



## Springing Into Action

*A note from Executive Director Molly Curren Rowles*

As spring comes to Maine, our fight for justice, civil rights, and the rule of law is heating up with new legal challenges and issues raised daily. Our commitment to this work remains steadfast, and we are grateful for your ongoing involvement in ACLU activities, litigation, and advocacy.

**Our mission doesn't fall within well-worn political parameters. It requires ongoing vigilance, and it has never been more important.**

Our legal team recently won a landmark victory in *Robbins v. Maine*. The state was ordered to meet its constitutional obligation to provide defense attorneys for people charged with a crime who cannot afford their own. As that litigation

continues, we are also expanding our capacity to support immigrants' rights throughout the state. Additionally, we have filed two new suits challenging unlawful Trump executive orders and we're demanding information from federal and local law enforcement about ICE activity in Maine.

Our legislative team is in Augusta working with coalition partners and lawmakers to quash bills that would restrict our personal freedoms or violate the Constitution or Maine law. They are also championing new initiatives to strengthen rights and

*Continued on page 2*

## VICTORY: Maine Ordered to End Sixth Amendment Crisis

**WE REACHED A MILESTONE** in our case to uphold the right to an attorney for people who cannot afford their own. On March 7, the superior court decided in favor of our clients. It ordered the state to uphold the Sixth Amendment and establish a plan to end our state's ongoing crisis.

The U.S. Constitution guarantees that anyone accused of a crime gets a lawyer if they cannot afford one. But for years, Maine has not done this. As of early March, nearly 500 people faced charges and had no attorney. 111 of them were incarcerated, locked up at a time when they were legally innocent.

In 2019, we began working to convince the state to fix things. That advocacy didn't lead to change, so we took the state to court in 2022. Three years later, the court told Maine to create a plan to ensure people receive legal help from the time charges are filed through the case's end. If the state cannot guarantee an attorney for all in need, the court will order people released from jail and charges dismissed.

This order is a serious remedy to address an egregious problem. It's also not a new or radical idea. In 2004, Massachusetts' highest court issued a similar ruling. An Oregon court recently ordered people released after seven days without a lawyer.

Through thousands of hours of work, we saw the impact of Maine's failure to provide counsel. People lost jobs and homes, missed their children's birthdays, and couldn't visit dying parents. As Mainers waited for their day in court, evidence was lost, witnesses' memories faded, and their cases weakened. Meanwhile, prosecutors brought the weight of the state against these unrepresented defendants — in the name of Maine's people — while they had no one by their side.

A fair process is the basis of our legal system and serves all: the accused, crime victims, and the public. Our legal system should uncover the truth so the innocent can be free and clear their names, victims can seek justice, and the public is informed. But none of that can happen unless the accused has an attorney.

**By denying people their right to an attorney, Maine has created a two-tiered system of justice: one for the rich and one for the poor.**

*Continued on page 3*

*Springing Forward, cont.*

freedoms – from limiting mass surveillance to protecting bodily autonomy.

There are many ways you can get involved. Join us at an event where we are tabling or sign up for one of our upcoming webinars. Learn more through our “Know Your Rights” materials and share them with friends and family in print or online. Consider donating to help us continue expanding our work across the state, and join us as a member or volunteer. See more at [ACLUMaine.org/Act](https://aclumaine.org/Act).

The ACLU’s commitment to freedom for all has never

been easy and it isn’t always convenient or popular. It doesn’t fall within well-worn political parameters, it requires ongoing vigilance, and it has **never** been more important. Thank you for your commitment to our work. We are honored to carry this torch alongside you through every kind of weather.

In solidarity,

*Molly Curren Rowles*

**Molly Curren Rowles**, Executive Director



Thousands gathered in Maine towns from York to Presque Isle as part of nationwide *Hands Off!* protests. We were thrilled to gather in Portland to connect and share resources.



Legal Director Carol Garvan testified on legislation to uphold the right to a speedy trial in Maine. See all of the bills we’re working on at [ACLUMaine.org/Legislation](https://aclumaine.org/Legislation).



Alongside other New England affiliates, we sued Donald Trump just hours after he took office, successfully blocking his birthright citizenship ban in federal court.



Earlier this spring, we joined other advocates for *Come As You Are*, a night of art and resistance sponsored by SPACE and the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance.

## RE-ENGAGING ACROSS MAINE

**WE WERE THRILLED TO WELCOME** our engagement and education coordinator, Aaron Rosenblum, earlier this spring. Aaron has already gotten the ACLU back into communities and has big plans ahead.

If you want to get involved or stay up to date, join our emails and share volunteer interests at [ACLUMaine.org/Act](https://aclumaine.org/Act). Find an event near you at [ACLUMaine.org/Events](https://aclumaine.org/Events). For the latest, follow [@ACLUMaine](https://twitter.com/ACLUMaine) or Instagram, Facebook, and Bluesky.

As we re-engage, please stay in touch and share how we can show up for your community.

## THE VALUE OF YOUR SUPPORT

Our work at the front lines is possible only because of your generosity. Every single gift – big or small – fuels our mission and shows the strength of Maine’s people coming together to support our shared causes. Every dollar is a statement of your commitment to freedom, equality, and justice.

We need you by our side at this critical time. Together, we are shaping a future where justice is in reach for all. Your support – at any level – makes an impact. [Learn more at ACLUMaine.org/Give](https://aclumaine.org/Give).

*With gratitude, Kim Allen, Development Director*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lily Lu, President  
Robert T. Kelley, National Board Representative, Immediate Past President  
Kathryn A. Yates, Vice President  
Karla Doremus-Tranfield, Treasurer  
Sara Lewis, Secretary

Douglas Milton, Equity Officer  
Nancy Osher Blumberg  
Lynn Brandsma  
Meghan Ginzer  
Felix Hagenimana  
Jodi Nofsinger  
Alexia Pappas  
Lisa Sockbasin

### TEAM

Molly Curren Rowles, Executive Director  
Kim Allen, Development Director  
Samuel Crankshaw, Communications Director  
Eleanor Ehle, Administrative Assistant  
Carol Garvan, Legal Director

Zachary Heiden, Chief Counsel  
Michael Kebede, Policy Director  
Maggie Nugent, Communications Fellow  
Alicia Rea, Policy Fellow  
Aaron Rosenblum, Engagement and Education Coordinator

Margarita Salguero-Macklin, Operations Director  
Nell Shea, Paralegal  
Shannon Sonrouille, Finance Director  
Anahita Sotoohi, Staff Attorney  
Heather Zimmerman, Legal Fellow

[ACLUMaine.org/Team](https://aclumaine.org/Team)

# 2025 Legislative Session

**STATES ARE AT THE FRONT LINES** in the fight for our freedom. Throughout 2024, we were preparing so Maine could resist abuses of power and attacks on our rights. We are working with lawmakers on hundreds of bills, ranging from immigrants' rights and abortion access to transgender equality and the right to a speedy trial.

The second Trump administration is threatening our most basic rights and freedoms. Targeting specific minority groups undermines due process rights for all. When power is consolidated, our system of checks and balances is dismantled.

Our legislative priorities are connected by the idea that all people should be able to live freely and that any government involvement must be fair and transparent:

- **Privacy:** Big Tech collects your sensitive information – like your location during a protest or a trip to a health center – and sells it to anyone willing to pay, including the government. Maine consumers must be empowered to protect their privacy and limit what they share.
- **Immigrants' Rights:** Federal immigration authorities routinely violate due process and other constitutional rights. Local law enforcement resources should never be used to support these practices.
- **Bodily Autonomy:** Abortion access and gender-affirming care are linked by a simple idea that you should have the right to determine your own life path. We're working with lawmakers to protect access to care in Maine and fend off threats from out of state prosecutors.
- **Criminal Law:** When the government brings the weight of the state against you, it is their responsibility to uphold your right to a speedy trial and to an attorney – but that has not been the case in Maine. The Constitution requires clear timelines for criminal proceedings and adequate public defense.

Scan the code for all priorities or visit [ACLUMaine.org/Legislation](https://aclumaine.org/Legislation)



## We'll See You In Court

Since Trump took office, ACLU offices around the country have filed over 30 lawsuits against illegal executive orders – including here in Maine. At the ACLU of Maine, we're pushing back by:

- Blocking Trump's attempt to overturn birthright citizenship in our lawsuit *NHICS v. Trump*.
- Challenging Trump's sanctions against the International Criminal Court and silencing human rights advocates – a clear violation of our clients' First Amendment rights – in *Smith v. Trump*.
- Expanding Know Your Rights resources.
- Supporting public universities with guidance on protecting academic freedom and equal access.
- Helping community partners prepare for immigration enforcement entering schools, places of worship, health care centers, shelters, and more.
- Exposing how ICE could use Maine as part of its mass deportation efforts.

### *Sixth Amendment, cont.*

This ruling is a significant milestone for Sixth Amendment rights, but there's a long way to go. The state has appealed the court's March order, and an enduring solution will require a comprehensive response from the whole of state government, including emergency legislation to expand public defense services.

No innocent person should be locked up or dragged through the system for months without a lawyer. This situation is intolerable, and we hope the court's order will bring us closer to a solution.

Scan the code for more or visit [ACLUMaine.org/Robbins](https://aclumaine.org/Robbins)



## Know Your Rights

We've expanded our Know Your Rights resources so you can protect yourself and your community:

- Multilingual videos about interacting with ICE
- Checklists for places of worship, schools, and health centers so staff are prepared if ICE arrives
- Your First Amendment rights when sharing Know Your Rights information

Scan the code or see more at [ACLUMaine.org/KYR](https://aclumaine.org/KYR)





ACLU of Maine  
PO Box 7860  
Portland, ME 04112

ACLUMaine.org  
@ACLUMaine




NONPROFIT  
ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Portland, ME  
Permit No. 235

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# JOIN THE FIGHT.

We hope you continue joining us to create a more perfect union.

 **Make a tax-deductible donation by completing and returning the enclosed envelope, or give online by scanning the code or visiting [ACLUMaine.org/Give](https://aclumaine.org/Give),**  
where you can also learn about planned giving and becoming a member.

