ACLU
Michigan





WHAT IF WE USE THIS TIME OF UPHEAVAL TO CREATE A BOLD NEW FUTURE? One where every person can live freely and with dignity. The ACLU of Michigan is joining with you — our volunteers, donors, members, and allies — to work towards the America we dream of. Thank you for being in the fight.

2026 IMPACT REPORT

THROWING SAND IN THE GEARS OF TRUMP'S ANTI-IMMIGRANT MACHINE

THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS Across the country, immigrants are being snatched from their communities, put into detention centers, and denied bond hearings to which they are entitled - no matter how long they have been in the United States. Detroiter Jose Contreras-Cervantes, a husband and father of three with a rare form of leukemia, was taken by ICE during a routine traffic stop. During his detention, he was denied life-saving medication while his family remained in turmoil. In May, the ACLU and the Contreras-Cervantes family struck a major blow against the Trump administration's inhumane policy denying bond hearings to noncitizens. In response to a habeas corpus petition filed by the ACLU of Michigan and the national ACLU on behalf of Mr. Contreras-Cervantes and twelve other Michiganders, a U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the administration's mandatory detention policy violates the U.S. Constitution. The decision affects potentially hundreds of thousands of immigrants across Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Our lawsuit is part of a multi-faceted effort to flood the courts with similar cases. Last Fall, the ACLU of Michigan and Michigan Immigrant Rights Center launched a habeas pro bono project which has trained nearly 200 lawyers how to represent immigrants in bond hearings, helping to secure the release of hundreds of Michiganders who have been able to return to their families and communities where they belong.



STOPPING COURTHOUSE ARRESTS Justice depends on courthouses remaining sanctuaries where all people can exercise their rights without fear. When the Trump administration expanded immigration enforcement to courthouses across the U.S., immigrants attending court for civil matters or to simply to access court services were immediately put at risk. The ACLU of Michigan and our partner the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center swiftly responded, asking the Michigan Supreme Court to adopt a proposed rule that would put an end to civil arrests, including most ICE arrests, in courthouses. After months of advocacy which included a letter of support signed by thirty organizations and our testimony before the court, the court adopted our rule, restoring the ability of immigrants to attend state court proceedings without the fear of being snatched by ICE.

DEMANDING DEMOCRACY

SLAPPING DOWN SLAPP SUITS Free speech is the cornerstone of our democracy, yet for decades, the rich and powerful have weaponized the legal system to stifle public dissent. Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) are a common tool for intimidating and silencing criticism – including from whistleblowers, journalists, activists, and everyday people – by tying them up with lengthy and costly court battles meant to drain their financial resources and coerce them into silence. After nearly two decades of unwavering advocacy by the ACLU of Michigan, our state legislature unanimously passed landmark anti-SLAPP protections in early 2026, making Michigan the 39th state to do so. Under this new law, state courts can now rapidly throw out baseless cases and impose fines on businesses and others who bring these suits. This historic step ensures legal protections for Michiganders who speak out against the powerful without fear.

SAFEGUARDING OUR ELECTION Protecting the right to vote requires constant vigilance. After discovering that hundreds of Ypsilanti Township voters were potentially wrongly removed from the rolls, the ACLU of Michigan sent a letter and Freedom of Information Act request to the clerk's office, requesting details on how this happened. The Ypsilanti Township Clerk and her staff quickly acknowledged their error and provided information demonstrating that over 300 voter registrations were improperly canceled. The clerk's office collaborated with the ACLU of Michigan and the Bureau of Elections to ensure that every wrongful voter registration was reinstated and created additional procedures and training to improve compliance with voter registration laws and voter list maintenance. The ACLU of Michigan is continuing to monitor voter registration cancellations around the state to ensure that eligible voters are not removed from the rolls. This is just one part of our election safeguarding strategy that is also tracking and responding to mis- and disinformation, preventing voter suppression, and making sure our elections are fair and free.

ORGANIZING, PEOPLE, AND POWER ACLU supporters across the state are coming together to fight authoritarianism through our Power & Purpose training. Power & Purpose is a free, high impact day-long experience designed to give people the tools to organize, resist authoritarian overreach, and champion democracy in their own communities. We have held trainings in Detroit, Flint, Kalamazoo and Traverse City, teaching hundreds of Michiganders how to undermine authoritarianism and defend democracy with the power of mass nonviolent resistance. Participants learn how to identify allies, networks, and power dynamics in their communities, engage people through persuasive, values-based conversation, and build authentic relationships that inspire others to take meaningful collective action. A strong democracy depends on the power of people asserting their rights. In this next year, the ACLU of Michigan will continue to host these trainings around the state, building a strong network of activists fighting for freedom.

PROTECTING PRIVACY: DE-FLOCK OUR CITIES

SHUTTING DOWN THE SURVEILLANCE STATE People across the country are outraged over the use of invasive government surveillance through automatic license plate readers (ALPR) contracts, and the ACLU helping them harness that energy to demand their cities protect their privacy. Residents of Bay City, Ferndale, and Lapeer County worked with the ACLU of Michigan to get their officials to end contracts with Flock Safety, a company that is helping build a mass-surveillance infrastructure across the country. Flock and other companies are selling nationwide automatic license plate reader networks that enable police agencies across the U.S. to track drivers in real-time — without a warrant, probable cause, or even reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing.



This technology, which is completely unregulated in Michigan, poses serious threats to privacy. ALPR networks and the people who use them also make mistakes — with frightening consequences. In 2023, the Detroit Police handcuffed a mother and put her two-year-old child with autism in a patrol car after using ALPR technology to wrongly accuse the mother of a crime. Momentum to limit the use of ALPRs continues to grow. Residents of Grand Rapids are working with the ACLU of Michigan to increase oversight of Flock cameras while a Michigan State House committee has introduced bipartisan bills to establish guardrails for the use of ALPR technology as a result of our advocacy.

ACLU Michigan



ARTIST'S STATEMENT — "ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE"

This year's striking image is by muralist and conservationist Eddie Chafer, who wrote, "This design combines hittin'-the-streets activism with fire-adapted ecosystems. For Michigan species like the Bur Oak, Jack Pine, Wild Lupine, Karner Blue Butterfly, and Kirtland's Warbler - all pictured - fire is critical to their life cycles. For new seeds to take root, periodic fires must clear away old, dead growth. Though fires seem negative, they create nutrient-rich soils that support a new world. With this year's theme of 'Another World Is Possible,' I wanted to show how our current sociopolitical upheaval could yield a healthier future for everyone."