

THE ISSUE

WE STRIVE FOR A DEMOCRACY THAT IS JUST AND EQUAL. Our democracy will only ever be just and equal when human rights are guaranteed for all. Justice and equality mean that individuals have rights that can never be taken away.

CORE CONSTITUENCY

People who are still fighting to secure the full exercise of their civil liberties and protection of their civil rights—including women, youth, people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people, immigrants and refugees, members of minority religions, people with disabilities, people who are experiencing poverty or homelessness, and people who are incarcerated—as well as individuals, communities, organizations, and movements committed to this struggle.

ASSUMPTIONS & STANCES

We must work to ensure that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and Bill of Rights are in practice, and not only in theory, extended to everyone in the U.S.

We must be visionary and dare to create a more perfect union. We cannot settle for what is currently the law; we can and must expand what is possible for civil liberties and civil rights.

We believe that basic economic rights are essential for the full exercise and defense of civil liberties and civil rights.

We believe that achieving significant progress requires great determination and that maintaining it requires constant vigilance because no victory ever stays won.

While litigation and policy work are often the most direct approaches to safeguard people’s rights, we cannot ignore other strategies and in particular the power of people. It is critical that we educate people about their rights and provide people with tools to be effective advocates for themselves and their communities. Too many people remain unaware of their rights, let alone how to use them.

We must have the courage to remain true to our principles even when it is controversial or unpopular. We are committed to maintaining our independence and integrity. As a result, we take care not to accept any funding that might in any way impair our ability to take principled positions. We are truly grateful for the generous private support that allows us to take this fundamental stance.

STAND FOR JUSTICE
WE ARE RESOLUTE

THEORY of CHANGE



CORE STRATEGIES & METHODS

- We employ the strategies of:
- 1. Community Education & Activist Engagement
 - 2. Media Advocacy
 - 3. Policy Research & Advocacy
 - 4. Litigation

We integrate these strategies, where possible, to achieve our mission.
We work independently and in coalition with other groups and individuals.

VALUES & BELIEFS / COMMITMENTS

Accountability: We are responsible for our actions, as individuals and as an organization. We follow through on our commitments, and we hold ourselves to the highest standards.

Collaboration: We are stronger together. We seek to build strong teams and coalitions that coordinate and leverage energy, resources, and vision.

Equity and Inclusion: We seek to build and sustain an equitable and inclusive culture internally and externally—one where people feel valued and respected for who they are.

Humility: We recognize our own limitations, as individuals and as an organization. We respect and honor others’ contributions, experiences, approaches, and expertise.

Strong Relationships with Impacted Groups: We work with directly affected individuals, communities, and organizations to build durable relationships, based on mutual respect, through which we can identify and pursue shared goals. We seek, wherever possible, the meaningful involvement and input of those most impacted by the denial of full civil liberties and civil rights in our society as we decide what goals we set, what strategies we adopt, and how we work in coalition with others.

ANALYSIS

Power has been distributed unequally in our society. Those with greater relative power have often used it to protect their privileged position and preserve the systems of oppression that underlie it, such as racism, misogyny, heterosexism, economic inequality, or xenophobia. Meaningful progress to ensure that all people may fully enjoy their civil liberties and civil rights requires acknowledging and challenging the effort to prevent change, minimize the extent to which it occurs, and roll back gains when they are secured.

VISION

We envision a nation where people in the U.S. will be free and equal in dignity and rights.

WHAT WILL BRING ABOUT CHANGE

Expand people’s knowledge and vision of civil liberties and civil rights.

Engage people in advocacy for civil liberties and civil rights for all.

Work effectively within movements for equality and justice.

Lift up the lived experience of impacted communities.

Support and develop the activism and leadership of impacted communities.

Integrate our strategies to maximize our impact.

Steward our resources in ways that are strategic, responsible, and sustainable.

