

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

— Robert F. Kennedy

2002
ANNUAL
REPORT

ACLU
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



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Dear Friends of the ACLU:

The ACLU is founded on principles: liberty, justice, equality. But our struggle to implement this vision is far from abstract, in both its sources and its results, as you'll see in the lives we've highlighted in this report. Our efforts are grounded in, informed by, and seek to change the real life experience of ordinary people whose freedom is imperiled, who live with injustice, or whose lives and opportunities are shaped by inequality.

In times of ease and peace of mind, freedom can, indeed, feel more abstract. But in the times we move through now, at this defining point in our nation's history, the struggle to defend freedom has become an urgent and historic calling. Since September 11, 2001, our government has embarked on a wholesale revision of our basic rights: discrimination against immigrants, detentions, domestic spying, and government secrecy have been carried out in the name of security. But the ACLU has fought at each step and continues to fight for a vision of American security that includes preserving our freedom, our democratic institutions, and our fundamental rights.

We fought for reform of the INS Special Registration program, which resulted in mass detentions. We insisted that airlines cannot discriminate against passengers simply because of their Middle Eastern origin. We fought a discriminatory exclusion of immigrants from airport screening jobs. And at the local level, we set up and monitored a hotline for civil liberties and civil rights abuses in the post 9/11 era, convened coalitions to counteract discrimination and hate crime against Muslim Americans, and insisted that a local movie theater could not eject patrons simply because of their Middle Eastern heritage and use of their native language.

Guided by principle, grounded in experience, our work has thousands of faces, and it is a few of these faces we'd like to show you, close-up, in this report.

Even as we fight the government's attempt to take back freedom, we seek to build our vision of freedom and greater equality in everything from education, where our landmark statewide class action suit presses for accountability in the provision of adequate educational opportunities for all California students, to foster care, to the rights of immigrant workers to organize. In our policy work and in our litigation, we actively seek opportunities to create an impact on the shape of our society. And in 2002, we acted on many of these opportunities including our successful intervention bid in the LAPD consent decree on behalf of communities affected by police abuse, our fight for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students to attend schools without being harassed, and our victory in reforming our system of voting.

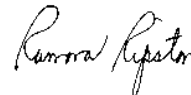
Guided by principle, grounded in experience, our work has thousands of faces, and it is a few of these faces we'd like to show you, close-up, in this report. The face of a woman who served her country, only to be told that because she's an immigrant she wouldn't be able to continue her work, the face of a mother who's looking at 25 years of separation from her son because of California's draconian Three Strikes law, and the face of a young woman eager for an education her school is incapable of fully providing.

Your continued support helps us as we seek to rewrite the stories of hundreds of thousands of people just like those we've profiled in this report. Thank you for your collaboration in helping us build freedom and make history.

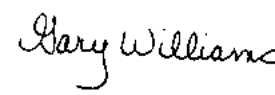
Sincerely,



Jarl Mohn
Chair,
ACLU Foundation
of Southern California



Ramona Ripston
Executive Director



Gary Williams
President
ACLU
of Southern California

jeimy gebin



When she was five years old, Jeimy Gebin's family fled their native El Salvador to escape civil war. Her adopted country became the United States, and she grew up in Los Angeles, graduating from Washington Prep High School.

After graduation, she enlisted in the United States Army and served for three years.

"I joined the Army because I love this country and wanted to give something back for the opportunity the United States provided to me," said Jeimy.

She met her future husband while they were both stationed in Ft. Stewart, Georgia. After serving for three years, she was honorably discharged as an E4 Specialist.

Gebin married, had a child, and moved to Los Angeles, where she obtained a job as an airport screener.

Things were going well. She was promoted in short time, thanks to her hard work and dedication, and she took a lot of pride in her job. Then the unthinkable happened: the events of September 11, 2001.



In the hysteria that followed the tragic events of that day, Congress passed legislation that barred legal residents who are non-citizens from working as airport screeners. No exceptions were made. It didn't matter that pilots, stewardesses, baggage handlers, and airline mechanics did not have to be citizens. It made no difference that members of the United States Armed Services were not burdened by the same citizenship requirement. The same went for the National Guard troops that were dispatched to provide added security to the nation's airports.

Jeimy was devastated.

"I was very upset when I heard that non-U.S. citizens would be fired from the job," she says. "It doesn't make sense that I can serve my country in the Army but not work in an airport as a screener. If I get fired, I could enroll in the National Guard and be back in the airport two weeks later, standing behind the screeners holding a rifle. Doesn't it make more sense for me to use the skills I've developed as a screener?"

Not to the authors of the Aviation and Security Transportation Act or to President George W. Bush.

Jeimy talked to her union representatives at the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and they contacted the ACLU of Southern California. Together, the ACLU/SC and SEIU filed a federal lawsuit challenging the Constitutionality, not to mention the logic, of barring qualified, non-citizens from working as screeners.

With one court success under their belts, attorneys are still fighting on appeal against the law that locked veterans like Gebin and others out of their jobs.

"You can't go fight for this country if you don't love it. I may not be sworn in yet, but in my heart I am an American, and no one can tell me anything different," says Jeimy.

victoria torres



Victoria Torres attends Fremont High School in Los Angeles. A bright high school junior with a 3.8 GPA, she has an interest in chemistry, biology, and local history.

“I have friends who go to better schools, outside of the city. They never have to copy down questions from a textbook that everybody shares just to do homework. They have facilities for labs and materials for projects in biology class. But not us.”

Victoria, like most of the students on her campus and hundreds of others across the state of California, understands that the educational opportunities at her school are substandard. In Victoria's chemistry and biology classes, for instance, where materials are in short supply, Victoria doesn't get to experience the scientific process, the sense of observation and discovery that is at the heart of science. Instead, Victoria and her classmates watch as a teacher conducts an experiment or they read about how an experiment would work in a textbook.

Likewise, in classes without enough textbooks for students to take home, a significant amount of valuable instructional time is given over to copying assignments — slowing the pace of instruction and limiting the overall content of Victoria's education.



How will this affect Victoria as she applies for competitive college slots against peers who have had better opportunities? How do these implications for her own future make her feel about society, about a system that is supposed to provide decent opportunities to all students — a system that is simply not keeping its word and, in the process, is placing limits on her future?

These future questions are necessarily uncertain now.

But whether she looks at school facilities, classroom materials, textbooks, the school's capacity to provide the classes students need and have signed up for, or the severe overcrowding, Victoria sees a campus that needs work.

The ACLU of Southern California filed a landmark lawsuit based on a commitment in the California Constitution to provide educational opportunities to all students. The lawsuit, still in litigation, was filed in 2000 and is built on the first-hand testimony of thousands of students, parents, and educators about the inadequacy of educational opportunities in too many California

schools, schools primarily situated in low-income communities of color.

Victoria has supported the ACLU suit and spoken out about her school's conditions not because she's down on her school — far from it, she's active in improving it. "We know that there are too many students and not enough administrators or teachers, but we still have to speak up. If we don't do that, nothing happens."

"Everybody would appreciate a better school," says Victoria, who, in addition to speaking out as part of this historic lawsuit, has also taken a leadership role in improving opportunities for her peers. She, like so many students, teachers, and parents in inadequate schools, is constantly looking for more resources. She recently obtained funding, for example, for a field trip exploring Los Angeles history.

sheila bernard



Pacing Lake Street in Venice, Sheila Bernard observes her neighborhood, the neighborhood she's fighting to save.

A man sells oranges to passersby. An older woman carrying groceries passes a single mother placing her baby into the child seat of a sedan. Around the corner on Elkgrove Avenue, four students gather in the shade to talk on their way home from Mark Twain Middle School. A young girl jogs past them, followed by her siblings.

This is the everyday rhythm and energy of life at Lincoln Place, a neighborhood under threat. Lincoln Place was built in the post-World War II building boom and is one of the most significant stocks of mid- and limited-income housing on the Westside of Los Angeles. The 795-unit, 52-building complex has a unique, modernist design with ample green space, courtyards, and curving walks that exemplify the "Garden City" movement in architecture.

But Lincoln Place and, with it, low-income housing opportunities for single mothers, the elderly, and people with disabilities, are threatened by the market forces that have turned this corner of L.A. into hot property. The owners of the complex have



already gutted six buildings, renovating one and turning it into high-priced rentals. Dozens of renters were evicted, and Lincoln Place, Sheila says with anger and sadness, “suffered the loss of many neighbors.”

Bernard, the president of the Lincoln Park Tenants’ Association (LPTA), has been fighting for the survival of Lincoln Place for a generation. She and her three children have lived there since the 1980s. In 1987, the owners sought to “upgrade” the complex into condominiums and townhouses. Led by Bernard, the tenants formed the LPTA, successfully lobbying to change city codes involving large-scale evictions.

“This is an important battle — not just for me, and not just for Lincoln Place, but for affordable housing for the entire city,” Sheila said.

In 2000, the Lincoln Place owners and developers sued the LPTA

with a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) in retaliation for their advocacy efforts, which included leafleting, putting up literature in common areas of the complex, and advocating for tenant action. The ACLU considers such lawsuits a serious threat to the First Amendment and filed suit to put a stop to this one, a victory we won in 2002.

The fight for Lincoln Place continues — and Sheila Bernard, with the assistance of the ACLU, refuses to be silenced.

ashly massey



Troublemakers. That's who other students and faculty see occupying seats in the Dean's office. Vandals, bullies, students who ditch classes, or smoke in the bathroom. Ashly Massey doesn't fit that profile.

She's quiet, respectful and studious — so what was she doing sitting in the Dean's office for eight consecutive gym periods?

One afternoon in gym class, a friend asked if she was a lesbian. Before Ashly could speak up, another friend — the only girl Ashly had talked to about her sexual orientation — answered for her.

"Yes, she's gay. She's a lesbian."

That's how word got out. The next day, when Ashly arrived in gym class, her instructor told her not to dress for class, instead directing her to the Dean's office. There she sat for eight days while the clerks, the principal and other students looked at her suspiciously, wondering what Ashly had done.



The middle school community in the conservative Banning district began piecing the story together.

“At first, I didn’t know what to think,” Ashley said. “But then I heard the whispers in the hallways. Kids started calling me things — ‘Big Fat Dyke’ — and I was hurt and angry. I lost all of my friends.”

Ashly began to grow afraid at school, and it was showing up at home. She spent more and more time alone; she withdrew. It was clear to her mother that something was wrong. At one point, Ashley’s mom, Amelia, discovered that Ashly had packed her bags, thinking she’d have to leave.

For medical reasons, Ashly cut her schedule to half a day, ending the question of gym class.

But the attention caused by the matter continued to grow, and Ashly found herself surrounded by hostility.

The ACLU, along with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, filed suit against Ashly’s school district under California’s Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Ashly graduated from middle school and now attends Belmont High School, where she plans to form a Gay-Straight Alliance, a student-run club that provides a safe place for students to meet, support each other, talk about issues related to sexual orientation, and work to end homophobia.

“I want everybody to know that it’s okay to be you,” says Ashly.

The case against the school is still pending. Ashly promises to “take this case as far as it needs to go.”

mohammed sayed



Mohammed Sayed and three friends planned to spend their Saturday night enjoying the same ritual they always did; they would hang out at The Block, a conglomerate of fashion and entertainment outlets near Cal State Fullerton, watch a movie at the AMC Theater, and catch up with each other.

But on Saturday, May 4, their casual routine turned into an episode of bias and discrimination. After purchasing tickets and sitting down, they started talking for the few minutes before the lights would dim and the movie trailers begin. Mohammed, a native of Afghanistan who has lived in the United States for 20 years, began to speak in the English/Pashto hybrid he and his friends often use.

After a few minutes, he noticed an usher staring intently at him and his friends, all of whom are of Middle Eastern descent. Mohammed shrugged it off and continued talking with his friends. Then the security guard approached. The guard asked to see their ticket stubs. Noticing that security had not asked any other customers to show their stubs, Mohammed calmly inquired why he and his friends were singled out. At that point, the guard beckoned six Orange Police Department officers to escort Sayed and his friends out of the theater.



After several failed attempts to speak with management in the theater lobby, Mohammed finally obtained a reason for their expulsion. "They told us that we looked suspicious and were speaking a foreign language. That's it."

Appalled and insulted, Mohammed and his friends attempted to get the names of the manager, the security company, and witnesses. At this point, one of the police officers threatened to arrest them if they returned to The Block at any point in the evening.

"I was angry. I know that everybody wants things more secure after 9/11, but this was just bigotry," Sayed says. "For the first time, I felt that I didn't belong here."

Mohammed was aware of a friend, also of Middle Eastern descent, who encountered a similar situation at a Southern California mall a few months before. He contacted the friend, who told Mohammed that he should contact the ACLU of Southern California.

The ACLU soon filed a federal civil rights lawsuit challenging the discriminatory treatment by the AMC theater chain. Seeking a formal apology, mandatory training for employee sensitivity and punitive damages, Mohammed and his fellow plaintiff wanted affirmation that such prejudice would not occur in the future.

"What they did was horrible and horrendous. It's always going to be in the back of my head," Sayed says.

Within months, the lawsuit was settled. AMC Theaters issued a formal apology but did not pay any compensation to Mohammed. Sayed says that the apology was sufficient. "At that point, I realized that I only wanted to make sure that they knew that this was unacceptable. I'm not going to crusade or hold a vendetta. It was just one ignorant mistake, and they apologized."

sue reams



Sue Reams never thought she would be fighting day and night for criminal justice reform. She never imagined herself lobbying legislators, standing in front of cameras, debating district attorneys, raising money, or asking for signatures. But she doesn't consider this a choice: she's fighting for her son Shane's life.

When California voters approved "Three Strikes" legislation in 1994, most voters thought they were targeting violent criminals. But California ended up with the most draconian Three Strikes law in the nation. No other state applies a Third Strike to all felonies, including nonviolent ones such as drug offenses and petty theft. In no other state would Sue's son Shane be locked up for 25 years to life.

Shane's two prior offenses were both residential burglaries, both of the family home. In each case, Sue, who believed in "tough love" and knew her son was struggling with drug addiction, turned him in to the police. Both cases were settled through plea bargains, which meant that the felonies stayed on his record. "I wanted him to get help, and I thought the system would include rehabilitation. But the court didn't do anything about his addiction. They just gave him 18 months in Chino."



When the Three Strikes initiative passed, Shane was back living with his mother. Still fighting addiction, he was struggling to escape his previous life, but he stumbled. In 1996, he was arrested for aiding and abetting a \$20 cocaine sale. The person who conducted the sale received a four-year sentence. Reams “struck out,” receiving 25-to-life.

As the judge read the sentence, Sue was flooded with despair and guilt. “I couldn’t escape it — I tried to help Shane and it backfired.”

But Sue isn’t one to be paralyzed. She turned her outrage and despair into action. She began with two other mothers of Strikers, forming the Orange County Resolution to End Three Strikes. Within three weeks, the group expanded to 15 members. They held meetings, carried out stand-ins at jails, circulated information about Three Strikes, and began contacting public officials to lobby for change. They soon realized that other family

members were doing the same around the state, and the groups came together as Families to Amend California’s Three Strikes (FACTS) by 1998.

Quitting her job to dedicate herself full-time to fighting for Shane’s and other Three Strikes inmates’ release, Sue now spends her time founding new chapters, acting as a spokesperson, lobbyist, and one of FACTS’ leaders.

FACTS and the ACLU have worked together closely for the last two years; the ACLU joined a U.S. Supreme Court challenge to the law that ultimately failed, and the ACLU has been a leading partner and ally in FACTS’ effort to launch an initiative campaign.

Shane is now 34 years old. He spends his time in prison writing letters to legislators, studying at the law library and doing what he can to support his mom. “He depends on me to keep fighting,” says Sue, “and I will. There’s no other choice.”

gabriel nimatuj



Gabriel Nimatuj recalls his childhood in Guatemala, reared among the banana and coffee crops tended by his aunt and uncle, and that image of home has endured over years and thousands of miles, leading to a lifelong interest in agriculture.

Seeking a better life for their family, Gabriel's parents immigrated to the United States. By 1991, the family was living in Huntington Park, a working class, predominantly Latino community in South East Los Angeles County. Gabriel excelled in school. By the time he entered Huntington Park High School, he had already planned his career path. "I wanted to go to Humboldt State University," says Gabriel. "It has the best agricultural department in the state, and that's what I want to study."

With a 3.9 grade point average, references from numerous teachers and active involvement in three political groups, Gabriel would have been a shoo-in for acceptance at Humboldt. But California law at the time required undocumented students, even those who lived in California and had attended California public schools for their entire academic careers, to pay thousands of dollars more as "nonresidents" of California. These were the very students who could least afford the higher rate.



"It just wasn't affordable," says Gabriel. "The fees, even at community colleges, were almost ten times higher, even though I went to middle school and high school in California."

Gabriel's dream might have to be deferred.

But the ACLU of Southern California joined immigrant rights, labor, and student groups to fight for a law that would change California's system, and Gabriel was an activist on behalf of the bill, known as AB 540.

He attended legislative meetings and press conferences; he spoke to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, and he worked throughout the state to increase awareness about the bill in immigrant communities.

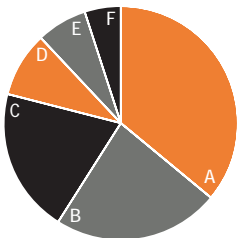
"I wanted people to know that this would make it easier for everybody and we all would benefit. If this didn't pass, a lot of

people wouldn't have the opportunity to go to college at all."

Gabriel and our coalition succeeded in the legislature; then we took the battle to the Regents, who, after receiving over 6,000 letters from ACLU activists, voted to extend the change to the University of California.

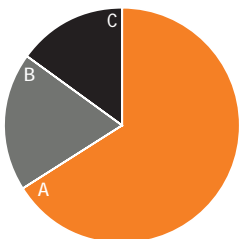
Gabriel is saving money through paid internships and is still fighting to expand immigrant students' rights at the federal level. In the fall, he hopes to enroll at Humboldt State.

ACLU FOUNDATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



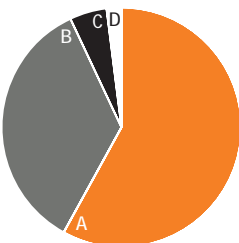
SUPPORT & REVENUE*		TOTAL	\$4,211,779
A. Individual Contributions	\$1,536,607		36%
B. Budgeted Transfers	\$960,689		23%
C. Bequests	\$840,513**		20%
D. Court Awarded Fees	\$372,199		9%
E. Restricted Foundation Grants	\$289,942		7%
F. Interest & Other	\$211,829		5%

*Represents net of sharing with the National ACLU of contributions and bequests. The National ACLU share totaled \$1,669,744.
 **An additional amount of \$419,007 in bequests was restricted by the Board of Directors to reserve funds for future years.



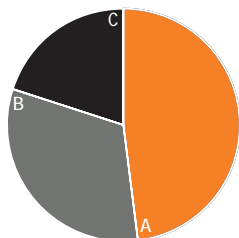
EXPENSES		TOTAL	\$3,302,706
A. Program Services	\$2,177,304		66%
B. Fundraising	\$630,589		19%
C. Management & General	\$494,813		15%

ACLU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



SUPPORT & REVENUE*		TOTAL	\$706,689
A. Membership Dues	\$411,157		58%
B. Individual Contributions	\$246,949		35%
C. Bequests	\$34,065		5%
D. Interest	\$13,000		2%
E. Budgeted Transfers	\$1,500		**

*Represents net of sharing with the National ACLU of dues, contributions and bequests. The National ACLU Share totaled \$134,101.
 **Represents less than 1%.



EXPENSES		TOTAL	\$630,331
A. Program Services	\$305,230		48%
B. Fundraising	\$198,888		32%
C. Management & General	\$126,213		20%

Note: All figures provided are unaudited at time of publication. Complete, audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2002 by Engel, Kalvin, et al., may be obtained by writing to the ACLU/SC, 1616 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026-5752.

The ACLU of Southern California needs your help in protecting the civil rights and civil liberties of all Southern Californians. Free speech, the separation of church and state, the rights of the poor, reproductive rights, educational equity, voting rights, equity for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity — these are all core principles the ACLU of Southern California works to defend each and every day.

This important work is made possible by thousands of members and supporters across Southern California. These generous individuals comprise an unparalleled force of political and financial activists, unified in their commitment to civil rights and civil liberties. There are many ways you can support the ACLU of Southern California:

BECOME AN ACLU MEMBER.

Add your voice to the more than 25,000 members in Southern California and 300,000 ACLU members across the nation. Annual memberships cost \$20.00 (\$30.00 for a joint or family membership) and connect you to one of the largest activist networks in Southern California. Call (213) 977-5216 or join on our website, www.aclu-sc.org.

BECOME AN ACLU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SUPPORTER.

The ACLU of Southern California depends on contributions, both large and small, to fund the dozens of cases and public education campaigns it supports each year. The ACLU Foundation of Southern California is a 501(c)(3) organization, making your contributions tax deductible. Your contributions can be made in cash, by check or credit card, in stock or bonds, and can be made in honor of someone else through a 'tribute gift.' Call (213) 977-5254 for more information.

DESIGNATE THE ACLU FOUNDATION AS A BENEFICIARY IN YOUR WILL.

Join other members of the ACLU Heritage Club in providing for the ACLU of Southern California in your estate plans. You can:

- *Name the ACLU Foundation as a beneficiary on your insurance*
- *Designate the ACLU as the beneficiary for part or all of your estate*
- *Start an annuity plan that pays you income in exchange for your gift of \$5,000 or more*

For more information on charitable estate planning, please call (213) 977-5226.

Your contributions make twice the impact. All contributions (unless otherwise designated) are shared with the National ACLU in support of smaller ACLU affiliates in states where there is little support for defending civil liberties and civil rights.

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The ACLU joined the fight for gay rights in the 1960s as a natural extension of its commitment to speak for all those denied equal treatment before the law. Now, four decades later, the ACLU maintains one of the nation's largest dockets of cases concerning the rights of lesbians, gay men, transgendered people and those living with HIV-disease. To acknowledge the generosity and commitment of friends who have helped advance this historic civil rights struggle, the ACLU Foundation of Southern California has established the PRIDE PARTNERSHIP. We are deeply grateful for this crucial support.

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