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ACLU

Michigan

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2022

IMPACT REPORT

YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



\$2,852,867 The estimated value of the hours donated by attorneys this year.



3,485 ACLU-MI activist actions to protect voting rights, reproductive rights, and the right to representation in Detroit.



2,000 Volunteers who helped us collect 753,759 signatures to place the Reproductive Freedom for All measure on the November, 2022 ballot.

THE FIGHT TO PROTECT AND EXPAND CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES REQUIRES PASSION AND PERSISTENCE, AND WE COULD NOT WIN THESE BATTLES FOR LGBTQ RIGHTS, CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM REFORM, VOTING RIGHTS, AND REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM WITHOUT YOUR CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS. WE THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN A SHARED VISION OF EQUALITY AND FREEDOM FOR ALL.

Equality For Everyone: A Historic Victory for the LGBTQ Community

On July 28, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that our state's civil rights law bans discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The ACLU of Michigan wrote and organized a friend-of-the-court brief representing dozens of partners and argued the case alongside the Attorney General. The case was originally brought by two for-profit companies that refused to provide services to LGBTQ customers while claiming that the MDCR does not have the legal authority to enforce these rights.

This historic win makes Michigan a state with one of the strongest, most expansive civil rights laws in the country. The ruling follows our landmark 2020 U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Bostock v Clayton County, Georgia*, and decades of work with our LGBTQ-rights partners to ensure equality in employment, housing, education, and public accommodations. At long last, Michigan law now guarantees that everyone in the LGBTQ community can live their authentic lives free from discrimination.

A Game-Changing Agreement to Reform Cash Bail

For decades, thousands of people, presumed innocent, have been needlessly locked in jail simply because they were too poor to pay bail. The cash bail system was intended to ensure that people return to court to face the charges against them. Instead, throughout Michigan and the nation, it has become a machine of mass incarceration that targets the poor and devastates communities of color. Katrina Gardner, a single mother who was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, is one of the many people who has been negatively impacted by this unfair system. She was forced to use her rent money to pay bail, and as a result she was kicked out of her residence, leaving Katrina and her children unhoused for months.

In July, the ACLU of Michigan and our partners reached an unprecedented agreement for bail reform that will dramatically lower the number of Detroiters put behind bars. This agreement with Detroit's 36th District Court not only makes a broken system fairer, it is also a model for courts across the country. To quote Ms. Gardner, "No one should have to experience that kind of hardship simply because they lack financial resources ... [B]ecause of this agreement, other people won't have to go through what my family went through. It's going to make a difference."

What's next? The ACLU of Michigan is pushing statewide bail reform through comprehensive legislation that would limit cash bail and prioritize rehabilitative support over punishment. Together, we're bringing an end to a system that is inherently unequal and unjust.

Defending Democracy in Michigan: Battleground States Initiative

The coming midterm elections could not be more consequential. Building on a statewide election protection program the ACLU of Michigan spearheaded in 2020, we are leading a first-of-its-kind initiative with 12 other ACLU state offices and the National ACLU to fight back against threats to democracy in battleground states that will only grow as we approach the 2024 election. One piece of this strategy—engaging local election officials—seeks to ensure that Michigan voters, especially those from historically disenfranchised groups, have full access to the tools provided under Proposal 3, the statewide voting access measure passed in 2018. Our clerk engagement program, which will operate in 30 key cities, emphasizes the safeguarding of access, the prevention of misinformation and disinformation, and the protection of elections. Preserving democracy demands the use of every means at our disposal, and with your help, the ACLU of Michigan is bringing the full array of our advocacy, education, and legal power to bear on protecting the vote in November.

Unanimous State Supreme Court Ruling that Puts an End to Decades of Racial Profiling

For 30 years the Grand Rapids Police Department employed a policy under which they stopped, photographed, and fingerprinted anyone regardless of whether they were accused of a crime. We achieved a massive victory for privacy and civil liberties on July 22 when the Michigan Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the GRPD's policy is unconstitutional. For nearly a decade, the ACLU of Michigan had challenged the policy on behalf of two Black teenagers—Keyon Harrison and Denishio Johnson—whose Fourth Amendment rights were violated when they were detained, photographed, and fingerprinted by officers who viewed them as "suspicious" but didn't arrest or charge them with any crime. The GRPD's dangerous "photograph and print" policy was used on thousands of people, with Black people targeted disproportionately. Our win will send a strong signal to other Michigan police departments not to replicate Grand Rapids' practices. Together, we are ending decades of racial profiling, police overreach, and threats to personal privacy.

A Giant Step Closer to Keeping Abortion Legal in Michigan

In the hours after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v Wade*, people across the state closed ranks and said, "Not here!" More than 700,000 Michiganders – a historic number – signed the Reproductive Freedom For All petition to preserve the right to abortion and protect broader reproductive freedoms by enshrining these rights in Michigan's constitution. This statewide measure will appear as Proposal 3 on the November general election ballot. The Reproductive Freedom For All campaign, led by the ACLU of Michigan, Michigan Voices, and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan, is being watched carefully by other states as a potential blueprint for protecting the fundamental right to make our own decisions in all matters relating to pregnancy.

We are not just safeguarding abortion access through direct democracy; we're also protecting it in the courts. In August, the Michigan Court of Claims ruled that a 1931 felony abortion ban violates the Michigan Constitution because it "would deprive pregnant women of their right to bodily integrity and autonomy, and the equal protection under the law." This decision in our lawsuit filed on behalf of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan will be challenged, underscoring the need to permanently protect the right to abortion in the Constitution. With your partnership, we will never stop fighting to keep abortion legal and to expand access to this essential health care for 2.2 million Michiganders.

