

ACLU

District
of Columbia

SUMMER 2026

NEWSLETTER

65 YEARS

(AND COUNTING)

Defending Civil Rights and Liberties in the Nation's Capital

2026 marks the 65th anniversary of the ACLU of the District of Columbia. Since our founding by a group of volunteer lawyers in 1961, the ACLU of D.C. has been steadfast in defending fundamental rights and liberties in our nation's capital. And we have done this together—supporters, members, staff, and the Board of Directors have all been instrumental in building a more just and free D.C.

Here are just a few highlights of the first 65 years of our work.



1967 FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION

Few cases are more aptly named than *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), which pitted an interracial couple – Mildred Jeter and Richard Loving – against Virginia's "miscegenation" laws banning marriage between Black and white people. After marrying in Washington, D.C. and returning to their home state in 1958, the couple was charged with unlawful cohabitation and jailed. The Lovings left Virginia and went to live with relatives in Washington, D.C. When they returned to visit family five years later, they were arrested for traveling together. Our ACLU affiliate along with the ACLU of Virginia represented them in the landmark Supreme Court case, ruling that state bans on interracial marriage were unconstitutional.



1971 FREE SPEECH VS. STATE REPRESSION

In early May 1971, tens of thousands of anti-Vietnam War protesters came to Washington, D.C. aiming to use civil disobedience to disrupt the federal government. The Nixon administration responded with an overwhelming show of force, deploying police, National Guard members, and federal troops; canceling permits; and using tear gas to disperse crowds. More than 12,000 people were arrested—the largest mass arrest in U.S. history—including thousands who were not engaged in any unlawful activity yet were detained in harsh, makeshift conditions. Our ACLU affiliate quickly mobilized, sending volunteer lawyers to document abuses and defend those arrested. As a result of our involvement, nearly all of the cases were dismissed or resulted in acquittals, marking the largest mass acquittal in American history.



2005

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

In November 2005, D.C. police arrested Lindsay Huthnance for disorderly conduct after she wondered aloud how a group of police officers were fighting crime by being in a 7-Eleven at midnight. We challenged the District's policy that allowed for arrests on "contempt of cop" charges. A jury awarded Ms. Huthnance \$97,500 in damages, finding that she had been unconstitutionally arrested. In part because of the facts uncovered by discovery in this case, the D.C. Council enacted a comprehensive revision of the District's disorderly conduct laws, which has resulted in a dramatic decrease in "contempt of cop" arrests.

Since the founding of this nation, it has been up to all of us to defend simple and foundational principles of our democracy. We are honored to have been fighting for freedom and justice for 65 years.



2019

THE PATH TO D.C. STATEHOOD

In 2019, the ACLU submitted a statement and testimony in support of the Washington, D.C. Admission Act ("H.R. 51") to the House Oversight and Reform Committee for its hearing on D.C. Statehood. H.R. 51 would have granted statehood to the residential areas of D.C. The statement included our legal analysis of the bill's constitutionality, which Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) called "particularly important to our effort to secure statehood for D.C."



The Fight Continues

WE ARE 65 YEARS INTO OUR FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND THE STAKES ARE HIGH.

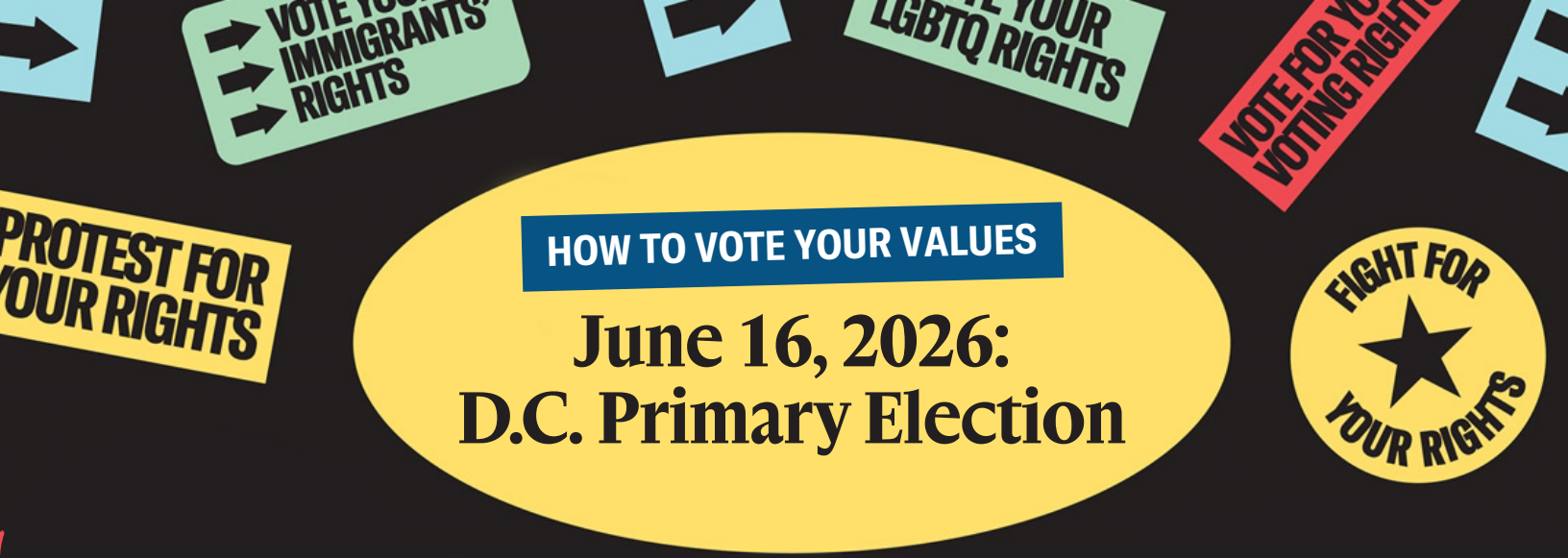
With your support, we are continuing to make history defending civil rights and liberties in our nation's capital.

The second Trump administration has brought difficult and destabilizing challenges to the nation and the District, but we have risen to the challenge since day one. We have filed over a dozen lawsuits, advocated for D.C. democracy, trained hundreds of people on their rights, and responded to nearly 1,500 civil rights and liberties violation complaints. Our message to the Trump administration has been loud and clear: no president or federal officer is above the law.

Since the founding of this nation, it has been up to all of us to defend simple and foundational principles of our democracy. We are honored to have been fighting for freedom and justice for 65 years, and we know that, together, we can secure America's promise of equality, freedom, and justice for all.

To learn more about our 65-year history, head to acludc.org/65:





HOW TO VOTE YOUR VALUES

June 16, 2026: D.C. Primary Election

Voting is one of our most fundamental rights, and the D.C. primary election is on June 16, 2026. However you plan to vote, make civil rights and liberties a priority when you cast your ballot.

Visit our 2026 voter hub (acludc.org/vote2026) for everything you need to vote for D.C. Mayor, Delegate to Congress, and other elected offices. Our voter hub also has all the info you need to vote, including ranked-choice voting, voting locations, drop box locations, and more.

Primary Election:

Tuesday June 16, 7am-8pm

Register to Vote:

Same day you vote

Vote Early:

June 8 – June 14

How:

In person, by mail, or by dropbox

Here are answers to some common questions about voting in the D.C. primary.

WHO CAN VOTE IN THE D.C. PRIMARY ELECTION?

D.C. residents who will be at least 18 years old by November 3, 2026 (general election day) and who are registered to vote as a Democrat, Republican, or DC Statehood Green can vote.

Registered Independent voters cannot vote in this primary. If you missed the May 26 deadline, you can register with one of the parties or change your party affiliation the same day you vote.

DO I NEED TO BRING ID TO VOTE?

You don't need to bring any specific form of ID to vote in person, but if you are doing same-day voter registration, bring proof of D.C. residency with you (see acceptable documents for citizens and non-citizens on our voter hub at acludc.org/vote2026).

HOW DOES RANKED-CHOICE VOTING WORK? IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3 (AND UP TO 5)!

This election, D.C. voters will use ranked-choice voting. Instead of voting for just one candidate, you can **rank up to five candidates for each office**, in order of preference.

RANK LIKE YOU READ: LEFT TO RIGHT

Rank left to right, from choice #1 – choice #5. Here are the steps:

1. Fill in the circle next to your first-choice candidate under the “1” column.
2. Fill in the circle next to your second-choice candidate under the “2” column.
3. Repeat this process until you have selected up to five candidates.

Ranked Choice Voting					
How to rank your top 5 candidates					
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
FINE (RANK 5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
GREAT (RANK 2)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
VERY GOOD (RANK 3)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
FAVORITE (RANK 1)	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
GOOD (RANK 4)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

YOUR #1 CHOICE

Ranking other candidates does not hurt your first-choice candidate. You can also still vote for only one person by completing the “1” column and not ranking anyone else.

HOW IT WORKS

If no one candidate gets over 50% of the votes in the first round of counting, lower-performing candidates are eliminated and votes for them are redistributed until one candidate gets more than 50% of the vote.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

The ACLU-D.C.'s voter hub!
Visit acludc.org/vote2026



Half-Million-Dollar Settlement

OVER ANTI-GAY HOSTILE WORKPLACE AT D.C. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Veteran D.C. corrections officer Sgt. Deon Jones faced years of verbal abuse and harassment from coworkers and incarcerated people alike.

People called him anti-gay slurs, threatened his life, and subjected him to degrading treatment at work. Other officers even put Sgt. Jones' safety at risk by refusing to answer his calls for assistance over the internal radio system when he was responding to incarcerated people or attempting to execute his duties. This chronic mistreatment took a severe toll on Sgt. Jones' mental health, and he experienced depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and 15 anxiety attacks in 2021 alone.

In 2021, the ACLU of the District of Columbia and international law firm WilmerHale filed a lawsuit on behalf of Sgt. Jones alleging that the Department of Corrections, including supervisors and co-workers, subjected Sgt. Jones to discrimination, retaliation, and a hostile work environment because of his identity as a gay man. The complaint

described how these actions violated Sgt. Jones' rights under the D.C. Human Rights Act.

On February 15, 2026, after four years of litigation, Sgt. Jones settled his lawsuit and secured a half-million-dollar settlement from the District of Columbia. Reflecting on his case, Sgt. Jones explained, "For years, I showed up to do my job with professionalism and pride, only to be targeted because of who I am. This settlement affirms that my pain mattered — and that creating hostile workplaces has real consequences." He also had some words of encouragement to share:

"For anyone who is LGBTQ or living with a disability and facing workplace discrimination or retaliation, know this: you are not powerless. You have rights. And when you stand up, you can achieve justice."

- Sgt. Deon Jones

Sgt. Jones' case underscores a foundational principle that the ACLU of D.C. will continue to uphold: no one should have to endure harassment or retaliation at their job because of who they are. In the words of Legal Director Scott Michelman, "Accountability matters, and hostile and discriminatory workplace cultures cannot be tolerated."

To learn more about the case, *Jones v. District of Columbia*, visit acludc.org/jones-v-dc



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.



SCAN TO SEEK
LEGAL HELP

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 FOR
RESOURCES

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

ICE in the DMV

In D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, families often live in one place, work in another, and rely on schools, hospitals, and public services spread across both state and district borders. But your rights do NOT change when you cross these borders.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STOPPED BY ICE

If you are not a U.S. citizen and are stopped or questioned, you should:

- Remain silent.
- Remain calm.
- Say “no” when asked to be searched.
- Never show false documents.
- Never lie about being a U.S. citizen.

You DO NOT have to answer verbal questions about:

- Your immigration status.
- Where you were born.
- How you entered the country.

AT YOUR HOME

- Stay calm.
- Do not open the door.
- Do not invite them into your home.
- If they have a warrant for your arrest, ask them to show it to you through the peephole or slip it under the door.
- An ICE warrant (Form I-200) does not give them permission to enter your home.
- A criminal warrant signed by a judge may allow them to enter your home.
- You have the right to remain silent.
- Do not lie.
- Never falsely claim to be a U.S. citizen.
- Do not show false documents of any kind. This includes a false driver’s license, Social Security card, or immigration paperwork.

IN YOUR CAR

- Pull over safely and quickly.
- Turn off the engine, turn on the internal light, and open the window.
- Upon request, give the police (1) your driver’s license, (2) registration, (3) proof of insurance.
- If you do not have one of these, do not give false documents.
- Do not give the officer permission to search your car.
- If they search your car after you tell them “no,” do not resist.
- Do not answer questions about your immigration status.
- If they are the police, you should ask for their name and badge number and write it down.
- If they are ICE and ask you for a green card or proof of status, if you have it, you must show it to the officer.

AT WORK

- Stay calm.
- Do not run.
- Go to a private area of the building.
- ICE needs a warrant from a judge or your employer’s permission to enter any part of the worksite that is not open to the public (ex: a restaurant’s kitchen).
- Remain silent.
- Do not show false documents of any kind. This includes your ID, work authorization, or other paperwork related to your employment.
- If ICE asks for a green card or proof of

status, if you have it, you must show it to the officer.

- Any information you give them can be used against you.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ARRESTED BY ICE

- Remain calm.
- Remain silent.
- Do not discuss your immigration status with anyone but your lawyer.
- Do not sign anything you do not understand.
- Say you need an interpreter.
- You have the right to hire your own lawyer.
- Memorize and carry your lawyer’s number with you.
- You have the right to contact your country’s consulate to tell them you have been detained.
- Give your immigration number or “A-number” (9 digits) to your family to find you.



Learn more at:
acludc.org/ice-in-the-dmv

ACLU-D.C. BOARD *Nominations 2026*

The Board's Nominating Committee has made their nominations for the eight Board seats up for election this year.

You can see their nominated slate by visiting acludc.com/2026board

Board members serve 3-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 a petition.

If you are a member in good standing, 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 17:

Nominate by JULY 17

- a petition signed by 25 ACLU-D.C. members in good standing as of June 6 (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 30, and a notice will be mailed and emailed to members. If the election is uncontested, the Board of Directors votes to approve the slate put forth by the Nominating Committee at their July meeting.



For more information, please visit acludc.com/2026board



ACLU-D.C. 2026 ANNUAL *Membership Meeting*

Join the ACLU-D.C. for our annual Membership Meeting on September 15 and learn how we're defending D.C. and our democracy against ongoing attacks from the Trump administration.

This is an opportunity to get informed and involved with our community, which is committed to protecting civil rights and liberties. We'll also take time to celebrate our 65th anniversary and the legacy of advocacy that continues to drive our work forward.

We invite all ACLU-D.C. members, supporters, and the public to join us to mark our 65th anniversary and learn how you can contribute to protecting civil rights and liberties in D.C.

Our event agenda includes 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 about how we are defending D.C. and democracy. The evening will conclude with a warm introduction to our 2026 slate of Board members.

**Tuesday, September 15
6:30pm-8:00pm**

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

Free and open to the public

RSVP Today!

acludc.com/26-membership-meeting



When we defend D.C., we are defending democracy.



The ACLU-D.C. was founded the same year the 23rd Amendment passed. This amendment gave D.C. residents the right to vote for the President of the United States. That was 65 years ago. Our ACLU affiliate has supported autonomy for the people of D.C. in the form of statehood or home rule since at least 1967. And as I reflect on the first 250 years of this country and the first 65 years of the ACLU of D.C., it is clear to me that making D.C. the 51st state is central to keeping democracy alive in the United States.

We know that the stakes for D.C. autonomy are high. In August 2025, the president announced that he was federalizing D.C.'s police department and deploying the National Guard to patrol our streets. It's been nearly a full year, and the people of D.C. are still living under a phony emergency manufactured by President Trump and his allies to expand their power, create fear, and undermine democracy in the nation's capital. Although the D.C. police are back under local control, the National Guard's deployment has been extended into 2029.

Defending democracy is not a partisan issue, and the ACLU of D.C. has been answering the call to defend democracy – for everyone – in our nation's capital because we are uniquely situated to demonstrate the dangers of an overzealous federal government. We are a District at the precise intersection of federal authority and local democracy, where federal intrusion is a recurring structural risk.

We are defending simple, structural, foundational principles of our democracy: 1) the military should not be deployed against civilians; 2) government officials must follow the law; and 3) “We the People” can govern ourselves.

We have filed over a dozen lawsuits and amicus briefs against the Trump administration. Beyond legal action, we've been educating federal lawmakers and partners about D.C. Home Rule and urging them to protect democracy in our nation's capital. We have also supported local efforts on the D.C. Council to shed light on what federal agents are doing in the District and have educated people about their rights. We will continue fighting Trump's abuse of power and protecting D.C. residents and visitors in our nation's capital.

When we defend D.C., as we at the ACLU-D.C. have for 65 years now, we are defending democracy. I thank you for your support and commitment as we continue to build a more just and free D.C. – and with it, a more just and free democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Hopkins".

Monica Hopkins
Executive Director

HOW TO SUPPORT ACLU-D.C.

We accept contributions in the following ways:



Through your donor-advised fund (DAF).

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



By phone.

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



Through the mail.

Please note that our office address has been updated.

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



With a gift of stock or for wiring instructions.

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



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 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.