

EXPLORING THE *ACLU NEWS* ARCHIVE: BATTLES TO PROTECT BODILY AUTONOMY IN CALIFORNIA



BY SARAH HOPKINS

“The [U.S. Supreme] Court’s precedents about bodily autonomy, sexual and familial relations, and procreation are all interwoven—all part of the fabric of constitutional law, and because that is so, of our lives.” So reads the dissenting opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the case under which the U.S. Supreme Court, on June 24, 2022, struck down the constitutional right to abortion established under *Roe v. Wade*. It is the only moment in which the term “bodily autonomy” appears. But it is resonant.

While a contested concept under the law, bodily autonomy remains a core principle within the Reproductive Justice movement, founded by feminists of color in the early 1990s. They base

their cause in “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”

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THE ACLU FIGHTS TO PROTECT CIVIL LIBERTIES FROM UNCHECKED POLICE SURVEILLANCE

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

Cameras mounted on street corners take pictures of people’s license plates with date and timestamps that can track them all over town. Facial recognition technology can identify individuals from a picture of their face. Drones can track our movements from the air. The ACLU of Northern California has been at the forefront of the battle to protect people from this invasive technology that threatens our civil liberties and civil rights. A cornerstone of this work was our 2019 campaign—in coalition with community partners—to pass San Francisco’s landmark surveillance oversight law.

The San Francisco Police Department has a long history of spying on civil rights activists, war protesters, LGBTQ organizations and others working for progressive change. That’s why a coalition led by the ACLU passed an oversight law that requires all city agencies to engage in a public process and get approval from the board of supervisors before they could acquire or use new surveillance technology. And it prohibited the use of facial recognition altogether.

The police department fought us all the way. Yet we successfully mobilized San Francisco residents to come out in support of the law. Hearing the voices of their constituents loud and clear, the board of supervisors approved the surveillance ordinance.

THE MAYOR’S PLAN

But even as we celebrated that hard-fought victory, we knew we would have to remain vigilant. Indeed, after the surveillance law passed, the police department tapped into a sprawling network of private cameras to conduct live surveillance of protesters during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations following George Floyd’s murder. In response to this flagrant violation of the oversight law, the ACLU of Northern California and the Electronic Frontier Foundation sued on behalf of three local activists alleging that SFPD’s surveillance violated the surveillance oversight law. Our case will soon be heard by the First District Court of Appeal in San Francisco.

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NEW GOLD CHAINS PODCAST EPISODE SPOTLIGHTS CALIFORNIA'S ENSLAVEMENT OF NATIVE CHILDREN

BY TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND

In history class, many of us learned that California was a “free” state that never had slavery. But that’s inaccurate. The fact is that in 1850, the California Legislature passed a law whose sole purpose was to funnel Indigenous children into a slavery pipeline. This deliberately buried history is the subject of our third Gold Chains podcast episode, *Indigenous Injustice*, which is available now. The podcast is a continuation of our 2019 public education project, *Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California*.

In 1850, the year that California joined the Union, the legislature passed the Act for the Government and Protection of Indians. It established vagrancy laws targeting Native people. Those who got jailed would be forced to work for free for whoever paid their bail.

But its most evil provision was aimed at children. It allowed white people to become “guardians” of Indigenous children in “apprenticeships.” In this way, thousands of children were trapped in forced servitude working as domestics and field hands for white settlers until they were young adults.

“There’s no oversight whatsoever,” said Stacey L. Smith, an Oregon State University history professor who is an expert in California’s hidden history and a guest on the podcast episode.

“Predictably, these children are subjected to all kinds of abuse. Many, many of them die in their apprenticeships before they grow up and are legally able to get out of them.”

The law’s supporters claimed that forcibly separating children from their tribal communities was for their own good and that taking them out of the “savage wilds” would civilize them.

State and federal governments have repeatedly used the forced removal of Native children as a tool to erase Indigenous people and steal their land. In our latest Gold Chains episode, we connect the dots between California’s Act for the Government and Protection of Indians to the brutalization of Native children in Indian Boarding Schools, to forced adoptions in the 19th

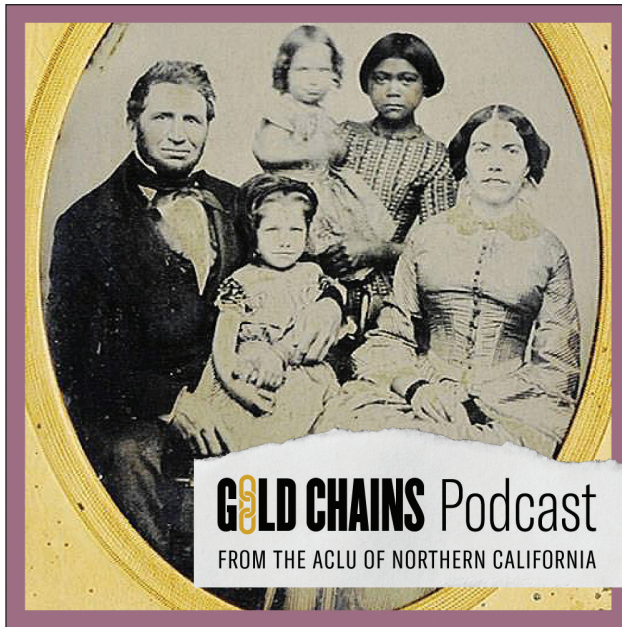


Photo of Kate Camden, a native girl who at age 10 was forced into servitude for a white family living in Shasta County. Photo is one of few records that exist showing native children entrapped by California’s apprentice and guardianship laws. Credit: Camden Family Portrait, circa 1857-1859 courtesy of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, WHIS 9066.

century all the way up to a current battle before the U.S. Supreme Court over who should have custody of Native children.

That case, *Brackeen v. Haaland*, challenges the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). ICWA was passed in 1978 because so

many Native children were being systematically removed from their communities and placed in homes of white people. ICWA seeks to place children first with a member of their immediate family. If that’s not possible, then with extended family, someone else from their tribe, or another Native family. Non-Native parents become eligible to adopt the child only if there isn’t a Native family available.

The Brackeens are a white evangelical couple from Texas. They sued after they initially faced obstacles adopting a Navajo boy because ICWA prioritizes placing Native children in Native homes. Although they eventually got custody, they and other plaintiffs claim the law racially discriminates against them and that it harms Native children.

The ACLU is fighting to uphold ICWA. If the Supreme Court dismantles the law, that could set a legal precedent that threatens the very principle of tribal sovereignty.

William Bauer, a history professor at the University of Las Vegas and an enrolled member of the Round Valley Indian Tribes of Northern California, sees a throughline between California’s Act for the Government and Protection of Indians all the way to the *Brackeen* case.

“If children are taken from their lands and enslaved in a household in Arizona, or indigenous children are taken to a boarding school, or if indigenous children are then adopted out of their families and into non-native families elsewhere in the United States, then indigenous people are not on their homelands,” Bauer said on the Gold Chains podcast. “And if they’re not on their homelands, then it becomes a justification for the United States to take those lands. Cruelly, these policies are often said to be in the best interest of indigenous children.”

Find the episode wherever you listen to your podcasts, or at www.goldchainsca.org/podcast and explore more stories about California’s hidden history of slavery at www.goldchains.ca.org.

Tammerlin Drummond is a communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.

Listen at www.goldchainsca.org/podcast or wherever you get your podcasts.

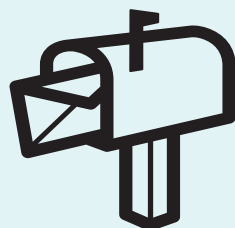
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DOROTHY EHRLICH, WHOSE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMED ACLU, RETIRES AFTER 50 YEARS

BY LISA P. WHITE

When Dorothy Ehrlich joined the ACLU of Northern California 50 years ago, many of the bedrock issues the ACLU vigorously defends today—including LGBTQ rights and reproductive justice—were emerging. Ehrlich recognized early on that the battleground for civil rights and civil liberties was shifting, and she was determined that the ACLU of Northern California would be at the forefront of the emerging fights for equality. Following 28 years as the executive director of ACLU NorCal, she then served as national ACLU deputy director from 2006 until her retirement this month.

Ehrlich began her ACLU career in 1972, working against an initiative that reinstated the death penalty in California. A year later, she joined the ACLU of Southern California, where she served as assistant field director and development director. In 1978, Ehrlich, then just 27, returned to the Bay Area and took the reins as ACLU NorCal's first woman executive director. "She's not at all arrogant, but she is confident," said retired staff attorney Maggie Crosby, who joined the affiliate in 1976 and worked closely with Ehrlich. "She knew that she could do this job."

Although widely respected as a litigation powerhouse, Ehrlich believed ACLU NorCal could be much more. Under her visionary leadership, the affiliate would build strong relationships with community organizations, harness the power of communications, and move boldly into policy, public education and organizing, laying the groundwork for the integrated advocacy model it employs today.

Former ACLU NorCal colleagues describe Ehrlich as a hardworking, fearless leader with a fierce intellect and steely resolve. At a time when anti-crime rhetoric reached a fever pitch in California, Ehrlich courageously spoke out against escalating prison construction and the disastrous war on drugs when few others did. She also didn't shy away from reckoning with a shameful episode in ACLU history. Elaine Elinson, former ACLU NorCal communications director who worked with Ehrlich for two decades, proudly recalled how Ehrlich insisted that the ACLU's centennial materials acknowledge that the national ACLU sought to prohibit the affiliate from challenging Japanese American internment during WWII. Of course, ACLU NorCal persisted and pursued the landmark *Korematsu v. United States* case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

During her 28-year tenure, Ehrlich built ACLU NorCal into the largest ACLU affiliate, diversified the staff, and spearheaded groundbreaking work on a range of issues including marriage equality, immigration reform, technology and surveillance, racial justice, and youth engagement. And she remained committed to abolishing the death penalty.

Whether she was delivering late-night pizza to staffers rushing to finish a filing or leading a



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For Dorothy Ehrlich, the ACLU has never been just a job, it was always "a calling to work for justice....So you can imagine what a joy, what an immense joy, it has been to be here nearly 50 years and to be able to do this work that I can hold in my heart forever."
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roomful of activists in a boisterous round of Broadway showtunes, Ehrlich did so with warmth, kindness, and humor, according to former colleagues.

"Her intellect and wisdom made us better leaders than we would have been without her," said Nancy Pemberton, a former longtime board

member who served as chairperson for three years during Ehrlich's tenure. "Dorothy is an exceptional human being who has generously given her unparalleled skills and her boundless passion to the ACLU in Northern California and nationwide."

Abdi Soltani, the current ACLU NorCal executive director, shared this reflection on working alongside Ehrlich in ballot measure campaigns in the mid-1990s and early 2000s, before he joined ACLU: "Dorothy approached everything with energy and integrity. She brought people together to tackle big challenges, and win or lose, she kept moving forward."


In 2006, ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero recruited Ehrlich to join him in New York as the national executive deputy director. In a speech at the Biennial Leadership Conference awards gala in May, Romero highlighted Ehrlich's many achievements at the ACLU and described her as the person who has been most essential to him as he steered the organization.

"If I've done anything right for the plight of civil liberties and civil rights in my tenure, it's because I've had Dorothy Ehrlich as my partner," Romero said. "Ours is a more perfect union because Dorothy devoted five decades of her life to make it so."

For Ehrlich, the ACLU has never been just a job, it was always "a calling to work for justice."

"So you can imagine what a joy, what an immense joy, it has been to be here nearly 50 years and to be able to do this work that I can hold in my heart forever," Ehrlich said at the gala.

Though she jokingly lamented that she is retiring at a perilous time, Ehrlich is certain the dedicated ACLU staff, board members and volunteers she leaves behind will carry on the organization's critical work.

"I have complete faith and confidence in all of you that you will keep on fighting like generations before you," she said. "I trust that you will follow and live by the words of Rev. Jesse Jackson who said, 'We do not drown because they throw us in the deep end. We only drown if we stop kicking.' And I know none of you will ever stop kicking." 

Lisa P. White is a communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.

LEGAL AND POLICY UPDATES

BY CARMEN KING AND BRADY HIRSCH

BRACKEEN V. HAALAND

CASE THREATENING TRIBAL RIGHTS HEADS TO THE SUPREME COURT

Since settlers first arrived on the land of what is now known as the United States, federal and state governments, eager to seize Indigenous people’s land and resources, have sought to eradicate tribes via the forced separation and assimilation of Native children.

Shockingly, this ruthless approach to genocide has been dusted off and rebranded for the modern era. In November 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Brackeen v. Haaland*—a case that threatens to undo basic requirements put in place to protect Native children from continued forced removal from their families and tribes.

In recognition of this dire threat, the ACLU of Northern California, along with 12 ACLU affiliates and the national ACLU, filed an amicus brief in August, imploring the court to protect tribes and tribal sovereignty, and to uphold the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Congress passed ICWA in 1978 to address the nationwide crisis of state child welfare agencies removing Native children from their families and placing them in non-Native homes. Before ICWA, public and private agencies were removing 25 to 35 percent of Native American/Alaska Native children from their homes, and 85 percent of those children were placed in non-Native households.

ICWA prioritizes the placement of Native children within their extended families or tribal communities, where their cultural identities will be understood and celebrated. If the Supreme Court overturns ICWA, states would once again be allowed to indiscriminately remove Native children from their families and culture while simultaneously robbing tribes of future generations. As with any nation, the future ceases to exist if children are prevented from carrying on the languages, traditions, and knowledge passed down from each generation to the next.

Tribes have an inherent right to govern themselves and make decisions on issues that affect their citizens. The ACLU’s brief argues that the Indian Child Welfare Act is constitutional and urges the Supreme Court to uphold long-standing legal precedent upholding tribal sovereignty—including tribes’ right and ability to preserve their unique cultural identities, raise their own children, and to govern themselves.

ACCESS TO WATER IN SISKIYOU COUNTY

In August of 2021, the ACLU of Northern California and Advancing Justice—Asian Law Caucus filed an amicus brief supporting a lawsuit against Siskiyou County’s discriminatory ordinances that threatened to dangerously limit the Hmong community’s access to water.

Earlier this year, a federal judge in Sacramento upheld the preliminary injunction for two of the discriminatory water ordinances after the County attempted to end the injunction.

But our work didn’t stop there; our investigation into Siskiyou County’s water ordinances revealed a years-long, systematic campaign of unrelenting racial hostility and persecution against the Asian American community, including unlawful and targeted traffic stops, discriminatory search and seizure practices, and property liens aimed at Asian Americans.

In August of this year, we, along with our partners,

filed a new class action lawsuit led by four Asian American community members drawing attention to how Siskiyou County officials, including the Sheriff’s department, have targeted and threatened Hmong Americans and other Asian American community members in an attempt to isolate them and drive them out of town.

Our complaint demands that Siskiyou County officials immediately cease their racially motivated harassment campaign and take responsibility for the harm they have caused this community.

SQ_ _ _ VALLEY NAME CHANGE

In previous editions of our newsletter, we’ve written about our work to support the Indigenous-led movement to change the name of Sq_ _ _ Valley in Fresno County. Now, thanks to the visionary and tireless leadership of the Rename S-Valley Coalition and the countless advocates, activists, and community members on the ground in Fresno, Sq_ _ _ Valley will be renamed in early 2023.

For decades, Indigenous people have spoken out about the devastating harm the word causes Native people, and its connection with violence against Indigenous people. With the passage of AB 2022, a bill ACLU CalAction co-sponsored, Sq_ _ _ Valley will be removed from all public places across the state of California, and the process to select new names will prioritize Tribal voices and recommendations. Future use of

this racist slur for geographic naming will be prohibited.

We commend and celebrate the generations of activism and leadership by Indigenous peoples that led to this important victory.


MARIN SHERIFF STOPS SHARING DRIVERS’ LOCATION WITH ICE AND CBP

The Marin County Sheriff’s Department has agreed to stop sharing license plate and location information with agencies outside of California, thanks to a settlement secured by the ACLU Foundation of Northern California and co-counsel.

For years, Marin Sheriff Robert Doyle illegally made the information of local drivers, captured by a network of automated license plate readers (ALPRS), available to hundreds of federal and out-of-state agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

As a result of this settlement, which is binding for future sheriffs, outside agencies will no longer be able to query information collected by Marin’s automated licence plate reader cameras.

Marin’s ALPRs scan tens of thousands of passing cars every month, recording their license plate number, date, time, and location. This can be used to track people, revealing where they live, work, get medical care, socialize, and worship. When shared with ICE and CBP, it facilitates the deportation of immigrants.

As a result of the settlement, which is binding for future sheriffs, outside agencies will no longer be able to query information collected by Marin’s ALPR cameras. This is especially important in this moment, as surveillance sharing threatens California’s status as a refuge where people can come to live and safely access services, such as reproductive and gender-affirming care. 

Carmen King and Brady Hirsch are associate communications strategists at the ACLU of Northern California.

ART ACTIVISM: THE ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S INAUGURAL ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

BY GIGI HARNEY AND TESSA D'ARCANGELEW AMPERSAND

Artists Ana Teresa Fernández and Edgar Arturo Camacho have been working with ACLU NorCal staff for more than a year as part of our first Artist in Residence program. The pilot project sought to use the power of art to connect people to ACLU issues in a visceral way.

The two artists, selected from dozens of applicants from across Northern California, delved into ACLU issues to form their projects. Fernández was drawn to the issue of surveillance. Before she began working with the ACLU, she thought she understood the important civil rights issues, but her eyes were opened to the many ways technology is used to harm people. Her #TechOnOurTerms project uses the iconic “no signal” image on masks and other clothing as a statement against constant surveillance.

Camacho was drawn less to a specific issue than to the stories of those affected by civil rights violations and the people fighting for their rights. With evocative poses and imagery, Camacho uses his paintbrush to tell their stories.

As the two artists complete their final projects and their residencies draw to a close, their art will live on through advocacy and outreach by ACLU NorCal.

Here are their stories, in their own words from interviews conducted by ACLU NorCal staff.

“For me, art and activism have always intersected.”

—Edgar Arturo Camacho

EDGAR ARTURO CAMACHO: ART AS STORYTELLING

Storytelling is at the core of our experience as human beings. Stories help us connect by seeing parallel struggles or joys in others. For the individual who tells their story, this process can bring healing, validation, and the realization that they are not alone. For the listener, empathy and motivation to take action, learn more, vote, and share their own stories. Stories build community. Stories build power. Without stories, we would be lost.

Art is about storytelling. Art is about empowerment. Art is about making people feel something. Art activism has a sense of urgency that other types of work doesn't have, and therefore I feel like it is in many ways more powerful.

As I engaged with the staff, volunteers, and partners at the ACLU of Northern California, I have been inspired by the power of people



Edgar Arturo Camacho's portraits, which are huge paintings that will appear in communities across Northern California, tell the stories of people fighting for justice.

standing up against systems of oppression and claiming their agency. I met with two mothers who are fearlessly standing up against the family regulation courts, driven by the love for their kids. I heard Hope Williams speak about the relentlessness with which she proclaims Black Lives Matter despite surveillance that tries to intimidate her into silence. As a Queer, Indigenous-Xicanx person, I know the power these stories hold to inspire me to take action, and I know these stories can inspire others to take action as well.

Because these pieces are going to be activated at community spaces, the power is held by community. Our stories as queer folks and as folks of color, as folks who come from marginalized or oppressed backgrounds, those stories have been told for us for hundreds of years. It's so powerful and so important to really empower folks to own their own narrative and to tell their own story. I hope that that this work serves as an invitation for folks to stand in their power and tell their own stories.



PHOTO BY CAROLYN FONG

Ana Teresa Fernández's #TechOnOurTerms artwork is part of a project that explores how surveillance is pervasive. It encourages people to be conscious of how much they reveal through technology.


“Art is a language that requires no translation.”

—Ana Teresa Fernández

ANA TERESA FERNÁNDEZ: ART AS A LANGUAGE

It was a very roundabout way to get to be an artist; art chose me instead of me being a decisive pursuer of art. I was really obsessed with languages, so I had been pursuing studying linguistics more than anything. I think I am obsessed with languages because how we communicate in the world is so important. I love how people express themselves and what you learn about a culture through idioms and slang in the vernacular of different languages I find so fascinating... and when I stumbled into art, I realized that that was a type of language that required no translation.

Language can sometimes be limiting. The written word can be limiting. With the ACLU, I was trying to find glyphs that you can bring into the conversation and reappropriate them. To amplify the meaning and create those connections between those dots. There's so much that already exists in the world that you can use as a tool to assist you and what you want to say without either being too obvious or too cliché.

I'm really keen on being able to mix and match in terms of peoples' expectations, so creating these “no signal” masks felt very playful. Inserting a little bit of humor and joy in an unexpected place where I think it's welcomed. 

Gigi Harney is the creative strategist at the ACLU of Northern California. Tessa D'Arcangelew Ampersand is the organizing program manager at the ACLU of Northern California.

IN MEMORIAM: AUNDRÉ HERRON, FORMER BOARD MEMBER

Aundré Herron, death penalty abolitionist, longtime ACLU board member, and standup comedian, passed away this summer.

One of Herron's many contributions to the ACLU was to serve as the emcee at ACLU NorCal's annual Bill of Rights Day event. At the 2021 celebration, Herron was presented with the Lola Hanzel Courageous Advocacy Award. The remarks at that ceremony encapsulate her legacy.

Dorothy Ehrlich, ACLU deputy director and former ACLU NorCal executive director, had this to say: "[I]n the nearly 30 years that she served on the boards of the ACLU of Northern California and on the national ACLU, she made an indelible mark... [She] is the most principled person I know and perhaps the funniest and the most loving, and by far the most courageous."

Anthony Romero, the ACLU executive director, added, "Being around Aundré, you can't help but feel and even marvel at the joy of life... A better human being, a better soul, a more empathetic person, you would be hard-pressed to find... If future generations say that [I] walked with Aundré Herron, I cannot think of a better way I would like to be remembered."



PHOTO BY MARTHA WINNACKER


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"Principles matter and they guide how we move or should move in the world."
—Aundré Herron
.....

Upon receiving the award, Aundré reflected on what it means to stay committed to fighting injustice:

"Principles matter and they guide how we move or should move in the world....What will they say of you and how you used the gifts and talents you have been given?"

"...The battle for human rights is not for everyone, and certainly not for the faint of heart. You may never see the fruits of your efforts, but that is not why you take up these battles. They are undertaken because it is the right thing to do."

"Some people give time, some people give money, some people advocate and persist. But the only real point is that you must do something to change the dynamic in favor of a more inclusive and better world. That is what courageous advocacy is all about."

Thank you, Aundré. The ACLU, and our country, is better for having had you in it. 

IN MEMORIAM: JOHN CREW, FORMER POLICE PRACTICES DIRECTOR

BY LISA P. WHITE

When John Crew was in high school in Southern California during the 1970s, he seethed at the presence of undercover police officers sent to spy on students in the classroom.

That early brush with law enforcement's flagrant disregard for civil liberties inspired a lifelong commitment to social justice that would lead Crew eventually to the ACLU of Northern California, where for two decades he was a tireless proponent of police accountability and a nationally recognized expert on policing.

Crew died on October 7. He was 65.

"It was a gift to have known him," said civil rights attorney and author Michelle Alexander, who worked closely with Crew on ACLU NorCal's pioneering "driving while Black or Brown" campaign. "He will be missed by so many of us, and the world of police reform has lost one of its most committed advocates."

Crew was born in Los Angeles in 1957, the youngest of five boys. As an undergraduate at Northwestern University in 1978, he worked at the ACLU Illinois affiliate. In 1981, Crew, then a third-year student at UC Hastings College of the Law, was a summer intern at ACLU NorCal, where he worked on a lawsuit against the Sacramento Police Department. He joined the staff soon after graduation, and in 1985 became director of the Police Practices Project, a position he held until 2000.

An attorney by trade, Crew was an organizer at heart. In his new role, he assembled a broad coalition of civil liberties and civil rights organizations whose early victories led to greater



PHOTO BY MICHAEL B. WOOLSEY

diversity among field training officers and a commitment to address sexual harassment in the San Francisco Police Department.

Crew, a tenacious advocate for community oversight of the police, often blasted the city's Office of Citizen Complaints for its toothless investigations of abuse and discrimination claims.

"In many ways, a local police agency is in greater need of public scrutiny and an independent system of checks and balances than any other local government institution," Crew wrote in the March 1991 issue of the *ACLU News*.


A fixture at Police Commission meetings, Crew frequently clashed with the powerful San Francisco police union as he successfully

pressed for changes to the department's lax rules governing use of force and its violent crowd control tactics, which he once described as creating "an atmosphere that is dangerously hostile to the peaceful exercise of free speech rights in San Francisco." Crew also helped craft a groundbreaking intelligence policy that restricted police spying on political groups.

Elaine Elinson, former longtime ACLU NorCal communications director, recalled that after police arrested Crew in 1984 for refusing to show ID while he monitored a sweep of unhoused people at Hallidie Plaza, he told her that although the experience had been awful and unjust, it was trivial compared to the abuse people of color and those living on the streets suffered regularly at the hands of law enforcement.

"He was not just a brilliant strategist and a fierce advocate, he was one of the most warm, generous, compassionate people that I've ever known, and I'm really glad that I was able to work with him for so many years," Elinson said.

Crew left the affiliate to lead the national ACLU's campaign against racial profiling. He briefly returned in 2008 as interim executive director. Though retired, Crew continued working on policing and criminal justice reform issues in San Francisco, collaborating with ACLU staff and mentoring the next generation of young activists.

"We are forever grateful for his generous spirit, and we will continue his legacy," said Executive Director Abdi Soltani. 

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: BEVERLY TUCKER

Beverly Tucker, an ACLU NorCal board member and donor shares the evolution of her activism and ACLU support with Devon Fryer, a member of our development team.

WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR EARLIEST EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Tucker: When I was a senior in high school in Detroit, a group of students created an alternative, politically-oriented school newspaper. It was in the early stages of the Vietnam War in 1965 and I wrote an article in the first issue arguing that the U.S. should withdraw. The school administration stopped a couple of students who were selling the newspaper, confiscated the newspapers, and suspended everyone who was involved in publishing it, including me. We contacted the ACLU, they met with the administration, and worked out a settlement allowing us to continue publishing the newspaper outside the school. I had a positive impression of the ACLU and how they represented people for First Amendment issues. I continued to do anti-discrimination work and attended many anti-war demonstrations in the following years.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE ACLU THAT BROUGHT YOU AND KEEPS YOU ACTIVE TODAY?

Tucker: In 1987 I was working on housing and employment, sex, and racial discrimination cases as a lawyer in the civil rights enforcement unit of the California Attorney General's office. I worked with some ACLU lawyers on a couple of sex discrimination cases that went to the U.S. Supreme Court. I later applied for a job on the ACLU legal staff and learned about how the ACLU's work had evolved from the 60s. Though I wasn't hired, I got my ideal job working for a labor union. Because of my contacts during the ACLU interview, I was asked to serve on the board. I accepted and served for a full term (1987-1990) and returned after I retired in 2007. When I wasn't on the board, I continued to donate, volunteer, and serve on the development committee.

I am active today because the ACLU, and in particular the Northern California affiliate, is one of the most effective, principled, and dynamic civil rights or social justice organizations that I am aware of. They are tremendously effective because of the quality of staff and the number of volunteers. When I first became involved, the ACLU primarily did litigation, but over the years, they have expanded into the Central Valley and into community organizing, becoming an organization that truly represents people across the entirety of northern California. Though they don't always win their cases, they're always there fighting for the rights of people, of all people.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO "TAKE ACTION," INCLUDING GIVING TIME, TALENT, AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT. WHAT DOES "TAKING ACTION" MEAN TO YOU TODAY? HOW ARE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACLU A PART OF THAT?

Tucker: I think the most important action everyone can take is to get involved in the political



arena. The ACLU provides tremendous amounts of information about issues, candidates, and the positions that they have taken in the past, all to make it easier for people to vote. I enjoy knocking on doors and talking to voters both with the ACLU and other organizations. Another way to take action is by contacting legislators and lobbying for or against bills. Lastly, I donate money, which is important, necessary, and something that anybody can do at any amount.

HOW HAVE YOUR PRIORITIES EVOLVED OVER THE PAST 5+ YEARS WITH ALL THE UPHEAVAL IN OUR COUNTRY?

Tucker: My priorities have evolved a lot over the past few years, beginning with Trump's campaign. I've always been very interested in racial justice and LGBTQ issues. Now, because that's being used by Republicans as a wedge issue and to motivate supporters, I'm even more encouraged to engage with those issues.


I did not pay as much attention to immigration issues, but when Trump started his anti-immigrant campaign, scapegoating immigrants, and using that to energize his constituents, I got more interested.

Obviously, reproductive rights have become a tremendous priority to me because of the harm that the *Dobbs* decision could cause as a stepping stone to overturn other privacy-related rights.

Finally, with the anti-democratic efforts by Republicans to discourage people, particularly Black people in the South by closing polling stations and attacking vote-by-mail, voting rights has become a huge priority.

IN THESE UNRELENTING TIMES, HOW DO YOU BUILD RESILIENCE? WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE?

Tucker: Over the trajectory of my life, I have seen progress in this country in many areas. I was in law school when *Roe v. Wade* was decided. I've seen the Supreme Court strike down bans on interracial marriage and gay marriage, and I've seen legislation passed to enhance voting rights. My beginning was ever hopeful because things were going in the right direction and people's rights were expanding. Things have been going backwards recently, but what gives me hope, even in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision, is that young people are more involved than they have been for many years. I was very heartened by the demonstrations after the murder of George Floyd and the continuing concern about police practices, racial justice, and immigrants' rights during the Trump years. Many people who share beliefs but felt that they didn't need to get directly involved decided to fight back.

I have never felt hopeless because the trend has been towards more rights and more hope for more people. There will be temporary setbacks, we may reach a plateau, and people may become apathetic. But the setbacks play a role in motivating people to respond to the circumstances. 

WANT TO TAKE ACTION?

Join our email list to stay informed about current issues and campaigns, upcoming events, and opportunities to get more involved in the fight to protect and expand civil liberties.

Subscribe to our email action list at [ACLUNC.ORG/EMAIL](https://aclunc.org/email)

BATTLES TO PROTECT BODILY AUTONOMY IN CALIFORNIA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Reproductive Justice framework, adopted by the ACLU of Northern California, recognizes that these rights have historically been denied to marginalized groups through state-sanctioned control over, and violence against, the body.

The archive of *ACLU News* shows that California history is replete with the stories of marginalized people fighting attempts by the state to assert control over their bodies and wrest their most personal decisions away from them. A look at just a few of these stories illuminates many guiding principles of the Reproductive Justice movement—including that the fight for abortion rights comprises just one part of a long line of attempts by marginalized communities to secure their right to self-determination.

These stories also provide lessons for the work ahead as the ACLU responds state by state to protect, regain, and advance reproductive justice.

You can explore the archives, spanning over 75 years of California history, at www.aclunc.org/CHS.

FORCED STERILIZATION

One of the most widespread violations against bodily autonomy in 20th century American history occurred here in California. It was home to the largest eugenics movement in the nation, which lobbied for the forced sterilization of poor people, people of color, people with disabilities, and others deemed part of “defective” lineages, all in the name of “social progress.”

Forced sterilization represents the ultimate denial of bodily autonomy, violating the very integrity of a person’s body and stripping them of their authority to decide whether or not to have children. In California, for decades, the state wielded that authority in tens of thousands of cases, to devastating effect.

According to historian Alexandra Minna Stern, by the time California’s 1909 eugenics law (known as “The Asexualization Act”) was repealed by the state legislature in 1979, California had “sanctioned over 20,000 nonconsensual

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[You can explore the ACLU News archives, spanning over 75 years of California history, at www.aclunc.org/CHS.](http://www.aclunc.org/CHS)
.....

sterilizations on patients in state-run homes and hospitals, or one third of the more than 60,000 such procedures in the United States in the 20th century.” Many people who were in custody of a state prison or other correctional facilities after 1979 continued to be forcibly or involuntarily sterilized.

In the 1970s, stories of nonconsensual sterilization and the legacy of eugenics began to emerge into California’s public consciousness. We see such stories begin to appear in *ACLU News* editions from that decade.

For instance, a 1974 issue tells the story of Holly Kemp, a 32-year-old Black woman with an intellectual disability whose father petitioned the state courts to have her forcibly sterilized. He contended that “any children would be a financial burden on the people of the State of California.” The Contra Costa Superior Court granted his request.

ACLU NorCal represented Ms. Kemp on appeal. Among the arguments presented were that she had received incompetent representation from her appointed counsel, who had failed to challenge troubling or contradictory statements. For instance, “not one of the twelve documents relied upon by the trial judge recommended sterilization.” The only doctor who made any recommendation had “specifically recommended against sterilization.” And another doctor, reflecting the racism and ableism that drove the eugenics movement, had described Ms. Kemp as a “mentally deficient colored female.”

In December 1974, Ms. Kemp prevailed in her case. The California Court of Appeal ruled, for the first time, that the Superior Court had no authority to order involuntary sterilization.

The legacy of eugenics would continue into the following decade.

In this, we see that the insidious ideals underlying harmful laws and policies often endure long after those laws and policies are repealed. It takes persistence and bravery on the part of individuals like Ms. Kemp to challenge them, and many more years of coordinated advocacy to beat them back.

ABORTION ACCESS

In the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the legacy of eugenics served as a backdrop for one of the most significant battles for abortion access in California.

To understand why, we must look back to the 1960s, when federal agencies began to distribute funds to states for sterilization procedures as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty” initiative. According to historian Stern, the focus on family planning for the poor marked a “shift in the criteria employed to sanction reproductive surgery.” So, rather than defend sterilization through the junk science of eugenics, the focus switched to an individual’s “parenting skills and welfare dependency.”

That focus, too, had sinister consequences. *ACLU News* reports that poor people receiving government aid were “continually pressured by welfare authorities to undergo sterilization in order to cut state costs.” The March-April 1974 edition notes that, in some instances, people “volunteered” to undergo sterilization “after being expressly threatened with termination of aid.”

In 1978, California’s legislature voted to end funding for abortions under Medi-Cal, the state’s medical aid program. The cruel irony, repeatedly referenced in *ACLU News*, was that the state would still pay for sterilization for the poor.

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[The Reproductive Justice movement teaches us that, if we do not include the voices of people at the margins of the struggle, then we are not telling the most inclusive and accurate story of the battle for reproductive justice.](http://www.aclunc.org/CHS)
.....

This sparked a protracted legal battle, spearheaded by ACLU NorCal and community partners, to protect Medi-Cal coverage of abortion. Over nine years, the coalition filed 10 consecutive legal actions as the Legislature introduced abortion coverage restrictions in every budget act. Every year, the coalition prevailed, and the courts struck down the funding cuts. Medi-Cal continues to cover abortion to this day.

However, to this day, people in California who live in poverty and in rural counties continue to face barriers to abortion care. This evokes a central tenet of the Reproductive Justice movement: for people whose existence has been relegated to the margins of society, the barriers to reproductive rights are even greater, and we must dedicate our work to breaking them down.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



From the archives: 1974 and 1975 issues of the *ACLU News* tell the story of forced sterilizations in California.

SURVEILLANCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Unfortunately, the SFPD's efforts to circumvent the surveillance law did not end there. Police officials have a powerful ally in Mayor London Breed. In January, citing public safety concerns, Breed introduced a proposal that would have gutted the law by carving out massive exceptions that gave virtually unchecked surveillance powers to the police. She warned that if the board of supervisors didn't approve it, she would introduce the same proposal as a ballot measure and put it to the voters.

In the face of this new threat, we and our community partners mobilized once again to defend the surveillance law. Attorneys on our ACLU of Northern California technology and civil liberties team joined forces with our communications department and our organizers to make sure the public knew and understood the impacts of Breed's proposal and could support a counterproposal that would preserve the current surveillance oversight law. We and nearly three dozen coalition partners signed onto a letter to the mayor and the board of supervisors opposing the efforts to undermine protections against surveillance. We then commissioned a citywide poll that showed that 60 percent of San Franciscans were against letting police use private cameras to monitor people. The poll demonstrated that Breed's proposal went against the wishes of the majority of her constituents, and was widely covered in the news media.

Our ACLU organizers recruited San Francisco residents to email the mayor and supervisors to challenge her proposal and demand that city officials preserve the current surveillance law. Hundreds of emails from San Franciscans flooded their elected officials' inboxes. We also encouraged

city residents to come to the board of supervisors meeting to speak out against the surveillance expansion, and they did. Facing a groundswell of public opposition, Breed quietly dropped her ballot proposal a month after she had introduced it.

SFPD STRIKES AGAIN

Still, we knew it was only a matter of time before there would be another attack against the surveillance law.

In June, the SFPD submitted a proposal to the board of supervisors that would allow the police to tap into thousands of privately owned cameras to conduct live surveillance.

And this time, they didn't just want to be able to use them in life-threatening and emergency situations. They wanted to be able to use them whenever they suspected any kind of criminal activity, even misdemeanors. This would effectively allow the police to put entire communities such as San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood under blanket surveillance.

The initial proposal also would have allowed SFPD to keep recorded footage for years. It did not set any meaningful limits on how this time-stamped video could be used and shared with other law enforcement, opening the door to all kinds of civil rights violations.

Our coalition rallied community partners yet again to stop efforts to shred the law. Dozens of San Franciscans turned out at public meetings to provide public comments and residents sent more than 800 letters to the board of supervisors opposing the SFPD's expanded surveillance powers.

The police department was forced to make the program a 15-month pilot and include an auditing requirement that requires quarterly reports to the




ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES SHIELDS

board of supervisors about how the cameras are being used. In September, the board of supervisors gave SFPD permission to move forward and the program will return to the board in 15 months for review.

This was certainly not the outcome we wanted. However, we were able to effectively push back on what the SFPD thought would be an easy win and made sure that there was true public debate about surveillance expansion.

"What we have now is a policy that authorizes the police to engage in a pilot program that is far narrower than originally envisioned by the SFPD and mayor," said Nicole Ozer, technology and civil liberties director at the ACLU of Northern California. "This would have never happened without the hard work and unfailing dedication of so many in our own organization and partner groups."

We well know that social justice campaigns to defend our fundamental rights never move in a steady upward trajectory. However, with the support of our ACLU members, we and our community partners will continue to fight to stop police surveillance that threatens our privacy and civil rights and liberties. 

BODILY AUTONOMY CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

LUCAS' STORY

A historical archive is as significant for the stories that it includes, as for the stories that it has not told. The absence of certain voices shows us which viewpoints have been prioritized in our collective histories, and which experiences have been relegated to the margins, or erased altogether. The Reproductive Justice movement teaches us that, if we do not include the voices of people at the margins of the struggle, then we are not telling the most inclusive and accurate story of the battle for reproductive justice.

Nowhere in the archive has a story like Lucas* been told.

In 2021, Lucas moved to the U.S. from Mexico with his partner and 1-year-old daughter. Shortly after arriving in Los Angeles, he found himself pregnant. A social worker helped him to enroll in Medi-Cal, and Lucas made an appointment to see a nearby provider for pregnancy care.

A few hours after making the appointment, a clinic staff member called him back and asked him questions about his appearance, and about what type of clothes he wore. When it became clear that

Lucas was a transgender man, the staff member told him, "We don't accept people like you."


The next morning, Lucas and his partner went to the clinic to try and reinstate the appointment. Clinic staff again turned them away. "They told me that they didn't specialize in trans people, that they only could help 'normal women,'" Lucas recalled. "I explained that they didn't need to specialize in anything, that I just wanted medical care for my pregnancy. I was on the verge of tears. I was so disappointed that I fell into a deep depression."

The ACLU of Southern California, in partnership with TransLatin@ Coalition, is currently representing Lucas in fighting the discriminatory denial of care. This is because reproductive justice and bodily autonomy entail not only the right to abortion, but also the right to bear children and raise those children with dignity.

Narratives about reproductive healthcare have historically been framed as only a women's issue, but these rights also apply to transgender and nonbinary people.

Today, in several states, many of the same lawmakers who are working to restrict access to abortion are the same lawmakers who are working to restrict transgender people from receiving gender-affirming healthcare, and from expressing trans and nonbinary identities. They are working toward the same goal: the denial of bodily autonomy for the most oppressed.

Lucas gave birth to a healthy baby earlier this year.

"I want people to be more aware that transgender people are going to choose to have children if they want, and that I won't be the only one," said Lucas. "And I want people in the transgender community to know that they can overcome any obstacle. They shouldn't give up. The doors might keep closing, but there will always be a way forward." 

*name changed to protect privacy

Sarah Hopkins is a communications strategist at the ACLU of Northern California.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION VOTING INFORMATION

WHO CAN VOTE

The bylaws of the ACLU of Northern California call for directors to be elected by the membership. The label affixed to this issue of the *ACLU News* indicates on the top line if you are a current member and thus eligible to vote. Your label states “VOTE” if you are eligible to vote or “INELIGIBLE” if you are not eligible to vote.

If your label states that you are ineligible to vote, but you have recently renewed your membership, please send in your ballot with a note that includes your name and phone number, so we can verify your status. If you are ineligible because you have not renewed your membership but would like to do so at this time, please enclose your membership renewal check in the same envelope as your ballot. (Please note that it is your membership dues payable to the ACLU, not tax-deductible donations to the ACLU Foundation, that make you eligible to vote.)

HOW THE CANDIDATES WERE NOMINATED

As explained in the Summer 2022 issue of the *ACLU News*, our bylaws specify two methods for nominating candidates for directorships. Candidates may be nominated by the current board of directors after the board considers recommendations from its nominating committee. Candidates may also be nominated by petition bearing the signatures of at least 15 of our members in good standing.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING

The candidates are listed in alphabetical order. We have 8 candidates running to fill 8 vacancies on our board of directors. You may vote for up to 8 candidates.

You cannot cast more than one vote for any candidate. That applies even if you vote for fewer than 8 candidates. If you share a joint membership with another member, each of you can vote for 8 candidates. Do so by using both of the two columns provided for that purpose.

After marking your ballot, clip it and enclose it in an envelope along with your address label (on the front of this newsletter), which is used to ensure voter eligibility.

**ADDRESS THE ENVELOPE TO
BOARD ELECTION
ACLU of Northern California
39 Drumm Street
San Francisco, CA 94111**

If you prefer that your ballot be confidential, put your ballot in one envelope, then insert that envelope plus your address label in a second envelope and send to the address indicated above. In that case, we will separate your envelopes before we count your ballot.

In order for your ballot to be counted, we must receive it at the address shown above by Dec. 28, 2022.

As required by our bylaws, in order to have a quorum for our election, we need at least 100 timely returned ballots from our members.

To help you assess this year’s candidates, we’re including brief statements submitted by the candidates (see opposite page).

✂

ACLU NORCAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT

Please vote by marking one square next to each candidate you support. You may vote for up to 8 candidates on this ballot.

If you share joint membership with another member, use both squares.

**Ballots must be received by
December 28, 2022.**

Send this ballot and your address label from the front page to:

BOARD ELECTION
ACLU of Northern California
39 Drumm Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DANIEL GALINDO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MELYS JEREZ
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	THERESA LOFTY JUELCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ZAINAB RAMAHI
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	KASSON STONE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANTHONY WAN
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MARIKO YOSHIHARA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ERICA FERNANDEZ ZAMORA

ACLU NORCAL BOARD STATEMENTS

Please see the opposite page for information on how to vote in this board election.



DANIEL GALINDO*

I am honored to be renominated to serve on the Board for a second term. I currently serve on the Audit & Compliance Committee & the Community Engagement Policy

Action Committee of the Union Board and would love the opportunity to continue serving in this capacity. I am an employment lawyer representing plaintiffs in employment law disputes and litigation.



MELYS JEREZ

I am honored to be nominated for the ACLU NorCal Union Board. I live and work on the ancestral lands of the Mechoopda Maidu (AKA Butte County), and as a student who

attended CSU Chico, I regularly engaged and advocated with my fellow students to build student and worker power via my internship with the California Faculty Association.



THERESA LOFTY JUELCH

I am a settler of Filipina and British/Scottish descent living in Mechoopa Maidu territory. I have invested my time and labor for

community care through Chico Traditional Ecological Knowledge programs, Mutual Aid networks, AAPI Community support circles, and other areas of intersectional solidarity. I would love to serve on the Union Board for ACLU NorCal.



ZAINAB O. RAMAHI

I am a Palestinian-Kashmiri attorney living in Oakland and working in San Francisco. My academic research and community organizing centers on settler colonialism, the

use of national security arguments to erode civil liberties, global anti-Muslim hostility, and sports as a platform for political expression. Thank you for considering me!



KASSON STONE*

I have served the boards of the ACLU NorCal in various capacities since 2016. Over that period, the quality, scope, and prescience of the work done by this affiliate to promote

and protect civil rights and civil liberties has filled me with awe, admiration--and relief. As a board member and committee chair (development), it is my honor to be a fiduciary of the organization and a steward of its resilience. I look forward to another term in which I may continue to scaffold the ACLU NorCal in its future battles to advance equity and justice for us all.



ANTHONY WAN

I am honored to have an opportunity to serve on the Board. Professionally, I own and operate a boutique investment advisory services firm in San Francisco. I currently

serve as the Board Treasurer for another legal and civil rights organization in the Bay Area and look to further my involvement in civil rights causes with this opportunity.



MARIKO YOSHIHARA*

It would be a privilege to continue serving on the ACLU NorCal Union Board. As an employment lawyer who has been fighting for workers' rights and gender and racial

justice for over a decade, I am deeply committed to social justice work. I currently serve on the Community Engagement & Program Advisory Committee, and I am also the Board's designated representative on the ACLU Cal Action Board. I would be honored to continue serving in these roles for the organization.



ERICA FERNANDEZ ZAMORA*

I am honored to be nominated to serve on the Board for a second term. I live in the territory of the Yokohl people, now known as Exeter, in Tulare County, where I am a

lead organizer with Fuerzas Unidas. This non-profit builds grassroots people's power to create institutional changes in San Joaquin Valley. Currently, I chair the Community Engagement and Program Advisory Committee of the Board and would love the opportunity to continue serving in this capacity.

*INCUMBENT BOARD NOMINEES

The next generation is ready to carry the torch. You can pass it on by remembering the ACLU of Northern California in your will or trust or by beneficiary designation. Help shape justice and equality for the future.

To learn more, please visit
aclunc.org/donate/planned-giving



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JOIN US (VIRTUALLY) AT BILL OF RIGHTS DAY

Thursday, December 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Join us for our annual year-end celebration, where we will honor Janette Robinson Flint and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, recognize our volunteers and advocates, and reflect on this year's civil rights victories and the road ahead. Sign up for this free event at www.aclunc.org/bethechange.

Reading this after December 8? View the replay at www.aclunc.org/bethechange and make sure to sign up for our email newsletter so you'll never miss another event: www.aclunc.org/email.

A LETTER FROM ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ABDI SOLTANI

In the wake of the mass movement for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, then-Assemblymember Shirley Weber introduced Assembly Bill 3121 to establish the state Task Force to Study and Develop Reparations for African Americans. The Legislature passed the bill and Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill into law, making California the first state to formally establish a process to recommend proposals for reparations for slavery.

The task force's job is to document the scope of slavery and the legacy of discrimination that followed in California and the United States, and to develop policy recommendations and reparations proposals for consideration by the state of California.

ACLU of Northern California supported the legislation, and we support the work the Task Force has undertaken to date. The Task Force's Interim Report, released on June 1, 2022, is a must-read for supporters of racial justice in California today. The 500-page report begins with an executive summary of policy recommendations. From there, 13 chapters span slavery itself, to persistent issues of racial injustice such as the racial wealth gap, to policies that pathologize Black families. The Task Force's second report, to be issued in 2023, will contain proposals for reparations.

The ACLU has supported a similar federal bill, HR 40, which has languished in Congress since 1989. If it ever gets a full hearing and passes, it will establish a national commission to develop reparations proposals.

In 1988, the national ACLU and ACLU of Northern California supported the Civil Liberties Act providing reparations for the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. That law was catalyzed by the revelation that the federal government had withheld and altered evidence in the case of ACLU client Fred Korematsu before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In this report, the Task Force has assembled and documented the evidence of the impacts of slavery and the decades of overt racial discrimination that followed, both nationwide and specifically in California.

This report is truly historic, building on other major comprehensive reports and books, such as W.E.B. DuBois' "Black Reconstruction" in 1935, and Pauli Murray's exhaustive States' Laws on Race and Color in 1948. Where this one stands apart is that it was commissioned by a state.

The report presents cumulative and devastating facts—among them the almost four-fold disparity in Black children being placed in foster care to the nearly tenfold racial wealth gap between white and Black households.

The Task Force held hearings and consulted with experts who provided testimony. ACLU of Northern California Racial and Economic Justice Director Brandon Greene and national ACLU President and NYU Professor Deborah Archer were among the experts who testified before the Task Force.

The Interim Report contains a comprehensive set of preliminary recommendations impacting a range of policies, including prison labor, housing, education, and family regulation.

WHY REPARATIONS MATTER FOR ALL OF US

For those in our community, state, and country whose ancestors were brought here in chains and forced to live and work in slavery, the importance of this report is clear. But reparations should matter to all of us—we live in the United States, and we all inherit that legacy of slavery and need to be part of facing it.

And so does California. As ACLU NorCal's public education project Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California has shown since its launch in 2019, California was not the "free state" it professed to be since its admission into the U.S. in 1850. Gold Chains has highlighted California's Fugitive Slave Law and post-slavery laws that prohibited Black people from giving testimony in court. This month, *Indigenous Injustice*, the third episode of the Gold Chains podcast, highlights how Native children were removed from their families and forced into involuntary servitude.

Reparations have been long delayed. After the abolition of slavery, the period of Reconstruction that followed it was brief. The United States did not provide the 40 acres and a mule promised to newly freed Black people and what little



PHOTO BY BETHANIE HINES

ACLU of Northern California
Executive Director Abdi Soltani

was gained (such as land in limited instances, or the right to vote and office-holding) was quickly rolled back. Through the racial terror of lynchings, and support of state and federal law, the United States established and maintained almost a century of Jim Crow segregation. We cannot go back and change that history, but we can face it. Providing reparations to people descended from enslaved people in our country is one essential way to do so.

When it comes to our rights, everyone has benefited from the fruits of the labor of the Black freedom struggle—from the 14th Amendment promise of birthright citizenship, equal protection and due process, to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As an Iranian American who was born here a citizen in 1973, a citizen due to 14th Amendment and the abolition of slavery, I support reparations.

I encourage ACLU members and supporters to visit oag.ca.gov/ab3121 to view the Task Force report. This report and its initial recommendations, and the subsequent proposal for reparations, are not self-executing. They require our support and active involvement.

Abdi Soltani, Executive Director
ACLU of Northern California

Gold Chains, our podcast about California's hidden history of slavery is back! Our third episode, *Indigenous Injustice*, highlights a California state law that enslaved Native children. And, we connect the dots to a current U.S. Supreme Court case *Brackeen v. Haaland*. Listen at www.goldchainsca.org/podcast or wherever you get your podcasts.



GOLD CHAINS

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF
SLAVERY IN CALIFORNIA