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# Where do we go from here?

Dear friends, old and new,

**T**he book in your hands is unlike any annual report we've shared before. It's 2017 and our America is different. We're different.

This didn't feel like the year to carry on as if nothing has changed. This year, we aren't giving you a list of victories, though we've had many.

This year we are giving you a promise instead of an annual report:

**We aren't going anywhere.**

For 96 years, the ACLU of Missouri has been committed to defending and expanding civil liberties for each and every citizen. As an organization, we've seen nearly a century of progress and setbacks.

We've seen America torn apart during war, unrest, and depressions. We have seen firsthand the hostility of an overzealous government and the brutality of ignorance and hate in our society. We've marched with America and cheered for a dream of a better, more equal, tomorrow.

We promised from the start to be on the right side of history, to remain true to our neighbors. Through all this, we've stood up for the rights of *all* Americans. Not just when it's convenient. Not just for those society says are "worth it."

I'm sharing this because I want you to fully understand what I say next.

This road has been difficult. And after nearly a century, 2017 promises to be the most dire and challenging yet.

**We aren't going anywhere.**

We won't back down. We remain vigilant.

I promise that the ACLU of Missouri will continue to fight for racial equity.

I promise that the ACLU of Missouri will continue to stand up for the right to marry who you love and to be respected for who you are regardless of orientation, gender, or sexuality.

I promise that the ACLU of Missouri will continue to defend reproductive freedom, access, and choices.

I promise that the ACLU of Missouri will continue to advocate the rights of immigrants, their dignity, and their own American dream.

Your freedom of religion, your right to protest, your right to vote — your right to be fundamentally *American* — the ACLU will continue to fight for all of the above and so much more.

It won't be convenient. It won't be easy.

**We aren't going anywhere.**

**I promise.**

**JEFFREY MITTMAN**  
Executive Director

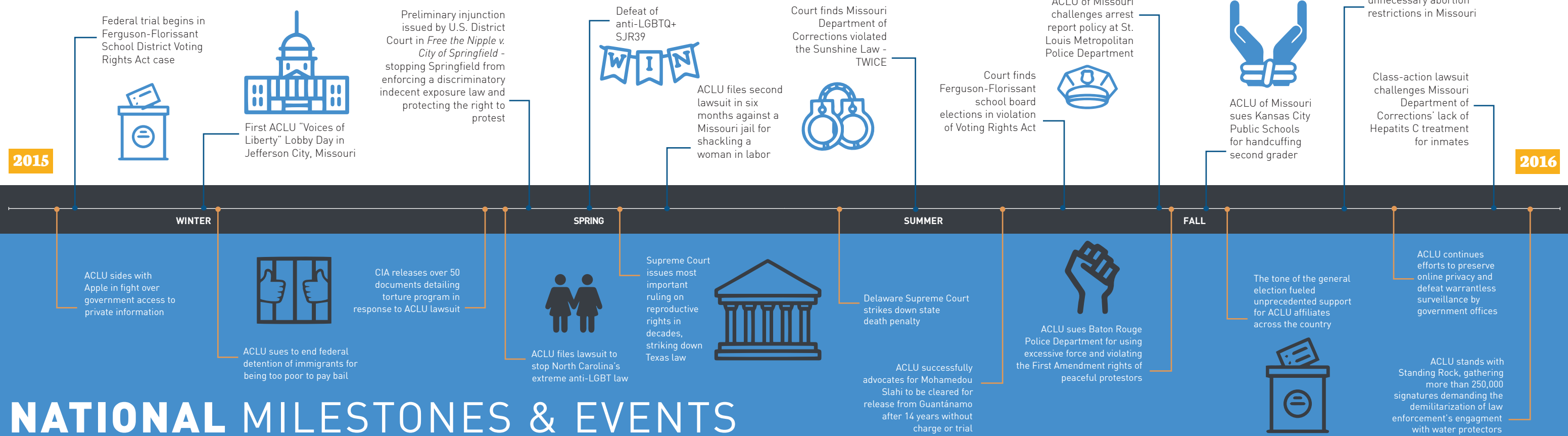
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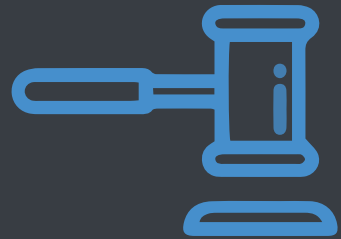
# ACLU OF MISSOURI / A YEAR IN REVIEW



# We are

## for justice

... our legal team of 3 attorneys processing 1,881 complaints, investigating 218 cases, & filing 27 suits.



## for advocacy

... speaking at 40 events, generating 981 news stories, & giving 132 interviews



## for equality

... a team testifying on 118 bills, defeating 34 harmful legislative actions.



## for making a difference

... 300 volunteers, giving 1,730 hours & collecting more than 13,000 petition signatures.



## for each other

...19,000 members & donors from nearly every county in Missouri.



**WE ARE** the **ACLU** of **MISSOURI**

# RACIAL JUSTICE

“ 2 of the 10 school districts with the highest rate of suspensions for black students are in Missouri. One has a 50% suspension rate for black students. ”

# EQUITY & JUSTICE. COMMUNITY FIRST.

The authors of the Declaration of Independence outlined a bold vision for America: a nation in which all people would be free and equal. More than two hundred years later, it has yet to be achieved.

## **FIGHTING FOR RACIAL EQUITY IN MISSOURI**

Missouri still bears the scars from its status as a border state during the Civil War -- ideologically split, it has long-suffered extreme racial disparities and legislative overreach. Missouri's unique position and history has fostered a generation of activists and advocates for racial justice with the capacity to change the world. Missouri has become ground zero for the struggle, with a focus on long-standing aggressions from law enforcement and the deep socio-economic disparities that plague Missouri.

## **SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE**

Kalyb Primm, a second grader in Kansas City, was handcuffed by school staff for crying after being bullied. In too many schools, black boys as young as kindergarten are taught that they are guilty until proven otherwise. Missouri disciplines students of color disproportionately higher than any other state. We are fighting for justice and continue to educate school districts and parents on ways to change a system that harms the future of a generation.

## **ACCOUNTABLE POLICING**

For law enforcement to protect and serve all, there must be trust. In Missouri, African-American drivers in Missouri are 69% more likely to be stopped than whites (despite searches finding contraband more frequently in white drivers' cars). We are championing the Fourth Amendment Affirmation Act to the Missouri Legislature to address racial disparities in policing.

# VOTING RIGHTS

“ In just one year, 27 measures were passed in 19 states to make it harder to exercise the right to vote. In 2016, Missouri joined these ranks. ”

# YOUR VOTE. YOUR VOICE.

Since 2008, states across the country have passed measures to make it harder for Americans—particularly black people, the elderly, students, and people with disabilities—to exercise their fundamental right to cast a ballot.

## **ENSURING ALL VOICES ARE HEARD IN MISSOURI**

Voting rights in the U.S. are not always a guarantee, particularly for already marginalized communities. States pass racist measures to make it difficult for many to exercise their constitutional right — voter ID laws, cuts to early voting, voter roll purges — all under the false pretense of protecting the ballot. Even worse, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act in 2013. Missouri is not immune to these legislative and ideological gymnastics. We remain vigilant.

## **FERGUSON-FLORISSANT SCHOOL BOARD**

For more than four decades, the Ferguson-Florissant school district never had more than two African-American board members. This is despite more than 80% of the current district students being African-American. A federal judge found the school board election process violated the Voting Rights Act and determined that the at-large system diluted the votes and voice of the African-American community.

## **AMENDMENT 6**

Missouri is now the first state in the nation to strip the right to vote from its state constitution. Similar photo ID laws in other states have been deemed unconstitutional for unfairly targeting marginalized groups. We continue to work to restore voting rights in Missouri and defend against any future suppression tactics.

# LGBTQ+

“ 31 states have no explicit protections against sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination. Missouri’s legislature plans on keeping it that way. ”

# PRIDE. IN THE NAME OF LOVE.

The ACLU has a long history of defending the LGBTQ+ community. We brought our first LGBTQ+ rights case in 1936 and founded the *LGBT Project* in 1986. Today, the ACLU brings more LGBTQ+ cases and advocacy initiatives than any other national organization.

## LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN MISSOURI

Marriage for all was initially won in Missouri with the ACLU of Missouri’s *Barrier v. Vasterling* in 2014, laying the groundwork for the U.S. Supreme Court to stand on the side of marriage equality in 2015 with *Obergefell v. Hodges*. States across the country were forced to do the right thing and start issuing marriage licenses. Yet for every win, there are more attempts to undermine the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in other ways. Citing conscience clauses or manipulating religious freedom to mask intolerance, Missouri has a long way to go.

## SJR39

The ACLU of Missouri, together with PROMO and prominent members of the business community, came together in opposition to a so-called religious exemption amendment that masked discrimination toward LGBTQ+ individuals. We have seen the damage to the economies of other states that passed similar measures. We refused to stand for it here in Missouri and successfully defeated the measure.

## BATHROOM BILLS

Unfounded fears over the use of public restrooms are fueling a rash of unconstitutional and discriminatory bills. A number of these have been filed by Missouri lawmakers that would make public schools enforce gender-specific bathrooms and locker rooms. We are actively working to defeat these bills.

# IMMIGRATION

“ There are 41 million immigrants in the U.S. More than 200,000 are making Missouri part of their American dream. ”

# OPEN ARMS. WELCOME NEIGHBORS.

When the government has the power to deny legal rights to any group, everyone's rights are at risk. We have been at the forefront of almost every major legal struggle for immigrants' rights: challenging laws that deny access to the courts, due process, and discriminate on the basis of nationality.

## **IMMIGRANTS MAKE AMERICA GREAT**

Missouri's foreign-born population has increased nearly 150% in the past 15 years. These New Americans are integral to the continued health and development of our state — sustaining metropolitan populations, joining our workforce, contributing as state taxpayers, engaging as students, and building the American Dream as community-enriching entrepreneurs. Missouri is improved by welcoming new neighbors and we challenge laws that intend to treat anyone differently under the same constitution.

## **DACA STUDENTS**

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) allows young adults who entered the country as undocumented minors to be protected from deportation and eligible for work permits and education. However, the Missouri Legislature added a line item to the budget requiring schools to charge DACA students international tuition rates, more than doubling their costs and disqualifying them for scholarships. To punish students who had no say in how they arrived in the country is against the law. We are proud to represent these students and work to change this policy.

## **ICE DETENTION FACILITY**

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operates private prisons across the country, despite federal discouragement of the practice. These facilities routinely deny immigrants due process and other civil liberties. Missouri is home to one of these ICE facilities.



# CREATING A PATH FORWARD

Where do we go from here?

# 2017

## DATES OF NOTE

1/4/17	Legislative Session Begins
2/28/17	ACLU Lobby Day
5/12/17	Legislative Session Ends
Summer	Annual Meeting
Fall	ACLU Fall Event Series Veto Session

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY ISSUES

What We're Fighting For:

- + Laws reducing racial disparities in policing
- + Anti-discrimination laws protecting all Missourians
- + Immigrants' Rights
- + Transgender Rights
- + Reproductive Rights

## CASES TO WATCH

& the Constitutional Rights We're Protecting

- ACLU & Missouri Public Defender's Office (6th Amendment)
- MO NAACP v. Ferguson-Florissant School District (Voting Rights Act)
- Postawko v. Missouri Department of Corrections (8th Amendment)

# Thank you.

We've been able to do this much because of the steadfast support from ACLU members across the state.

We are humbled and grateful that you are fighting with us. Know that you will be crucial to our success in 2017.

And we promise you —

**We aren't going anywhere.**

Please join us in thanking our major donors.  
Visit us online at [www.aclu-mo.org/annual-report](http://www.aclu-mo.org/annual-report)

