

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ACLU FOUNDATION OF RI

PROTECTING RHODE ISLAND FROM THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

THREE ACLU LAWSUITS FILED SO FAR TO ADDRESS ISSUES IN THE OCEAN STATE

Judge Orders 72-Hour Notice Before Removal of Venezuelan National After ACLU Emergency Lawsuit

After the ACLU and the ACLU of Rhode Island filed an emergency lawsuit to prevent the removal of a Venezuelan national from the country under President Trump's recent proclamation invoking the Alien Enemies Act (AEA), a 1798 law designed for use during wartime, U.S. District Court Judge Melissa DuBose issued an order barring the government from moving the petitioner outside Rhode Island without at least 72-hours' notice to the court and the ACLU's attorneys. *Cont'd on p 2*

ACLU Files Class Action Lawsuit Challenging Terminated Student Status of Students in RI, NH, ME, and PR

Four ACLU affiliates, including Rhode Island, have filed a federal class action lawsuit seeking to represent over 100 students in New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, and Puerto Rico who had their student immigration status unlawfully and abruptly terminated with no explanation. This included a handful of students from Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design who had their student status revoked in April without their knowledge. The lawsuit asked the court to immediately reinstate their F-1 student status, which would allow them to continue their studies. Shortly after the suit was filed, the federal government restored their status – at least for the time being, but the lawsuit will proceed. *Cont'd on p 2*

Arts Organizations Push for Answers in National Endowment for the Arts Lawsuit

Four arts and theater organizations filed an amended complaint in federal court in Rhode Island in their First Amendment lawsuit against the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The complaint, filed by the ACLU and ACLU of RI, was accompanied by discovery requests seeking clarity on precisely how the NEA intends to implement an executive order that directs federal agencies to cease spending federal funds on what the government calls "gender ideology." *Cont'd on p. 4*



ACLU lawyers and staff, and artists from various organizations outside the U.S. District courthouse after the March 27 hearing.

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NEW LEGAL CASES (CONTINUED)

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every day we are working to protect our democracy from unprecedented assaults on fundamental rights that are emanating ceaselessly from Washington, D.C.

Our Affiliate has already been involved in three lawsuits against the Trump Administration, with more almost certain to follow, which you can read about in this newsletter.

But there is much to be vigilant about at the state level as well. We are deep in the legislative session, lobbying at the State House daily and working with coalition partners to get proactive legislation passed, to protect reproductive freedom and the rights of immigrants, promote voting rights, and prevent censorship in our local libraries.

This newsletter, however, is focused on the fight against bills that threaten our civil liberties – including ones limiting our free speech and making our already overly punitive criminal justice system even more so.

In this chaotic time, I encourage you not to lose sight of the issues on the local or state level where you can make a big impact. Call or write your legislators about bills in this newsletter, and use the advocacy training materials on our website (check out page 11 for details).

Thank you for taking action – in whatever way you are able. We need all hands on deck to protect our democracy and our rights in Rhode Island.

– Steven Brown

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Judge Orders 72-Hour Notice *Cont'd from p. 1*

Invoking the AEA and bypassing any normal procedural requirements of federal immigration law, the Trump Administration has removed over 100 other Venezuelan noncitizens, without review or hearing, to a notorious prison in El Salvador.

The petitioner in this emergency case sought asylum two years ago in this country, along with his fiancée and son, after being detained and threatened by state police in Venezuela because of his perceived political views. His application for asylum is pending, but he was suddenly arrested by immigration agents in March and jailed at the Wyatt Detention Center. Although he has no criminal history, the Department of Homeland Security claims he is a member of a Venezuelan criminal gang that is engaged in an “invasion” of the United States under the AEA. Because of the government’s accusations against him, the petition claims, he “is at grave risk of being classified as an alien enemy under the AEA ... and summarily deported under the Proclamation to El Salvador.” The judge’s interim order will prevent that from happening for now.

WHAT IS THE ALIEN ENEMIES ACT?

By its terms, the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 is intended for use only in wartime, in a declared war against a foreign invasion or government.

The AEA has only been used three times in the nation’s history – during the War of 1812, World War I, and World War II.

Lawsuit Challenging Terminated Student Status

Cont'd from p. 1

These unilateral and unlawful terminations severely disrupted the educational opportunities of these students who were in the middle of their studies (and in the middle of a semester) and who are simply trying to obtain, often at considerable expense, an education in the United States while following all the rules required of them. With terminated F-1 statuses, they are placed at dire risk of detention and deportation.

These terminations by the Department of Homeland Security have been occurring since the beginning of March, and have impacted hundreds, if not thousands, of international students throughout the United States. *Inside Higher Ed* estimates that, as of mid-April, over 210 colleges and universities had identified over 1,400 international students and recent graduates who had their legal status changed. While a temporary victory has been obtained, the suit will continue to secure permanent relief.

With terminated F-1 statuses, students are placed at dire risk of detention and deportation

VICTORIES: SETTLED CASES

ACLU and RWU Law School Clinic Settle Suit over ACI's Failure to Accommodate Native American Prisoner's Religious Freedom

The ACLU of Rhode Island and the Roger Williams University Law School Prisoners' Rights Clinic have favorably settled a lawsuit that challenged the R.I. Department of Corrections' (RIDOC) restrictive policies governing the religious freedom of people incarcerated at the ACI and, in particular, the agency's refusal to accommodate the religious practices of a Native American prisoner.

The lawsuit, filed by Jared Goldstein, Director of the RWU Law School Prisoners' Rights Clinic, and ACLU of RI cooperating attorney Lynette Labinger, had argued that RIDOC's refusal to allow Native American prisoner Wolf Pawochawog-Mequinosh to wear an Apache headband, along with its policy of delegating to itself decisions as to what religious beliefs and practices align with an inmate's religious designation, violated his rights under a federal law that protects the religious freedom of incarcerated individuals. The lawsuit noted that RIDOC allows Muslim and Jewish prisoners to wear kufis and yarmulkes, respectively.



Under the settlement agreement, RIDOC has agreed to allow Wolf to wear the requested headband. More broadly, RIDOC is also required within 120 days to adopt a process to allow all prisoners whose religion is not specifically recognized by the agency to seek approval to obtain religious items and attend religious services consistent with their religion. The case will remain open until RIDOC complies with that requirement.

RIPTA Data Breach Class-Action Lawsuit Preliminarily Settled

A R.I. Superior Court judge has preliminarily approved settlement of a class-action lawsuit filed by the ACLU of RI against the R.I. Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and UnitedHealthcare New England (UHC) over an August 2021 data breach at RIPTA that compromised the Social Security numbers and other personal and health care information of thousands of adults and their children, including many with no connection to RIPTA. A hearing on the settlement will be held in September. Key aspects of the proposed settlement include the following:

- RIPTA and UHC will establish a \$350,000 settlement fund.
- Members of the class can claim up to four hours of lost time at \$15 per hour for time spent addressing issues related to the data breach by submitting an attestation form.
- Members of the class may claim up to \$7,500 for appropriately documented "extraordinary losses" resulting from identity theft, fraud, or other misuse of personal information caused by the data breach.
- Members of the class who sign up during the claims period will receive five years of free credit monitoring that sells for a retail value of \$840 per class member.

The lawsuit was filed by ACLU of RI cooperating attorneys Peter Wasylyk and Carlin Phillips in 2022. It argued that the defendants did not adequately encrypt and secure the personal information from unauthorized access by third parties as required by federal standards, and were negligent in failing to properly maintain, protect, purge, and safely destroy the data. The data files provided by UHC to RIPTA that were part of the breach included information not only of individuals insured under RIPTA's healthcare plan but also of thousands of non-RIPTA state employees. The suit alleged that these deficiencies violated state laws designed to preserve healthcare confidentiality and protect against identity theft.



MORE LEGAL UPDATES

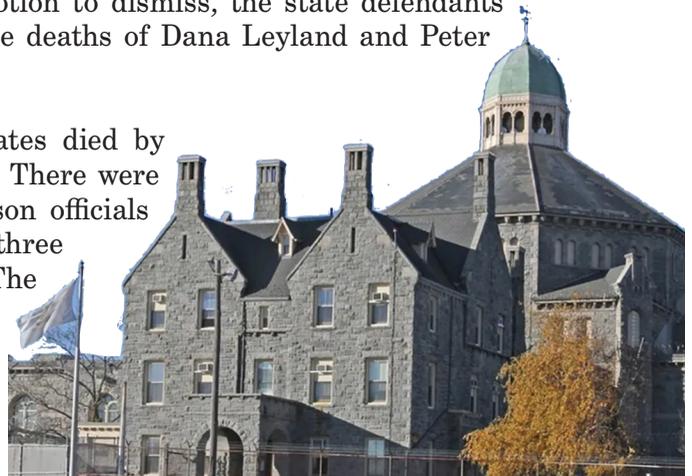
Judge Rejects State's Attempt to Dismiss ACI Suicide Lawsuits

U.S. District Court Chief Judge John McConnell, Jr. rejected requests by the state to dismiss lawsuits filed against RI Department of Corrections' (RIDOC) supervisors and staff on behalf of the family members of two individuals who died by suicide at the prison within the span of a few months in 2023.

The lawsuits, filed by ACLU cooperating attorneys Mark Decof, Jeffrey Mega and Shad Miller from the law firm of Decof, Mega & Quinn, P.C, allege that prison officials were deliberately indifferent to the decedents' known suicide risk, and that the failure to properly intervene or provide them necessary medical care was negligent and violated the Eighth Amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual punishment."

In his brief opinions, Judge McConnell held that, accepting the allegations in the complaint as true, which he was required to do at this stage of the case on a motion to dismiss, the state defendants were not entitled to qualified immunity from suit for the deaths of Dana Leyland and Peter De Los Santos.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 27 inmates died by suicide in Rhode Island prisons between 2001 and 2019. There were at least four deaths by suicide at the ACI in 2023; prison officials made no public acknowledgment of the deaths until three had taken place in the first five months of the year. The family members expressed frustration at their inability to obtain detailed information about the circumstances surrounding their loved ones' deaths. The suits seek compensatory and punitive damages on behalf of the families. As a result of the court rulings, the cases can proceed with further discovery and, ultimately, a trial.



Maximum Security, Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) in Cranston, RI.

Arts Organizations Push for Answers *Cont'd from p. 1*

The amended complaint and discovery requests come after the NEA's self-imposed April 30 deadline. By the deadline, the NEA determined whether communicating anything about "gender ideology" would make grantees ineligible for awards. Those new implementation guidelines from the NEA fail to clearly guarantee that grant awards will not be restricted based on the viewpoint of the applicants.

After a court hearing on the matter in March, U.S. District Judge William Smith held that a decision by the NEA to make any project that "promotes" what the government deems to be "gender ideology" ineligible for funds would likely violate the First Amendment and exceed the agency's statutory authority. However, he also concluded that, because the NEA was in the process of determining whether and how to impose that ban, the court would not get in the way of the agency's decision-making process at this stage by issuing a preliminary injunction against the ban.

The ACLU, the ACLU of Rhode Island, David Cole, and Lynette Labinger, cooperating counsel for the ACLU-RI, filed the suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island on behalf of Rhode Island Latino Arts; National Queer Theater; The Theater Offensive; and the Theater Communications Group.



BILLS THAT THREATEN CIVIL LIBERTIES

Every February, we publish some of the “good” bills introduced at the beginning of the session – bills that will protect or expand civil liberties in our state if enacted into law. In this newsletter, we look at some of the many bills that threaten civil liberties. This issue focuses particularly on two areas: bills that infringe on First Amendment rights and legislation that is harmful to justice reform. You can find our testimony and additional information on all of these bills on the legislative section of our website at riaclu.org/bills.

As we get closer to the end of the legislative session, we encourage you to pick a bill or two, send an email or make a phone call to your state legislators, and share your views! Remember – your words as a constituent hold weight.

LEGISLATION THAT COULD UNDERMINE OUR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Explicit Digital Images (H 5046, S 136)

As juvenile as it is to use artificial intelligence to create sexually explicit, but fake, digital images, broadly criminalizing the dissemination of such content, as this bill does, raises First Amendment concerns. By not requiring any intent to harm the subject of the image, the bill, to give a recent example, would make criminals of thousands of teenagers who shared fake digital images of a nude Taylor Swift, or of people who use AI to create clearly fabricated images of public officials in the nude.

“Workplace Psychological Safety Act” (S 959, H 5132)

Ensuring a healthy workplace is a laudable goal, but we oppose this far-reaching and totally subjective legislation which would impose significant financial liability on employers and co-workers who, among other actions, “confuse” a person emotionally or don’t treat a fellow employee “respectfully.” The bill raises numerous First Amendment problems in punishing routine personal interactions in the workplace.

Social Media Regulation Act (H 5291, S 929)

While we appreciate the concerns of some about the effect of social media on minors, we oppose this legislation that would require express parental consent for them to access social media platforms. It would impose privacy-invading verification obligations on all users and make it challenging for young people to find community in these spaces and to explore and discuss sensitive matters like LGBTQ+ issues and family relations with peers.



Expansion of Electioneering Ban (H 5084, S 569)

State law currently bans “electioneering” within 50 feet of a polling place on Election Day. This bill would lengthen that ban to the *three weeks* before election day at the places where early voting occurs – city and town halls. We believe that stifling political speech for such a long period of time in front of the buildings that are core forums for free speech activity raises serious First Amendment alarms.

Regulating the Use of AI in Elections (H 5872, S 816)

A bill that would regulate the use of AI in election communications is well-intended but could significantly interfere with core political speech, the sphere the First Amendment most fundamentally applies to. Our testimony cites a number of examples of how public officials could use this law to deter the exercise of free speech by individuals.

Rhode Island Legislative Dashboard

To keep track of some key bills that could affect our civil liberties, we created a digital dashboard where you can see what some of our priority bills are, where they’re at in the legislative process of becoming law, and what actions you can take to help support or oppose them.



riaclu.org/2025Dashboard

ACLU of RI Position	Bill Number	Issue Area(s)	Summary	Status
OPPOSE	H5071, H5262	First Amendment	Broadly worded bills would make it a felony to threaten government caseworkers (5071) or school employees (5262) with physical harm.	Held for Further Study
			Would remove a sunset clause for	Held for

LEGISLATION THAT COULD TAKE JUSTICE REFORM BACKWARDS

Increasing Penalties for Driving Offenses (H 5638, S 947)

This Attorney General bill would double and triple the already lengthy prison penalties for a variety of driving offenses. We argued that sending offenders to prison for longer periods of time would not deter reckless driving nor assist in the rehabilitation of offenders, and would only divert limited financial resources away from approaches that could better address dangerous driving behavior.



Increase Attorney General Powers (H 6164, S 956)

This bill would exponentially expand the authority and powers of the Department of Attorney General to conduct intrusive civil investigations against anybody engaged in what that office believes to be “repeated illegal acts.” We argued that this bill would inappropriately allow the AG to supersede, and potentially interfere with, the jurisdiction of numerous other executive agencies that, with more appropriate guardrails, enforce statutes and regulations over a wide array of business and personal conduct.

State Crime Laboratory (H 6229, S 951)

We strongly oppose this Attorney General legislation which would place the independent state crime laboratory under the authority of his office. Since the crime lab conducts forensic analysis for the evidence considered in criminal proceedings, preserving its independence is essential in any justice system that values fairness and objectivity.



False Reporting of Police Misconduct (S 814)

We know that many victims of police misconduct do not file complaints, either because they believe it will be futile or because they are fearful of retaliation. We also know that internal investigations rarely find an officer guilty of misconduct. This legislation, which would make it a misdemeanor to file a false report of misconduct against a law enforcement officer, would place a dangerous retaliatory tool in police hands, and further chill victims from filing legitimate complaints of police misconduct.



Criminalizing the Homeless (H 5919, S 817)

Rhode Island’s serious homelessness crisis cannot be solved by punishing those affected. As such, we object to this legislation which would make it a crime punishable by a year in prison for a person to “occupy a dwelling unit or other structure,” even if abandoned, without permission. Aimed at “squatters,” this criminalization is ineffective and lacks compassion for the plight of the hundreds in our state experiencing homelessness.

AN ACT
RELATING TO PROPERTY -- HOMELESS BILL OF RIGHTS

Training School Contraband (H5437, S 619)

We strongly oppose this DCYF-sponsored legislation that would make it a crime punishable by ten years in prison for any child in the custody of the Training School to give to, or receive from, another person any item – whether a piece of paper or a stick of gum – without agency approval. DCYF likes to claim that the Training School is not like prison, but legislation like this belies that notion.

Kids shouldn't potentially be charged with 10 years in prison for sharing a stick of gum.

Electronic Stalking (H 5655)

This legislation creates the crime of “electronic stalking,” defined as repeatedly following someone with an electronic device in a manner that is “seriously annoying.” Joined by news media advocacy groups in opposition to the bill, we raised concerns about its potential impact on citizen journalists who follow an unresponsive elected official around for comment, or on members of the public who film the conduct of police officers.



Threats Against Public Officials (H 5071, H 5262, H 5300, S 729, S 821)

In these polarized times, it is tempting to toughen criminal penalties for making threats to people doing their job. But we have objected to a slew of bills that would significantly increase the prison sentences for people who threaten any school employees, poll workers, or government caseworkers. It is particularly problematic since the “threats” that could lead to five-year prison sentences need not be credible or require an actual intent to harm, thus potentially turning people engaged in rhetorical excess into felons.

... AND A FEW MORE ANTI-CIVIL LIBERTIES BILLS

JUSTICE REFORM

iGaming Penalties for Young Adults (H 5643, S 623)

We opposed legislation which would make it a crime punishable by up to a year in prison for a person between the ages of 18 and 21 to engage in electronic casino gaming, even while it is legal for them to gamble in the state's casinos. We are working to strike that penalty from the bill.

Mandatory Minimum Sentence for Sexual Assault (H 5924, S 562)

As longtime opponents of mandatory sentencing, we opposed a bill which would establish a mandatory prison sentence of at least ten years for first-degree sexual assault offenses.

Shoplifting as a Felony (S 822)

We argued against a bill that would seriously exaggerate the consequences of shoplifting, making it a felony, punishable by five years in prison, for two individuals associated with each other to shoplift a piece of merchandise.

GENDER EQUALITY **Anti-Abortion Rights Legislation** (H 5295, H 5296, H 5661)

As is true every year, we have opposed numerous bills designed to chip away at the ability of Rhode Islanders to make their own reproductive choices. Fortunately, the bills are not expected to pass.

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS **Banning Transgender Students from Sports** (H 5842, S 304)

We opposed legislation seeking to exclude transgender students from participating in organized sports aligned with their gender identity. We noted that transgender students and athletes deserve autonomy, dignity, and meaningful participation in team building activities in the same manner as their peers.

ADVOCACY ON IMMIGRATION ISSUES

In the past few months, the ACLU of Rhode Island has sent various letters to state and local stakeholders on how **to address some of the dangerous and troubling anti-immigrant actions** coming from the White House. Those letters include the following:

- Working with the Immigrant Coalition of Rhode Island, we sent a letter to the Chief Justice of the R.I. Supreme Court, asking him to take steps to keep Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents out of state courtrooms in light of their presence's chilling effect on the willingness of immigrants – including victims of and witnesses to crime – to make use of the court system.
- We shared with the presidents and general counsel of the state's colleges and universities a detailed letter from the National ACLU that outlines their rights and responsibilities when dealing with ICE investigations and enforcement actions on campus or the receipt of ICE administrative subpoenas.
- We joined with the National office to send a letter to our federal magistrate judges asking them to be wary of ICE requests for warrants based on an overly expansive interpretation of federal law that bars harboring of undocumented immigrants. The letter was prompted by ICE actions in securing a warrant to enter the Columbia University campus on the grounds that the university was engaged in "harboring" by allowing immigrant students to live on campus.



RECENT ACLU OF RI ADVOCACY

STATEWIDE: The Courts The ACLU of Rhode Island submitted detailed testimony raising a myriad of concerns about proposed Rhode Island Supreme Court rules implementing a new court electronic case management system. Among the concerns: the new system would impose unspecified costs on reviewing court documents electronically; bar the public from accessing online any exhibits filed in a case; eliminate remote public access to the dockets of the family court and workers compensation court; and continue to allow the designation of “non-public” documents to be made by the party filing the documents without further review. Open government groups also condemned the planned limits on easy access to court documents. It remains unknown whether the court will reconsider any of its plans.

STATEWIDE: Elections The ACLU of RI, Common Cause RI, and Disability Rights RI strongly urged the state Board of Elections to reject legislation it was considering proposing to make it unlawful for any “candidate, political party, political action committee, or ballot question advocate [to] knowingly be present when a voter executes a mail ballot” or to assist in the mailing of the ballot. The groups argued that this limitation could severely impact many groups of voters, including shut-ins and people with disabilities, and also undermine the legitimate collection of mail ballots by third parties. After lengthy discussions at two meetings, the Board decided not to move forward with the legislation.



PROVIDENCE The ACLU helped quash a proposed ordinance that would have allowed police to declare a house a “public nuisance”— and consequently subject the owner and residents to fines – based solely on a request by a Providence City Councilor and the statements of two residents alleging excessive noise or other “nuisances” at the location. Under the ordinance, the statements could have been relied upon by the police without any interviews of the alleged witnesses or assurances that they were aware of what constitutes a “public nuisance” under the law. The Council withdrew the proposal after receiving the ACLU’s letter pointing out the severe due process problems raised by the procedure.

WOONSOCKET A letter sent by the ACLU of RI and the R.I. Homeless Advocacy Project to the Woonsocket City Council unsuccessfully urged the defeat of an anti-encampment ordinance. By a 4-3 vote, the Council approved the ordinance, which, among other things, authorizes the destruction after 72 hours of an individual’s personal property seized at an illegal encampment, and imposes a \$250 fine on second offenders. The ACLU will be monitoring implementation of the ordinance for constitutional violations.



Woonsocket City Council Meeting, May 5, 2025, passing the anti-homelessness ordinance 4-3.

4,615

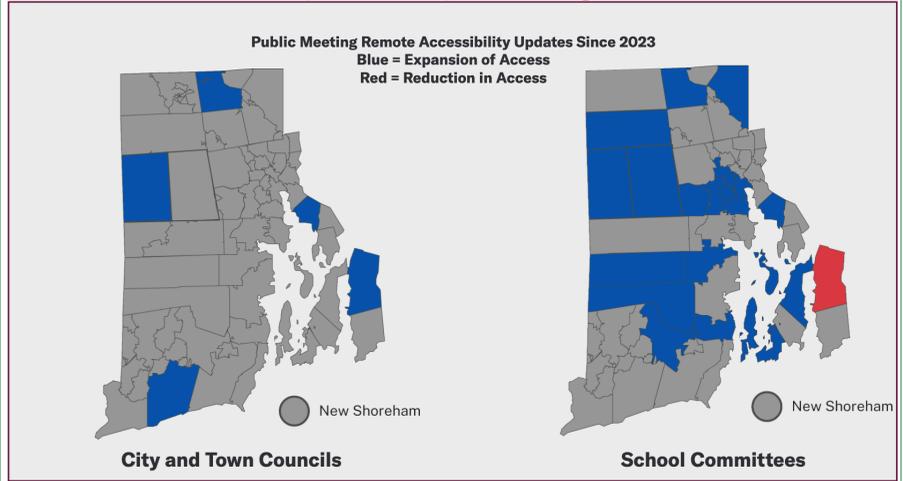
Educational Materials Distributed Across the State

From Woonsocket to Westerly, we’ve distributed our brochures and wallet cards about your rights when interacting with police or immigration agents to community partners across the state.

UPDATED REPORT: Remote Access to Public Meetings

The ACLU of RI issued an update to its 2023 report summarizing how Rhode Island’s 39 city and town councils and 34 municipal school committees – two of the most important public bodies in any community – are operating in terms of providing remote public access and participation. The updated report, available on our website, highlights expansion of access in communities across the state over the past two years.

Quick-Glance Charts: Updates to Open Meeting Policies in Rhode Island



THE POWER OF SHOWING UP

We are navigating unprecedented waters together as Rhode Islanders, and I want to share a story that grounds me in moments like these. In 2013, I decided to run a marathon. I trained consistently, but midway through, I suffered a series of small injuries that nearly derailed my goal. I couldn’t train like I had planned, but I was determined to finish – even if it meant walking across that finish line. I didn’t set any records, but I learned something important: **Commitment and grit can carry you farther than you think.**

I share this story because I believe we’re all in the middle of a marathon right now – not a sprint. The challenges we’re facing in Rhode Island and across the country may tempt us to push for fast wins, to move quickly and react. **But real, lasting change requires patience, resilience, and endurance.**

We are not in a race to be first or flashy. We are in it to finish – and to do so with **purpose and power.**

We’ve seen that commitment echoed in our community. Attendance at our events has **doubled or tripled.** New members are joining, and people are spreading the word. Our programming is expanding to meet this moment, shaped by the needs we’re hearing directly from Rhode Islanders. And we’re doing it together – with our **community partners,** and with **all of you.**

It’s important to remember: **We don’t take government funding.** Every step we take is powered by people like you. Your commitment and support give us the independence to act boldly, protect our rights, and serve our community. If you’re feeling tired or unsure how to contribute to this marathon, know this: **Building community is action.**

In addition to writing to your legislators and using our advocacy materials, as Steve mentioned, we invite you to host a house party – a small, powerful way to connect people who care about civil liberties. It can be focused on growing our membership, fundraising for our work, or simply getting people in a room to listen, learn, and support one another. I am happy to support you through the process, email me at development@riaclu.org or call **401-831-7171.**



Thank you to all of our **members, supporters, and partners.** This work isn’t easy, but we are stronger – and we will go farther – **because we’re doing it together.**

–**Monica Smith,** Development Coordinator

Photo by Maddie Van

EVENTS & COMMUNITY



RECAP: POSTCARDS TO LEGISLATORS (+ ICE CREAM) *pictured above*

In April, we held a workshop in Cumberland that resulted in over 400 postcards being written to state legislators about four common-sense bills that would protect essential civil liberties in Rhode Island.

THANK YOU FOR DONATING DURING 401GIVES!

We far exceeded our goals, with **over 110 donors** and **over \$10,000 raised**. All of these funds go to supporting our legal work in the courts and educational work in the community, like advocacy trainings and Know Your Rights materials.



ALLIE'S DONUTS FUNDRAISER

Stop by Allie's Donuts (3661 Quaker Ln, North Kingstown; accepts cash only) this May for a sweet treat, and to support the ACLU of RI! You'll see a donation jar at the counter instead of a tip jar, all the money that gets put in there this month will be donated to us!



IN THE COMMUNITY...

Our staff, Board members, and volunteers have been busy in the past few months, attending community events, joining panels, and speaking to audiences of all ages. This outreach is an important part of our educational programming. Thanks to all the people and organizations across the state who have invited us to table and participate!



Executive Director Steven Brown at a panel discussion about book banning. Photo courtesy of RI Atheists.

L-R: Zoe Chakoian, Monica Smith, and Christine Lopes Metcalfe table at the NewportFILM screening of *One to One: John & Yoko* (2024). Photo by Maddie Van.

Christine Lopes Metcalfe, ACLU of RI Board Vice Chair speaking on a NewportFILM panel. Photo by Eli Berkowitz.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND US — UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 1: **Tabling at a Screening of *Will and Harper* (2024)**

United Theatre in Westerly, 4pm-7pm. More info at unitedtheatre.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4

Co-Sponsoring **Demystifying Democracy: Understanding the Limits of Executive Power**



Rhode Island

The first 100 days of the Trump Administration have brought a deluge of executive actions and executive orders that have upended the government, higher education, and our democracy. This has resulted in a flurry of litigation, including cases filed here in Rhode Island. Join **Common Cause Rhode Island** and **ACLU of Rhode Island** for a virtual Demystifying Democracy event where we will hear from local experts, including ACLU of RI cooperating attorney Lynette Labinger, to better understand what has happened, what the reaction has been in the Ocean State, and where we go from here.

SATURDAY, JUNE 21: **Tabling at Rhode Island PrideFest**

We'll be tabling at Rhode Island PrideFest again this year, to spread our educational materials and share our *new* 2025 merch. The buttons to the right are a sneak peek at a dozen new designs we'll be handing out. Huge thanks to volunteer Sylvia Pacheco (noodlecatstudio.com) for designing most of the new Pride merch this year!



MORE EVENTS JULY DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

2025 Rhode Island Legislative Session Wrap-Up

Keep an eye out for an invitation to our upcoming July event, where we'll sit down with a Rhode Island legislator or two and explain the good and the bad from the 2025 Rhode Island Legislative Session. Get involved now to help us pass positive legislation, prevent bad legislation, and then join us in July to learn about what it all really means for our state going forward.

U.S. Supreme Court Wrap-Up

While the U.S. Supreme Court hasn't ruled on many things yet, their term will end by the beginning of July. We'll host a Zoom webinar with lawyers who are experts in different fields to explain what the SCOTUS decisions mean for civil liberties and for Rhode Islanders.

Check out our **Advocacy 101** materials, go to: riaclu.org/advocacy101



Since January, we've trained hundreds of Rhode Islanders like you to advocate at the State House, covering topics such as:

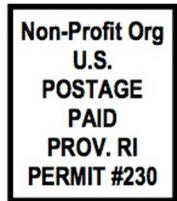
- How to communicate with your legislators
- How to testify in person or submit testimony
- How to find and read bills
- How to use the state's legislative website

LEARN HOW TO ADVOCATE!

Our in-person legislative training sessions for the year are over, but you can find all this information on our website!



ACLU FOUNDATION of RHODE ISLAND
128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

We're working every day to protect Rhode Islanders' civil liberties, and doing our part to protect democracy.

Your donation will keep us active in the courts and hosting educational events throughout the state.

If you'd like to help us continue our work of protecting and defending civil liberties across Rhode Island, consider making a special tax-deductible gift:

MAIL A DONATION

Mail a check made out to "ACLU Foundation of RI" to:

ACLU Foundation of Rhode Island
128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903

OR

MAKE A GIFT ONLINE

Scan the QR code with your phone camera to make a one-time gift or set up a recurring donation, or go to: www.riaclu.org/donate



IN THIS ISSUE:

Go to p. 5 to learn about some of the state bills that could undermine our civil liberties this Legislative Session!