergency local D.C. bills have to go through Congressional review before they become law. The review period is 30 Congressional working days for civil bills and 60 days for criminal bills.

Here's how the process works.

STEP 1: Elected D.C. Councilmembers vote to pass a bill.

STEP 2: The bill goes to the mayor. If the mayor doesn't veto it, or if the Council overrides the veto, the bill passes.

STEP 3: The local bill goes to Congress, where D.C. residents have no voting representation, for review. Congress can (i) let the review period pass without interference, (ii) modify or amend the bill, or (iii) disapprove of the bill.



STEP 4: If Congress lets the review period pass, the bill becomes law. But if Congress disapproves of the bill, it moves on to the next step.

STEP 5: The disapproval heads to the president, who can veto it or sign it and overturn the local law.

There are two other ways that Congress can interfere in our local democracy. First, Congress can attach rules (or riders) to budget bills (called appropriations bills), and second, it can pass stand-alone laws for D.C., bypassing our entire elected local government.

The president also has some limited opportunities to interfere in D.C.'s public safety system, federal land, and federal agencies. For example, the president can issue Executive Orders that direct federal agencies in D.C., but those orders cannot dictate how the local D.C. government must act, and they cannot change D.C. laws.

WHY DOES D.C. HOME RULE MATTER?

Of course, home rule deeply affects the everyday lives of D.C. residents. The people who live in D.C. are just like people who live in any other state. We are veterans, nurses, grocery store clerks, teachers, restaurant workers, volunteers, family members, and neighbors. We deserve to govern ourselves—not to have politicians we never elected dictate what happens in our neighborhoods. Denying democracy to the 700,000 residents of D.C., the majority of whom are Black and brown, is an egregious example of voter suppression happening in our country today. And, practically speaking, history suggests that Congress struggled to provide decent services to the people of D.C.

Read more about D.C. home rule and what you can do to protect D.C. democracy on our blog: www.acludc.com/dc-home-rule-blog.



KNOW YOUR PROTEST RIGHTS

The majority of protesters in D.C. do not encounter problems, but it pays to be prepared. Here are three things to know about protesting in D.C.

1 D.C. HAS BOTH LOCAL AND FEDERAL TERRITORY, AND THE RULES ARE DIFFERENT IN EACH.

Metro stations and D.C. streets and sidewalks are local territory. All green space downtown, the National Mall, federal buildings/monuments (and nearby sidewalks), and Rock Creek Park are federal land.

2 GETTING A PERMIT FOR A DEMONSTRATION, WHILE A GOOD IDEA, IS NOT ALWAYS REQUIRED.

If you want to demonstrate on local territory, permitting is governed by D.C. law, and no notice or approval is needed if:

- the protest won't block pedestrians from using sidewalks and crosswalks; or
- under 50 people are expected, and they won't be on a D.C. street; or
- the assembly breaks out spontaneously.

Permitting on federal land is governed by National Park Service regulations. You'll generally need a permit if you have 25 or more people.

3 YOU CAN PREPARE FOR POLICE ENCOUNTERS.

When an officer approaches, **DO**:

- Respond to the officer calmly and politely, without providing detailed information about you or your activities.
- Keep your hands in plain view.
- Feel free to videotape officers; it's legal as long as you're not so close to them as to be interfering.

But **DON'T**:

- Make sudden movements or point at the officer.
- Touch the officer or their equipment.
- Yell or otherwise escalate the situation

Head to www.acludc.org/kyr to learn more.



BILL OF RIGHTS CELEBRATION



People who stood up to defend their rights during 2020's racial justice protests



David Cole and Arthur Spitzer

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2025 Bill of Rights Celebration this May. Amidst the turmoil of this year, we were grateful to take a moment to come together, reflect on our impact, and recommit to the work ahead.

We were also deeply honored to award these outstanding people who have defended our civil rights and liberties in D.C.:

Jay Brown, community activist and organizer, with the Barth Volunteer Award

David Cole, former ACLU National Legal Director, with the Spitzer Lifetime Achievement Award

2020 racial justice demonstrators, a group of people who defended their rights following racial justice protests, with the Edgerton Civil Liberties Award.



Jay Brown

Thank you also to our generous sponsors who helped our community of advocates, leaders, and members connect during a special evening of community, solidarity, and shared purposes.

We hope you'll join us in 2026.

RSVP TODAY

ACLU-D.C. 2025 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Join the ACLU-D.C. community for our 2025 Annual Membership Meeting. This public event underscores our commitment to protect and advance civil liberties and civil rights by using the tools of public education, political advocacy, and litigation.



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH

6:30pm - 8:00pm

National Press Club, 529 14th St NW, 13th Floor, Washington, DC 20045

Our event agenda includes detailed updates on how the ACLU-D.C. is responding to attacks from the Trump administration, our organization's accomplishments and strategic priorities, and a discussion and call to action to support our political advocacy work. The evening will conclude with a warm introduction to our 2025 slate of board members.

We invite all ACLU-D.C. members, supporters, and the public to join us and learn how you can **contribute to protecting civil rights and liberties in D.C.**



Scan code to RSVP

www.acludc.com/2025membershipmeeting

ACLU-D.C. BOARD NOMINATIONS 2025

THE BOARD'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAVE MADE THEIR NOMINATIONS FOR THE EIGHT BOARD SEATS UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR.

You can see their nominated slate by visiting www.acludc.com/2025board.

Board members serve three-year terms and are responsible for governance, fiscal stability, and attendance at six meetings each year. A member may be nominated by the Nominations Committee or by submitting a nomination and petition.



If you are a member in good standing as of May 2, 2025, you can nominate yourself or someone else (*who is also a member in good standing*) by submitting the following materials to nominations@acludc.org by **July 18**:

- ☐ A petition signed by 25 ACLU-D.C. members in good standing as of May 2 (*candidates may use their own petition form*);
- ☐ A statement signed by the nominee expressing their willingness to serve if elected;
- ☐ A statement of 300 words or less;
- ☐ A headshot.

Candidate statements will be posted on our website in late July. If there is a contested election, electronic ballots will open on July 31, and a notice will be mailed and emailed to members. If the election is uncontested, the Board of Directors vote to approve the slate put forth by the Nominating Committee at their July meeting.

For more information, please visit www.acludc.com/2025board.



“WE ARE PREPARED TO PROTECT D.C., AND WE’RE GIVING THIS FIGHT EVERYTHING WE’VE GOT.”



On January 22, just two days after the president took office, the ACLU-D.C. filed our first lawsuit against the second Trump administration challenging an unlawful attempt at fast-tracking deportations. Since that day, we have filed nine additional legal actions, advocated against federal interference in local matters, and responded to over 500 civil rights and liberties violation complaints.

Our message to the Trump administration has been loud and clear: the president is not a king, and no president is above the law. During Trump’s first administration, the ACLU filed more than 400 legal actions. As you’ve read in this newsletter, we are building on that legacy. At the ACLU-D.C., we are prepared to protect D.C., and we’re giving this fight everything we’ve got.

We felt the resilience and power of this fight just last month at our 2025 Bill of Rights Celebration. As those of you who joined us know, the room was alive with the energy of We the People. It was a much-needed moment to connect with passionate, brave, and incredible people who exemplify the beautiful promise of this country—of equality, justice, and freedom for all. It was an honor to hear from our awardees who met unjust and challenging moments with bravery and integrity.

Monica Hopkins
Executive Director



District
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HOW TO SUPPORT ACLU-D.C.

We accept contributions the following ways:



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Choose "American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of the District of Columbia" and EIN 52-6070446 with your DAF provider.



With a gift of stock or for wiring instructions.

Please contact development@acludc.org for our account and DTC number.



By phone.

Call our Donor Services at (212) 549-2543.



Through the mail. *Please note that our office address has changed.*

Monica Hopkins
ACLU of the District of Columbia
529 14th Street NW
Ste 722
Washington, DC 20045



With a gift through a bequest or charitable trust.

Visit www.aclu.org/legacy to see how gifts through your will, retirement plan, life insurance, or trust can provide for both your loved ones and ensure our ability to fight for civil liberties in the future.



Via mobile device.

Access our donation page here via QR code or at www.acludc.org/give



Don't forget! Gifts to the ACLU-D.C. Foundation may be eligible for matching funds from your workplace. Please inquire with your employer.