

2025 ANNUAL REPORT | Resilient and Resolute



A YEAR OF GROWTH AND COMMITMENT

As I reflect on my first year with the ACLU of Maine, it is a joy to share and celebrate the many ways we are making a difference across the state. In a time of transition and unprecedented attacks, the ACLU of Maine stands firm

in its commitment and vision of the United States as a vibrant, multicultural democracy. This year, despite facing new challenges and significant headwinds, our legal, policy, and engagement work expanded dramatically across the state.

As this report demonstrates, the ACLU of Maine plays an active role in the courts, in the legislature, and in the public square. Together, we have championed both civil liberties – like freedom of speech and expression – and civil rights – like protection from discrimination – for all people in Maine.

Much about the future may be uncertain, but the ACLU of Maine will remain steadfast in its commitments. We know that in addition to our legal expertise, public education, and community engagement, these times require we bring our full humanity to bear on the challenges we face. I am so proud of our incredible team of dedicated staff and visionary board members who remain committed to engaging this work with curiosity, kindness, humor, skill, and creativity. And we are all deeply grateful to our many supporters – including donors, members, participants, and action-takers – that make our work possible and help build a future where civil rights and civil liberties are the true foundation of our political and legal systems.

In solidarity and gratitude,
Molly Curren Rowles

Molly Curren Rowles, Executive Director

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FROM THE STATE HOUSE: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

BODILY AUTONOMY: With partners, we defeated all 16 bills undermining trans rights and reproductive freedom – ranging from limits on adults’ gender-affirming care to complete abortion bans. We also helped pass new laws to strengthen patient/provider privacy and expand access to family planning.

PRIVACY: Big Tech pushed three bills to upend Maine’s data privacy laws so companies could track what you do online and sell that data. We rallied a bi-partisan coalition to stop all of them.

VOTING RIGHTS: We helped defeat all bills targeting voting rights, including mandatory voter ID and ending ongoing absentee voting.

PUBLIC DEFENSE: We championed a bill to fund new public defenders, strengthening Maine’s ability to uphold the right to a fair trial. This is another part of ending the public defense crisis, alongside our litigation in *Robbins v. Maine*.

IMMIGRANTS’ RIGHTS & DUE PROCESS: As the federal government carries out a “mass deportation” agenda, we are fighting to protect due process rights and prevent Maine law enforcement from being complicit in federal civil rights abuses. We championed legislation to limit state and local police involvement in federal immigration enforcement. It passed both chambers and will become law unless the governor vetoes it at the start of the next session.

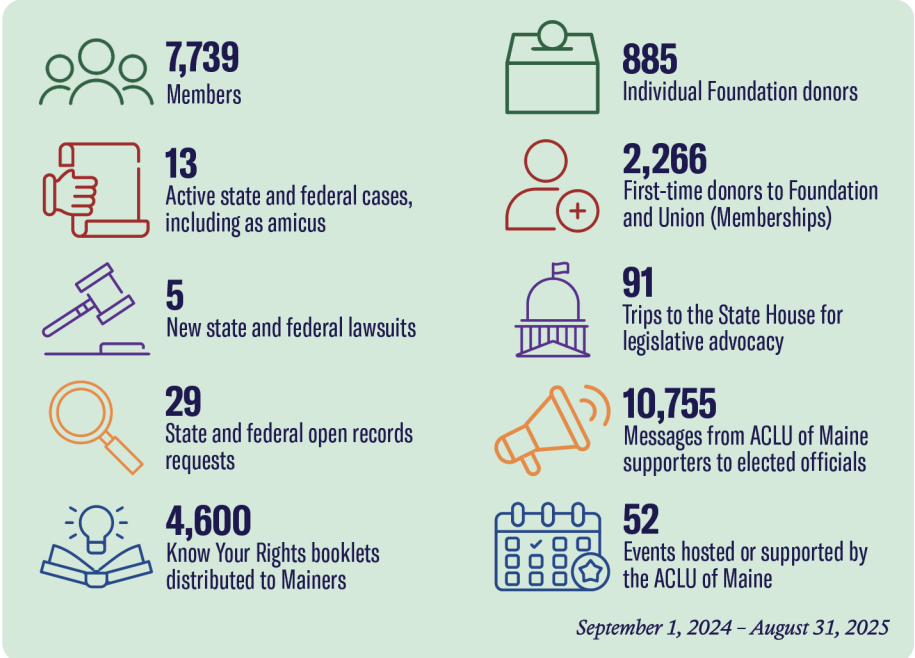
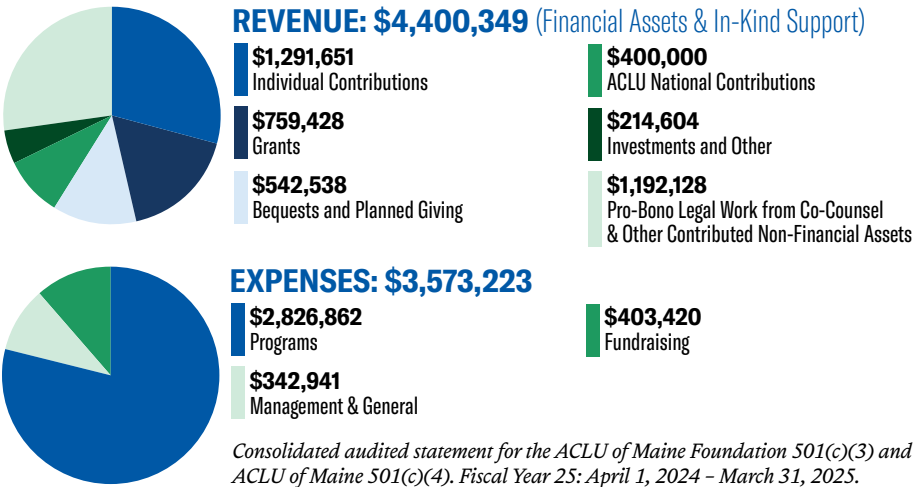
See our full legislative report at [ACLUMaine.org/2025LegislativeReport](https://aclumaine.org/2025LegislativeReport)

SEE YOU IN COURT: CASE HIGHLIGHTS

- ROBBINS V. STATE OF MAINE:**
- ISSUE** Maine is denying attorneys to people who have been charged with a crime and cannot afford their own, a clear violation of the Sixth Amendment.
- STATUS** Active: Maine appealed our trial court victory.
- COURT** Kennebec County Superior Court, Maine Supreme Judicial Court
- STATE OF MAINE V. DERRIC MCLAIN:**
- ISSUE** Police continued interrogating a suspect after he ambiguously invoked his right to remain silent, something police are allowed to do under the U.S. Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Fourth Amendment. We urged the state court to expand protections at the state level, arguing that the Maine Constitution requires police to stop interrogations if a suspect invokes their right to remain silent or requests an attorney – even if they do so in an ambiguous manner.
- STATUS** Victory: The court ruled in our favor, expanding protections in Maine.
- COURT** Maine Supreme Judicial Court (The ACLU of Maine presented arguments to the court as amicus to the case.)
- SMITH V. TRUMP:**
- ISSUE** Trump’s sanctions against the International Criminal Court silence human rights advocates, violating their First Amendment rights.
- STATUS** The trial court blocked enforcement of the executive order as the case proceeds.
- COURT** U.S. District Court for the District of Maine
- NHICS V. TRUMP and BARBARA V. TRUMP:**
- ISSUE** Trump’s executive order restricting birthright citizenship is a blatant violation of the 14th Amendment’s plain language.
- STATUS** The trial court blocked enforcement of the executive order as the case proceeds. The federal government appealed, and the appeals court upheld our victory from the trial court.
- COURT** U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire, U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

THE YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

The ACLU of Maine Foundation and the ACLU of Maine (Union) are separate nonprofit organizations. The Foundation conducts litigation and public education programs. It is a 501(c)(3) organization, and contributions to it are tax deductible. The Union conducts membership outreach and organizing, legislative advocacy, and lobbying. It is supported primarily by membership dues. It is a 501(c)(4) organization, and donations to it are not tax deductible.



Freedom is an Act

Ryan Adams, 2025

I am a painter and muralist born and raised in Portland, Maine. My ‘gem’ style of work is centered around the abstraction of letterforms and often includes a statement embedded within. For this piece, we went with ‘Freedom is an act,’ taken from a quote by John Lewis. I had the honor of creating a mural of this piece in the ACLU of Maine’s office. It just so happened to fall during the first few weeks of January when we were waking up to an onslaught of executive orders placed by the new president. I was in an anxious and overwhelmed place when I arrived to paint. Over the course of the week, I was able to personally see the tireless, organized, and effective efforts of the ACLU of Maine team, as well as have a candid conversation with the executive director that filled me with optimism. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to work with the ACLU of Maine and for their work to make this country a better place.

