



ACLU

75TH ANNIVERSARY

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of MARYLAND

STILL STANDING
FOR U.

Highlights* of 75 Years of Fighting for Rights in the Free State

November 1921

- The Maryland Civil Liberties Committee, precursor to the ACLU, is formed by Elisabeth Gilman (daughter of John Hopkins University's first President) and 24 others in the wake of arrests and deportations of immigrant workers, particularly Russians.

March 8, 1931

- In the wake of several lynchings, the National ACLU establishes its Maryland affiliate (still called the Maryland Civil Liberties Committee) at a meeting in the home of Elisabeth Gilman after a speech by Roger Baldwin, National ACLU founder.

1930s

- MCLC wins change of venue for Orphan Jones, an African American man charged with murder, threatened with lynching, and denied counsel.
- ACLU fights to protect minority party access to ballot for national elections.

1940s

- ACLU takes up case of Maryland League for Planned Parenthood, which was forced to cancel a meeting on "Marriage Counseling" funded by the Community Fund of Baltimore City, because of opposition by the Catholic Archdiocese.
- ACLU attempts to intervene on behalf of a student who refused military training.
- ACLU's first Supreme Court appearance involves Smith Betts, an African American charged with robbery and found guilty without benefit of counsel.

1950s

- ACLU opposes prosecutions of Owen Lattimore (former MCLC President and teacher of Chinese history) and other Johns Hopkins University professors accused of perjury under the Smith Act, the federal anti-subversive law.

- ACLU files successful suit against Maryland's 61-year-old law prohibiting display of "crime and lust magazines to minors."
- ACLU files wrongful termination case on behalf of Maryland Bethlehem Steel workers fired after invoking 5th Amendment during House Un-American Activities Committee hearing.
- ACLU represents Roy Torcaso, who was refused Notary Seal (public office) because he refused to state a belief in God.
- ACLU takes up case of parents who refused on religious grounds medical treatment for their child.

1960s

- ACLU defends numerous picketers and protesters arrested for demonstrating against segregated conditions at parks, restaurants, and other public venues.
- ACLU represents citizens jailed for violating Baltimore City-imposed curfew in aftermath of 1968 (MLK death) riots, who could not afford to pay fines and were jailed for longer than if they had been convicted.
- ACLU has court strike down Maryland's Uniform Flag Desecration Act, which made it a crime to wear the U.S. flag unless it was on a military uniform.
- ACLU successfully appeals to US Supreme Court to strike down Maryland film censorship law.
- ACLU successfully appeals to US Supreme Court to strike down Maryland Subversive Activities Act of 1949, aka Ober Law, the most stringent loyalty test in US.

1970s

- ACLU represents actress Jane Fonda and others who solicit anti-war petition signatures among soldiers at Fort Meade.
- ACLU defends right of Black Panthers to distribute materials that advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government.
- ACLU Legal Counsel Elsbeth Bothe defends fledgling filmmaker John

Waters after his arrest for violating obscenity law while filming.

- ACLU Executive Director John Roemer arrested in Hampden for violating Baltimore City anti-loitering law (later ruled unconstitutional).
- ACLU wins reinstatement of attorney Maurice Braverman to Maryland Bar, finally ending his McCarthy era expulsion for political reasons under the Smith Act (anti-communist act of 1950s).
- ACLU wins official recognition for Gay Student Alliance at Essex Community College.

1980s

- John Norfolk wins right to secular alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous as part of judge's DWI sentencing.
- ACLU files case in state court to strike sodomy statute as unconstitutional.
- ACLU asks federal court to declare unconstitutional three Eastern Shore jails, two of which dated back to the civil war and one of which once imprisoned Frederick Douglass.
- ACLU founds the Coalition for Open Doors to press large and influential private clubs to cease discriminating on the basis of race, gender, and religion.
- ACLU represents Ku Klux Klan when Thurmont, Maryland refuses them a permit to march down Main Street, and the NAACP insists on participating in the KKK march.

1990s

- ACLU's voting rights cases on Maryland's rural Eastern Shore change the political landscape and create political opportunity for African Americans for the first time.
- ACLU brings one of the nation's first cases under the Americans with Disabilities Act representing inmates at a Hagerstown prison.
- "Question 6" abortion rights referendum passes by wide margin after campaign by Marylanders for the Right to Choose coalition, spearheaded by ACLU and others.
- ACLU represents homeless persons

*These represent a mere fraction of all our work in the courts, in the legislature, and in the court of public opinion.

banned under Baltimore City's pan-handling ordinance from speaking to passers by.

- ACLU challenges Maryland's first execution in 32 years; wins right to defend "volunteer" death row prisoner, but fails to halt execution.
- ACLU successfully represents Somerset County's first African-American school superintendent against school board that failed to renew his contract based on race.
- ACLU successfully represents 13 Mexican migrants who are exploited by their crab-packer employer and threatened with deportation if they complain.
- ACLU sues Maryland State Police for racial profiling of African American motorists ("Driving While Black"), wins court order that police must collect racial data on all traffic stops and searches, and ultimately negotiates substantial policy changes to stop the discrimination.
- ACLU's class action suit challenges State of Maryland to provide a constitutionally adequate education for the state's poorest children in Baltimore City. Since case settled in 1995, over \$200 million more funding per year flows to the city schools, as part of the Bridge to Excellence Act ("Thornton"). We continue to press city officials to spend the funding wisely. Our new priority is to press for repairs of dilapidated buildings that house low-performing schools.
- ACLU represents State Trooper dad in his bid to stay home with newborn and sick wife in face of Maryland State Police policy that violates the federal Family Medical Leave Act.
- ACLU represents blind voters who want to cast independent, secret ballot. Individual remedies are implemented and then abandoned, leading ACLU to file lawsuit in 2002.
- ACLU sues HUD and Baltimore City public housing officials to remedy nearly a century of government imposed segregation that left over 14,000 families with children vulnerable, isolated and perpetually locked in unsafe, distressed neighborhoods. In January 2005, federal court holds HUD responsible, ruling that racial segregation is a "regional problem" to be addressed by "regional solutions." In 2006, ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and Morgan Lewis attorneys go to court seeking communities of opportunity for their clients.
- ACLU defends the 1st Amendment

when Ku Klux Klan is denied the right to participate in Anne Arundel County's "Adopt A Road" program. ACLU also represents Klan when Elkton, Maryland council refuses to let them march down Main Street.

- ACLU forms Public Funds for Public Schools Coalition; spearheads effort to fight state-subsidized texts and other government funds for private/religious schools.
- In a case that sparks national debate, ACLU successfully challenges a Calvert County high school's plan to have prayer at graduation.

And into the 21st Century ...

- Federal court strikes down Annapolis anti-loitering ordinance after ACLU files suit.
- On behalf of Viva House, a Catholic Worker community, ACLU successfully gets Baltimore City Police Department to fulfill a Maryland Public Information Act request for information about a secret \$250,000 slush fund.
- ACLU is instrumental in passing law barring discrimination based on sexual orientation; then successfully challenges fraudulent anti-gay referendum petitions opposing the law.
- ACLU sues to remove Ten Commandments from public property in Western Maryland.
- In the wake of 9/11, ACLU launches campaign to monitor U.S.'s "War on Terror" activities, including its "special registration" of immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries.
- ACLU helps pass many county and local "anti-Patriot Act resolutions" as part of national campaign of outrage over the Bush Administration's response to the tragedy of 9/11.
- ACLU, along with ACLU's National Prison Project, sues to stop women detainees from dying in overheated Baltimore City jail.
- ACLU steps in to protect peace group's right to hold silent anti-war vigils on public streets near Baltimore's Inner Harbor.
- ACLU successfully challenges narrowly circumscribed "free speech zones" at University of Maryland College Park.
- ACLU files landmark lawsuit seeking state marriage licenses for the thousands of same-sex couples in Maryland; trial court rules for marriage fairness in January 2006, and case now pending before Court of Appeals.

- ACLU defends thousands of voters unaffiliated with any party who are barred from voting for judicial candidates who appear on the parties' primary ballots.
- ACLU represents high school students subjected to humiliating drug tests and full-body strip searches in "lockdown" at Eastern Shore school.
- ACLU defends student 1st Amendment rights, including students forced to say the Pledge of Allegiance and suspended for wearing an "anti-Bush" t-shirt.
- ACLU successfully defends Eastern Shore women criminally prosecuted for carrying their pregnancies to term despite the drug dependencies they suffer.
- ACLU champions the rights of citizens from Emmitsburg to Bethesda who want to post political signs on public byways and in their front yards.
- ACLU challenges state regulations governing administration of the death penalty, charging that they are out of compliance with the law.
- Challenging the notion that the American with Disability Act does not protect opiate addicts, ACLU successfully defends their right to receive treatment at a Baltimore County clinic.
- ACLU files lawsuit on behalf of tens of thousands of mostly African American individuals arrested by the Baltimore City police, held and strip searched at Central Booking, and released without charges being brought by prosecutors
- Following a series of controversial national elections and nefarious voter suppression activities in Maryland, ACLU launches "Election Protection" campaign to educate voters about their rights, solve problems at the polls, and then successfully win voting reforms in the General Assembly.

Want to learn more?
www.aclu-md.org

* Have information on past ACLU cases? Call 410-889-8555.

