

Highlights from THE LEGAL DOCKET

The courts are one of the most powerful avenues we have for protecting and expanding the rights of all Mainers. Here is just some of what our legal team is up to.

Skowhegan Mascot Change – We were proud to support tribal leaders who have worked for years to end the use of indigenous mascots in Maine schools. Numerous studies show that using indigenous mascots lowers the self-esteem of native students and teaches students that racial stereotyping is acceptable. After all but one school heeded the call, our legal team sent a letter to the last remaining hold out, Skowhegan, outlining the civil rights issues at stake. And we headed to Skowhegan to join community members at no fewer than three school board meetings to discuss the issue. These efforts paid off – in early March, the school board voted to retire the “Indians” mascot – paving the way for Maine to become the first state in the nation to end the use of indigenous mascots in the schools.

Opioid Treatment – Our legal team was in court in February to argue that a ban on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in Aroostook County Jail is unlawful and harmful. Despite the medical consensus that MAT is safe and effective in combating substance use disorder, most Maine jails have policies explicitly prohibiting this treatment for incarcerated people. Our client, Brenda, is a mother from Madawaska who uses MAT to keep her opioid use disorder in remission. Brenda faces excruciating withdrawal and the likelihood of relapse if she is forced to stop taking her medication in jail.



Reproductive Justice – Lawyers from the National ACLU joined us in federal court to challenge a Maine law that requires that abortions be performed solely by physicians and blocks qualified advanced practice clinicians (APCs) like nurse practitioners and nurse-midwives from doing so. APCs already provide a wide range of health services of equal or greater complexity than abortion. Blocking them from providing abortion care serves no medical purpose and limits people’s access to abortion care, especially in rural parts of the state.

To read about all of these efforts and more, visit aclumaine.org and click on “Our Work.”

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THE VIEW FROM AUGUSTA

The legislature is in full swing, and we love seeing ACLU members in action! From calling your legislators, to testifying in Augusta, to spreading the word about key issues – you all are a powerful force. We’ve already seen what can happen when we get together: so far, legislative committees have voted to protect civil rights and liberties on every single bill we’ve asked you to act on. We can’t stop now! We’ve still got upcoming public hearings of some of our priority bills – read on for more information.

LD 94: AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE DISSEMINATION OF OBSCENE MATERIAL BY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Position: Ought Not to Pass
This bill amounts to book banning - it would tell teachers what books they can and cannot teach, based on a vague idea of what may be considered obscene by some.
Status: The Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee unanimously voted “ought not to pass” on this bill.

LD 179: AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF COLUMBUS DAY TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Position: Ought to Pass
When we recognize Columbus Day, we teach our children a story of America’s beginnings that is simply false. We teach them that Columbus discovered this land – which he did not. We teach them a story about America that erases the millions of indigenous people who lived here in 1492. This bill would help Maine start honoring the people who lived here long before.
Status: The State and Local Government Committee voted 8-5 “ought to pass” on this bill. It now goes to the full legislature.

LD 322: AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN MAINE’S ELECTION LAWS BY REQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING

Position: Ought Not to Pass
This bill would make it harder for qualified Mainers to vote, by requiring people to present photo ID at the polls. More than 21 million Americans do not have a government-issued photo ID; a disproportionate number of them are older Americans, people of color, and poor people. Many of them can’t afford the required documents needed to secure one.
Status: The Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee voted 8-5 “ought not to pass.” This bill now goes to the full legislature.

LD 433: RESOLUTION, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF MAINE TO EXPLICITLY PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON THE SEX OF AN INDIVIDUAL

Position: Ought to Pass
This is a state-level Equal Rights Amendment. It would enshrine women’s full legal equality in the Maine Constitution and further the ongoing process of extending civil liberties to all.
Status: We testified at the hearing and are awaiting a committee vote.

LD 589: DIRECTING THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM ENGAGING IN POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL OR RELIGIOUS ADVOCACY IN THE CLASSROOM

Position: Ought Not to Pass
This bill would prohibit teachers from discussing “controversial” issues that are not “germane” to the course being taught, and could ban teachers from addressing the very real issues of white supremacy and racial justice.
Status: The Educations and Cultural Affairs Committee voted unanimously “ought not to pass” on this bill.

LD 946: AN ACT TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF ONLINE CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Position: Ought to Pass
LD 946 will reverse some of the damage done by the loss of privacy protections at the federal level by requiring Internet Service Providers that do business in Maine to get our permission before selling our private information to the highest bidder.
Status: Awaiting a public hearing

LD 1261: AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS TO PERFORM ABORTIONS

Position: Ought to Pass
This bill would end Maine’s outdated ban on advanced practice clinicians (APCs) such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and certified nurse-midwives providing abortion care in Maine.
Status: Awaiting a public hearing

We’ll need your help on all of these bills – check out our new action center for updates!
www.aclumaineact.org

MEET THE BOARD

LISA SOCKABASIN, ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY

“My earliest experiences as a child were filled with opportunities to learn about social justice and equity.



My mother and father were active in anti-poverty programs during my upbringing. My father served as tribal chief and remained active in advocacy and tribal government throughout his lifetime. I am a Passamaquoddy Tribal citizen. I learned at a young age about the importance of culture, community, and service. I feel fortunate to have career experiences that allowed me to work directly with tribal communities and other underserved people.”

KRYSTAL WILLIAMS, CUMBERLAND COUNTY

“The 2016 election and this Administration’s continued efforts to roll back key human and



environmental protections have shaken me to my core. I believe in a just and fair America, and I know that we must work to make our belief a reality. Through the ACLU’s advocacy, we can hold our government accountable and demand that the first words of our Constitution ring as true today as when they were first written. I am proud to be a member and contributor to the work of the ACLU and appreciate the opportunity to serve.”



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WE THE PEOPLE:
An Evening with the ACLU of Maine

Honoring
Justice Louis Scolnik

Featuring
Nusrat Choudhury, Deputy Director of the
ACLU's National Racial Justice Program

Thursday, June 6
5:15 p.m. Reception & Hors d'ourves
6 - 7:15 p.m. Program

Hannaford Hall, USM
88 Bedford St., Portland

For more information or to **purchase tickets** or **become a sponsor**, visit www.aclumaine.org/wethepeople2019

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