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 and others organized a friend-of-the-court brief representing dozens of partners and argued the case alongside the Attorney General. The case was originally brought to court by the ACLU of Michigan as part of our LGBTQ-rights advocacy. The ruling is one of the strongest, most expansive civil rights laws in the country. The ruling means that everyone in the LGBTQ community can live their authentic lives without fear of discrimination.

Defending Democracy in Michigan: Battleground States Initiative

The ongoing election season 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. Our success in this strategy—involving local election officials—depends on ensuring that Michigan voters, especially those from historically disenfranchised groups, have full access to the tools provided under Proposal 2, 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. Preventing 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 major 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—Kayan Harrison and Destea Johnson—who haveFourth Amendment rights were violated when they were detained, photographed, and fingerprinted by officers who viewed them as “suspects” 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 cried, raged, and asked, “What next?” More than 700,000 Michiganders—a historic number—signed the Reproductive Freedom for All measure to preserve the right to abortion and protect broader reproductive freedoms by enshrining those 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 closely 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 is our lawsuit filed on behalf of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan, a long-standing advocate by other states as a potential blueprint for protecting the fundamental right to make our own decisions in all matters relating to pregnancy.

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