

WE SHOW UP
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HOW UP



*in the courts,
in the state house,
at the ballot box,
and in the streets.*

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2023 Fiscal Year

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*Community Engagement
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The ACLU-MO joins Bobby Bostic at a speaking event at the St. Louis County Library. [From Left: Jessie Steffan, Bobby Bostic, Tony Rothert, Luz María Henríquez]

The ACLU of Missouri's annual report details our efforts throughout the 2023 fiscal year, spanning April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. During that time, our team fought some of the most important battles of this political moment: statewide book bans, regressive efforts to curb voting rights, justice for transgender Missourians, confronting the school-to-prison pipeline, and more. How? By expanding in size and strategy to meet the need. Today, we have the largest staff in our 103-year history—a team of nineteen, compared to fourteen last year.

Please know that you are a key member of the ACLU of Missouri community, and your support is a vital piece of the ACLU's power. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luz María Henríquez".

Luz María Henríquez

Executive Director, ACLU of Missouri

INTRODUCTION TO INTEGRATED ADVOCACY

The ACLU of Missouri utilizes an integrated advocacy approach when fighting for and protecting civil liberties. We work in the courts through litigation, in communities through public education and narrative advocacy, and through our legislative work at the local and state levels. Our Integrated Advocacy division led by director Tony Rothert, encompasses the litigation, communications, policy and campaigns, and community engagement teams of the ACLU of Missouri. Each arm represents an important and equal part of the work we do for ACLU of Missouri's priority campaigns.



Missourians exercising their First Amendment rights by protesting for transgender justice in Jefferson City.

PHOTO BY PHILIP DEITCH / STL LGBTQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Sydney Smith and Iyaun Bell, Sr. tabling at a weekly snack bags for kids event held at the Monument of Deliverance Church in Hayti, MO.



Voters at Hayti Community Center following the local school board election.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

If you follow the ACLU of Missouri's Facebook page, you've seen the Community Engagement Team. They host trainings, community meetings, and even school board election results analysis sessions – especially about our work in the bootheel community of Hayti.

In 2020, ACLU data showed that Hayti schools are one of the state's worst offenders for over-disciplining Black children, children with disabilities, and boys. More, Hayti residents have a strong community and are ready for change. With support from the Missouri Foundation for Health, the ACLU of Missouri hired two bootheel residents to be Community Engagement Restorative Justice Fellows. In the long term, the Fellows' work in Hayti will catalyze the end of corporal punishment in all Missouri public schools.

The CE Team met with Harold Jordan, Nationwide Education Equity Coordinator, to discuss how to break Missouri's school to prison pipeline.

[From Left: Elaine Sutton, Sydney Smith, Harold Jordan, Krysten Vaughn, Iyaun Bell, Sr., and (volunteer) Karla Sutton-McKinney]



PHOTO BY KARLA SUTTON-MCKINNEY

Led by Elaine Sutton, Deputy Director for Community Engagement, the team also includes about 40 interns annually and two full-time staffers. Together, they research and vet over 2,000 unique requests for legal aid each year. They also lead within the ACLU's national community by reviewing recordings of police encounters for 20 states submitted via the ACLU's Mobile Justice App.

COMMUNICATIONS

The hand of the ACLU of Missouri's communication team is in every social media post, every press release, and every article published on the ACLU of Missouri's website. This two-person team led by Tom Bastian, Deputy Director for Communications, strives to increase awareness of our work and build support for our priorities and initiatives at the local, state and national levels.

PHOTO BY GILLIAN WILCOX / ACLU-MO



Last year, through efforts led by the communications team, the Missouri ACLU garnered national attention several times.

The CBS Morning Show (CBS *This Morning*) featured our long-time client, Bobby Bostic, who was released on parole after serving 27 years of a 241-year prison sentence uplifting our fight to prevent a man from serving an unjust life sentence.

Bobby Bostic (center) poses for a celebratory picture with friends and family at the state capitol after a press conference marking his release after serving 27 years of a 241-year prison sentence.



Crowd protesting against imposed restrictions on gender-affirming care at a rally in Jefferson City.

PHOTO BY PHILIP DEITCH / STL LGBTQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

We collaborated with transgender Missourians to submit op-eds to newspapers across the state to share personal stories and the lasting effects the organized attacks to restrict their rights and access to life-saving gender-affirming care has on them.

We brought Missouri book bans to the national spotlight highlighting statewide efforts of unconstitutional censorship.

By effectively sharing the ACLU of Missouri's message and work, communications has built a stronger, more informed, and more engaged community of supporters and advocates.

POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS

In 2022, Missouri lawmakers filed 2,104 bills, more than nearly every other state in the nation. In 2023, 2,340 were filed. Amidst this noise, the ACLU of Missouri's three-person legislative team, led by Tori Schafer, Deputy Director for Policy and Campaigns, focuses on bills that are crucial for civil liberties.

One key to our legislative success is 501c4 dollars invested in lobbyists. The Penman Group works with us specifically on blocking anti-transgender legislation. Former Missouri Senator Jeff Smith supports all remaining issues. Another key to our success comes from people who take the time to write letters, visit the capitol, submit op-eds to local newspapers, and make their voices heard. The final key is coalitions. Working with groups like PROMO, Pro Choice Missouri, NAACP and the League of Women Voters allows us to build power by sharing our resources and experience.



Crowd gathered in Kansas City to protest the leaked Dobbs decision that eventually overturned Roe v. Wade.

Beyond the statehouse, the Policy and Campaigns group advocates for legislation at the city level and leads the affiliate's participation in any statewide ballot measures. In 2022, the ACLU of Missouri endorsed the successful campaign to legalize marijuana with automatic expungement.



PHOTO BY CAITLIN UNG / ACLU-MO

A rally held at the state capitol to stand against proposed bills that would censor LGBTQ+ information and topics in classrooms. [Center: Katy Erker-Lynch (PROMO), Tori Schafer (ACLU-MO), and Nikhil Vashee (Family Equality Law)]

LITIGATION

The Litigation team at the ACLU of Missouri is a vital component of our integrated advocacy approach to fighting for and protecting civil liberties. It is comprised of three attorneys led by Gillian Wilcox, Deputy Director for Litigation. Last year the ACLU of Missouri filed 10 cases and 7 appeals.

We sued to ensure an incarcerated individual with HIV has access to life saving medication.

We challenged strict voter ID restrictions that limit specific forms of identification to vote and sued over the criminalization of voter engagement efforts. We filed another lawsuit that aims to improve access to the ballots for voters with disabilities or who are non-English speakers.





The ACLU-MO legal team and clients celebrate after a judge ordered St. Louis County to pay damages for an illegal warrantless entry and search. [From Left: Emily Lazaroff, Tony Rothert, Jon Luer (client), Andres Steinbach (client), Jessie Steffan, Molly Carney, and Gillian Wilcox]

We stood against egregious book bans designed to target BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and authors from other marginalized communities by challenging the government censorship law that caused school districts across the state to remove hundreds of titles from library shelves. We also sued a school district to end its policy of automatically removing library materials after receiving a challenge before a review has taken place.

These cases are just a few examples of how our litigation team works tirelessly to protect the rights of all Missourians and continues to be a critical force for change.

OUR WINS



Wins from 2022 MOLEG

No anti-transgender bills passed, no so-called “CRT” bills passed, and the initiative petition process remained unchanged. Additionally, the Missouri Department of Corrections can now open nurseries in correctional facilities.

Results from 2023 MOLEG

After a session-long fight, no changes were made to Missouri’s initiative petition process. Additionally, the ACLU of Missouri partnered closely with Republicans to introduce new privacy legislation. However, two bills did pass impacting transgender Missourians, one restricting sports for youth and another restricting healthcare for children; the ACLU of Missouri is investigating all possible next steps.

Criminal Legal Reform

At the age of 16, Bobby Bostic was sentenced to 241 years behind bars for armed robbery. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is unconstitutional to sentence a juvenile to life without the possibility of parole for non-homicidal crimes. Through our efforts and the now-retired judge who originally sentenced him, Bobby Bostic finally left prison as a free man in 2022.



Fair Treatment for Workers with Disabilities

The ACLU of Missouri and the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund issued a formal demand to immediately end the discriminatory practice of misclassifying custodial workers with disabilities at the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri and to make retroactive payments to ensure workers with disabilities have access to the same benefits that all employees are entitled to under Missouri's Unemployment Insurance program. This led to the City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen passing a resolution to resolve the issue.

Fair Representation for Bail and Bond Hearings

Judge William E. Hickie ordered Missouri to provide counsel to defendants in criminal cases in time to assist the accused person with critical stages of the process, like bail or bond hearings, and, at a minimum, counsel must be provided within two weeks of qualifying for court-appointed counsel.

Staff Unionization

In December of 2022, the ACLU of Missouri and the United Media Guild formally agreed to ratify an inaugural collective bargaining agreement. The five-year agreement marks the first union contract for employees, who formed a union with the United Media Guild that was voluntarily recognized by the Missouri ACLU on March 8, 2021.

Lead Attorney Celebrated

Deputy Director for Litigation, Gillian Wilcox, was honored as a recipient of a 24th Annual Women's Justice Award, hosted by Missouri Lawyers Media. Based in Kansas City, Wilcox won an award in the Public Service category.

Banned Books Defended



The Missouri ACLU's lawsuit against the Wentzville School District led to the reinstatement of seven banned books, all but one—Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*. Additionally, Missouri's legal team filed a lawsuit against Missouri legislation that caused the removal of hundreds of titles statewide (RSMo. Section §573.550).

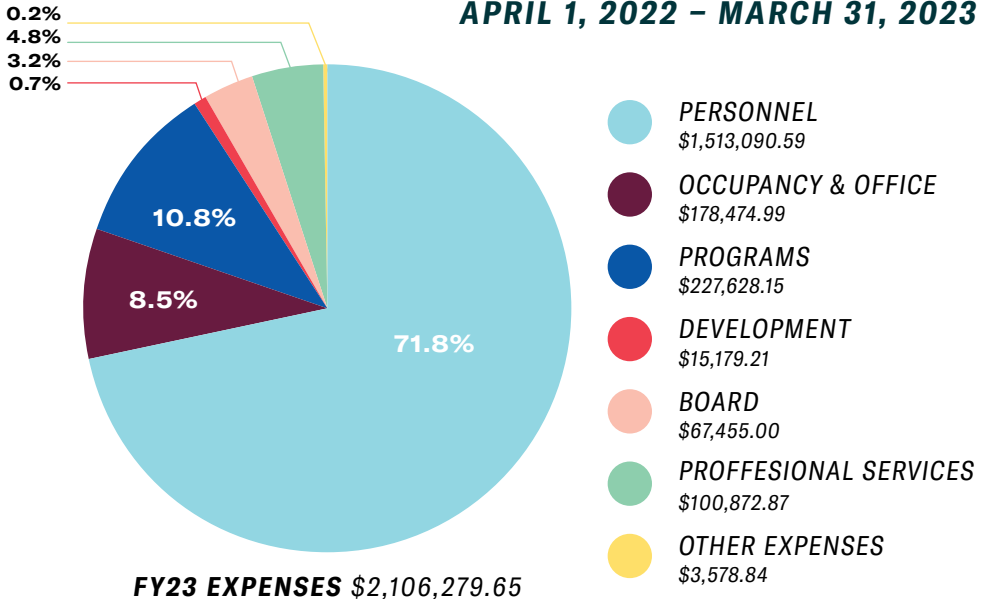
In retaliation to our lawsuits, the House Budget Committee threatened to cut library funding statewide. The Missouri ACLU's attention on the matter helped raise national awareness of the attacks on the state's public libraries which ultimately led to the restoration of the funding.

Free Speech and Social Media

A federal judge ruled after a trial that former St. Louis Board of Aldermen President Lewis Reed violated a constituent's free speech rights when blocking her on the social media platform Twitter for making a critical comment.

FINANCIALS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

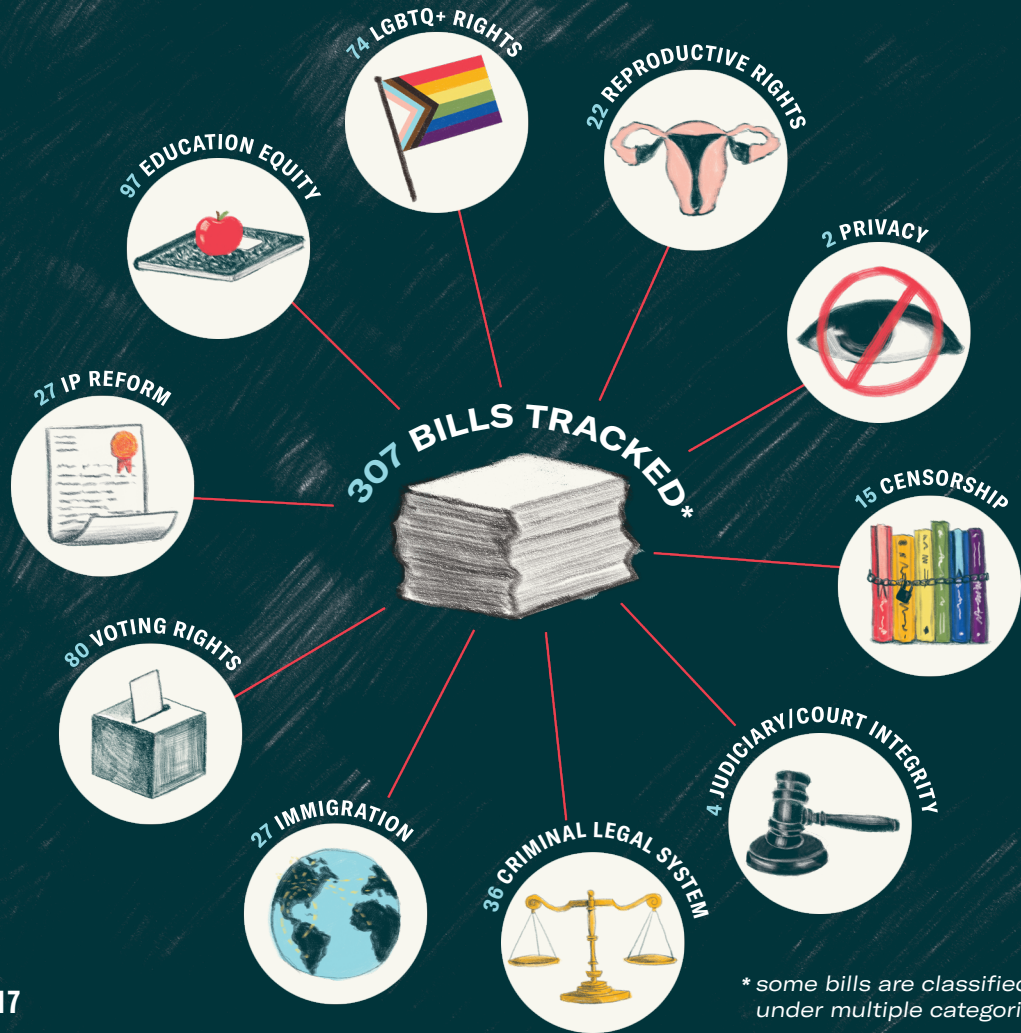
APRIL 1, 2022 – MARCH 31, 2023



PLEASE NOTE: THE NUMBERS ABOVE ARE UNAUDITED

As of May 2023, the ACLU of Missouri's final revenue numbers are still pending our national office's contribution. They will be available by August 2023; **please contact us if you would like final numbers: nrainey@aclu-mo.org or 314.669.3419.**

MOLEG 2023 Bills



OUTPUTS

19 staff

Offices in 2 cities

11,389 Missouri ACLU Members

Over 40 interns & law clerks

1850 intake requests

10 cases and 7 appeals filed

307 bills tracked

Support the ACLU of Missouri and take a stand against threats to our constitutional and civil liberties.

DONATE

Gifts to the ACLU of Missouri Foundation are tax-deductible and further the legal, communications, policy and campaigns, and community engagement activities described in this report.

JOIN

Membership is the way to become a “card-carrying member” of the ACLU. Memberships are not tax-deductible but do support our legislative and campaign work.

LIBERTY LEAGUE

The ACLU of Missouri’s Liberty League is a way for community leaders to publicly state their support for the constitutional rights of all Missourians. Liberty League Members invest \$100 monthly, or \$1,200 annually. They ensure that the ACLU of Missouri has the resources it needs to do its most important work.



ACLU

Missouri

GENDER
AFFIRMING
HEALTHCARE
SAVES LIVES

TRANS RIGHTS
ARE
HUMAN
RIGHTS

DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY MONICA HAINES / ACLU-MO
COVER PHOTOS BY TOM BASTIAN / ACLU-MO