

# ACLU

## Maine



# SPECIAL COVID-19 ISSUE

DEAR FRIENDS,

In times of crisis, the rights of the most vulnerable are always the first to be sacrificed. With your help, we're fighting to make this time different. Ensuring that our pandemic response treats every Mainer fairly and equitably will be essential to rebuilding and coming out stronger than ever. We're working hard to ensure every decision our government makes going forward extends protections to *more* people, instead of continuing to exclude.

Thank you for joining us in this work.

From our homes to yours,  
**The ACLU of Maine Team**

## VOTING & COVID-19

**W**ith primaries and the general election coming up, **the spread of COVID-19 could soon directly impact the ability of Americans to participate in our democracy.** For many – including people who vote in Maine – the safest way to vote will be no-excuse absentee voting by mail. However, we still need to maintain safe in-person voting for those who can't vote by mail.

**We're working hard to protect voting rights during this unprecedented time.** Along with our partner organizations, we sent a letter and a petition

signed by over 2,400 Mainers to the governor and Secretary of State, urging them to take necessary steps to ensure safe and secure voting in July, November and beyond. We joined Sen. Angus King and other advocates for a virtual town hall on the importance of safeguarding voting. And we're taking part in webinars to help Mainers understand what they need to know when they go to the polls – whether in person or from the safety of their own homes.

**Register to vote and request a ballot at [aclumaine.org/covidvoting](http://aclumaine.org/covidvoting)**

**Want to help?**  
Email [voting@aclumaine.org](mailto:voting@aclumaine.org) and we'll get back to you with election-related volunteer opportunities!

**JUL 14**

**Mark your calendars.**  
Maine's primary has been moved to July 14.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Daniel N. Crewe, *President*  
 Susan Bates, *Past President*  
 Jodi Nofsinger, *Vice President,*  
*Equity Officer*  
 Robert Kelley, *Treasurer*  
 Nancy Fannon, *Secretary,*  
*National Board Rep.*  
 Chris Branson  
 Sally Dobres  
 Colleen Khoury  
 Doug Kimmel  
 Lisa Sockabasin  
 Krystal Williams  
 Kathryn Yates

## STAFF

Pablo Anaya, *Major Gifts Officer*  
 Beth Ansheles, *Finance Director*  
 Makena Bauss, *Digital*  
*Communications Strategist*  
 Joann Bautista, *Special Projects*  
*Manager*  
 Alison Beyea, *Executive Director*  
 Emma Bond, *Staff Attorney*  
 Rachel Healy, *Communications*  
*Director*  
 Zachary Heiden, *Legal Director*  
 Michael Kebede, *Policy Counsel*  
 Ariel Kernis, *Deputy Director*  
 Emma Findlen LeBlanc, *Senior*  
*Researcher*  
 Laura Retherford, *Director of*  
*Leadership Giving*  
 Joelle Rutembesa, *Finance &*  
*Development Associate*  
 Margarita Salguero-Macklin,  
*Office Manager*  
 Dhivya Singaram, *Engagement*  
*Coordinator/Organizer*  
 Meagan Sway, *Policy Counsel*

## PUBLISHED BY

ACLU of Maine  
 PO Box 7860  
 Portland, ME 04112  
 (207) 774-5444  
 info@aclumaine.org  
 www.aclumaine.org

# RACE & COVID-19

**H**istory has made it abundantly clear that in times of crisis people of color disproportionately bear the impact. Whether in war times or pandemic, Black, brown and indigenous people have always fared worse at the hands of decisionmakers than their white counterparts. They face worse health and economic outcomes, and they are more likely to be discriminated against and have their rights trampled under new policies. This new crisis is no different.

In May we sent a letter asking the Maine CDC to release data about race and COVID-19 infections. **That data revealed that this state – like the rest of the country – is experiencing alarming disparities when it comes to COVID-19 infections.** People of color, and especially Black people, are far more likely to contract the virus than white people.

Collecting and examining demographic data related to this pandemic is a critical first step toward fixing the problem. Knowing which communities are most vulnerable to COVID-19 – or to any other crisis – can

help us ensure a response that is equitable. **Since the release of the data, we have been in regular meetings with Maine CDC director Dr. Nirav Shah. We are calling on the state to create a plan for ensuring that communities of color have access the personal protective equipment, testing and treatment they need to stay safe.**

It is essential that Maine's response to this crisis protects *all* of us.

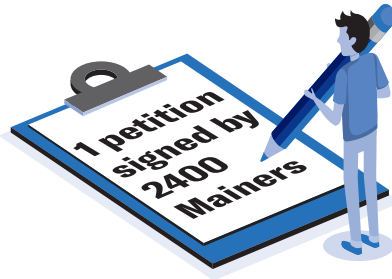
# DECARC

**T**he ACLU of Maine has worked for years to reduce our state's overreliance on the criminal legal system and incarceration – through reform of our bail, drug law, and policing systems. Never is this work more urgent than during a pandemic.

Across the nation, jails and prisons have become epicenters of COVID-19 outbreaks. Prisoners and staff inside correctional facilities have little ability to physically



ALONE & WITH OUR  
COALITION PARTNERS,  
**SINCE THE START OF  
THE PANDEMIC WE'VE  
ISSUED:**

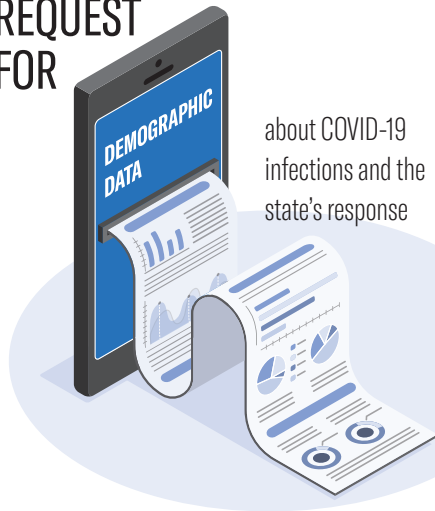


calling for voting  
protections

**50+** policy  
recommendation letters to  
municipal & state officials on  
behalf of vulnerable Mainers

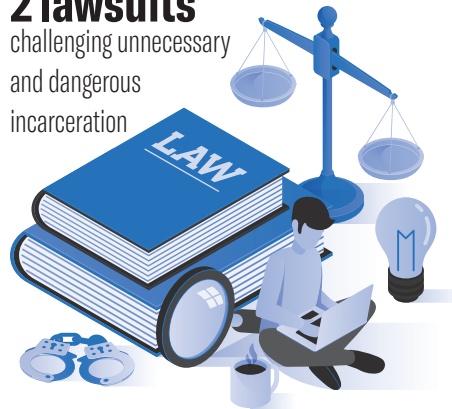


**1** REQUEST  
FOR



about COVID-19  
infections and the  
state's response

**2 lawsuits**  
challenging unnecessary  
and dangerous  
incarceration



# CERATION & COVID-19

distance or properly sanitize, and many people caught up in the system are already more vulnerable to getting sick – they often have underlying conditions and little access to healthcare.

**Preventing people from unnecessarily entering the criminal legal system in the first place, and ensuring that prisons and jails do not needlessly hold people who are especially vulnerable**

**to COVID-19, is essential to stopping the virus from spreading in Maine.**

We've sent letters to all the top law enforcement and legal officials in Maine, and filed a lawsuit on behalf of two prisoners who have underlying health conditions and could be safely released. In response to this outbreak and our advocacy efforts, Maine's jails have now safely reduced their populations by 40 percent. Along

with our partner organizations, we'll be working to ensure Maine doesn't fall back into our old ways when this crisis is over.

**Read more about all of our work to protect civil rights and liberties during the pandemic:**  
[aclumaine.org/covid](http://aclumaine.org/covid)





# ACLU

Maine

PO Box 7860  
Portland, ME 04112  
www.aclumaine.org

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# ACLU

Maine



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

For several years, our Legal Internship Fund donors have supported summer positions at the ACLU. In this position, aspiring lawyers experience what it's like to work at the ACLU, while adding invaluable research and writing capacity to our team.

Our Summer 2020 legal intern is Laura Greenwood, a rising 3L at Maine Law. Laura is passionate about criminal justice and one day hopes to build a career in public defense.

**Thank you to our generous funders for supporting the next generation of civil rights defenders!**

 [Facebook.com/aclumaine](https://www.facebook.com/aclumaine)  &  [@aclumaine](https://twitter.com/aclumaine)

