

2018 IN REVIEW

This year, the ACLU of RI lobbied on hundreds of bills and was involved in 40 court cases. Behind the scenes, we contacted innumerable government officials to informally resolve dozens of civil liberties violations. All of this work is done with two goals in mind: defending and upholding the Bill of Rights and **making a difference in the everyday lives of Rhode Islanders**. Here are some of the highlights from the past year:

IN DEFENSE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT:

- We pressured the North Smithfield Town Council to rescind a resolution opposing Town contracts with Nike because of the company's controversial ad campaign.
- A threatened ACLU lawsuit prompted the R.I. Department of Transportation to unblock critics from its Twitter account.
- We aided the Waterfire Arts Center when it was threatened with trademark infringement (!) for seeking to display a reconstructed family house that Rosa Parks spent time in.



PAULA BORRELLI

Borrelli v. Premier Entertainment II, LLC.

IN DEFENSE OF VOTING RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS:

- Because of our intervention, the Department of Corrections reversed a policy that had unlawfully barred persons serving home confinement from voting.
- We filed suit on behalf of Newport Grand employee Paula Borrelli after she learned she was being paid thousands of dollars less than a male colleague with the same job responsibilities.
- We assisted the ACLU of Massachusetts in its representation of an undocumented Providence mother of two who was hauled away and jailed by ICE agents at an interview she was attending to revise her immigration status.
- The General Assembly passed an ACLU bill barring the shackling of pregnant inmates going to and from court proceedings.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the past year, the principles we hold dear have come under repeated attack, and real people have been harmed in concrete and devastating ways. Also clear is that there are some realities – political, cultural and social – that are not going to change overnight, regardless of what happens in politics or at the federal level.

As the ACLU of Rhode Island prepares to enter its 60th year as an organization, I have been reflecting on how we got here, and how our work fits into the broad picture of justice and equality that many of us hope for. Times like these force us to clarify what really matters – as a nation, as an organization, and even as individuals. The truth I return to again and again is that strong enforcement of the Bill of Rights is one of the most effective antidotes we have to the country's current atmosphere of fear, discontent and ignorance. To that end, we have had quite an impact in 2018, as you'll see from our docket and the small sample of our work included in our "Year in Review" article.

As we prepare to defend and uphold the rights of all in the Ocean State for the 60th year in a row, I hope you will continue to support our work. Please donate to the ACLU Foundation of RI today.

--Steven Brown

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J.Y. V. PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT NEWS CONFERENCE

IN SUPPORT OF EQUAL PROTECTION FOR ALL:

- As a direct result of our advocacy, the RI Department of Education adopted strong regulations to protect the rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming students.
- We mounted a successful legal campaign for compensatory services for students with disabilities who were unable to get to school due to a lengthy Providence school bus strike.
- We filed a second lawsuit over the state's mismanaged UHIP system, and our initial suit has led to significant improvements in the provision of SNAP benefits to eligible Rhode Island residents.
- We sued on behalf of Sojourner House, a shelter for domestic violence victims, after Woonsocket city officials arbitrarily and vindictively barred the agency from applying for various grants.

TO PROMOTE BOTH THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW:

- We filed a brief in a successful challenge to the Attorney General's charge of exorbitant fees for access to records of his agency's expenditure of \$50M in funds from the settlement of a major class-action suit.
- We successfully defeated an Attorney General bill that would have expanded police authority to track cell phone users' locations without a warrant.
- At the ACLU's urging, the Department of Transportation adopted rules strictly protecting the privacy of data gathered from the state's new truck toll gantries.



COURT RULES FAVORABLY AFTER ACLU FILES BRIEF SUPPORTING WAIVER OF FEES FOR GOOGLE SETTLEMENT RECORDS

R.I. Superior Court Judge Melissa Long ruled that the Attorney General (AG) must waive fees for any documents that are delivered as part of State Rep. Patricia Morgan’s request for public records related to the AG’s expenditure of \$50M in funds from the settlement of a lawsuit against Google. The ruling came after the ACLU filed a “friend of the court” brief in support of the waiver. At the time of the filing, Rep. Morgan had already been charged more than \$3,700 for partial release of the records, some of which were heavily redacted. The request for the fee waiver was for an additional \$4,000 that the AG was demanding in order to fulfill the rest of Rep. Morgan’s Access to Public Records Act (APRA) request. Citing an inherent public interest in the records, Judge Long agreed with the ACLU in rejecting the AG’s argument that records requestors should have to prove financial hardship in order to have fees waived.

Prior to this, the ACLU had issued a critical 10-page analysis of the AG’s response to Rep. Morgan’s APRA request. The analysis took issue with the extensive redactions of documents provided and the exorbitant fees charged by the Attorney General, and highlighted the need for legislation to strengthen the open records law.

Among the APRA amendments suggested by the ACLU analysis were ones creating a presumption of waiving charges for record requests that are in the public interest; barring public bodies from charging for time spent redacting records; and requiring that a specific exemption be cited with each redaction.



“JUSTICE DE-INVESTMENT” AT THE STATEHOUSE

Despite legislation enacted in 2017 aimed at promoting criminal justice reform, the RI General Assembly’s 2018 session took significant steps back from a “smart justice” approach by adding more than a dozen new felonies to the books and increasing sentences for several other crimes.

Between 2000 and 2017,
RI Created more than
170 NEW CRIMES....
LITTLE CHANGED IN 2018.

This expansion of the “Statehouse-to-prison pipeline” was the disappointing finding of an ACLU update to an extensive analysis of RI lawmaking on criminal justice issued earlier this year. That earlier report documented the problems of mass incarceration and overcriminalization resulting from the state’s routine passage of laws that create new crimes and increase sentences to existing crimes – without any analysis to support the expansions. The new report found a return to those ways, with legislative action in 2018 adding to “the ongoing upward trend of creating new crimes, adding harsher sentences, and sending more and more people to prison...” The report concludes with a plea to RI lawmakers to make good in 2019 on the promises of “justice reinvestment,” rather than continue with an ineffective and expensive approach to criminal justice. The ACLU report can be found on our website.

ACLU ACTS ON SCHOOL BUS STRIKE

Among those affected by the recent Providence school bus strike were students with disabilities, many of whom couldn't get to school. During the strike, school officials repeatedly said they were powerless to do anything for these 1,000 or so students, and only offered to provide families travel reimbursement that they might wait weeks or months to receive. But that arrangement didn't work for many low-income parents without the funds to pay transportation costs up front, or whose children had disabilities that require specialized transportation.



After receiving multiple complaints from parents of students with disabilities that transportation alternatives were not being offered, the ACLU, R.I. Legal Services, and the R.I. Disability Law Center sent a letter to Providence school officials, outlining a number of steps for the school district to take to fulfill its legal obligations to special education students. The school district responded by doubling down on its position that since it couldn't provide transportation to all special education students, it would provide it to none. The hands off, one-size-fits-all approach of the district prompted the advocacy groups to file a series of administrative complaints with the RI Department of Education seeking legal remedies for affected students and their families.

Specifically, the legal actions sought to force the Providence school district to comply with these students' special education plans that explicitly obligate the district to provide their transportation to school. The complaints also encompassed students with disabilities who attend school outside the state capital, but who lost their transportation because their buses originated in Providence. As a result of the legal actions, many issues were favorably addressed, and the districts notified parents and caregivers of their rights to prompt reimbursement and compensatory education for class time missed. The ACLU continues to monitor the district to ensure compliance with their obligations.



IN MEMORIAM: Belle Pellegrino

Belle A. Pellegrino, 74, of Providence, passed away in December. She was born in Providence and served in the Marine Corps. She was a courageous plaintiff in the ACLU of RI's successful lawsuit in 1976 allowing the first Providence gay pride parade to take place after the city's police chief barred it.

At left, Belle, a RI Pride founder, poses for a photo at the ACLU's Pride Fest booth. She once said: "If we had not had the ACLU, there would not be a Pride Fest. We wouldn't be in the State House fighting for marriage equality; we'd still be trying to fight to get the first pride parade." She will be remembered for her kindness, love and acceptance of all those she touched.

2018 ACLU OF RHODE ISLAND CASE DOCKET

Cases Active January-December 2018

* indicates case opened in 2018; # indicates case closed in 2018

In Re 38 Studios Grand Jury. OPEN GOVERNMENT. "Friend of the court" brief supporting a motion filed by the Governor to seek the release of records relating to the grand jury's 38 Studios investigation. The court rejected the motion, and an appeal is pending. Cooperating Attorney: Jared Goldstein.

ACLU of Maine et al. v. Department of Homeland Security. OPEN RECORDS/RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS. Freedom of Information Act lawsuit over DHS's failure to provide New England ACLU Affiliates documents relating to implementation of the President's first Muslim travel ban. Pursuant to a court schedule, the defendants are processing the documents. ACLU of Maine Attorney: Zachary Heiden.

* *Borrelli v Premier Entertainment*. SEX AND AGE DISCRIMINATION. Lawsuit against the Newport Grand Casino on behalf of a female employee who, for a decade, has been paid significantly less than a younger male employee performing the same duties. Cooperating Attorney: Lynette Labinger.

Brady v. Tamburini. FREEDOM OF SPEECH. Federal lawsuit challenging the two-day suspension of a Johnston detective after he publicly criticized the police department in his role as president of the police union. Discovery is proceeding. Cooperating Attorney: John W. Dineen.

*# *Brown v. Miller*. OPEN RECORDS. Open records lawsuit against a public charter school that failed to provide records regarding its policies on the rights of transgender students. A day after the suit was filed, the school released the documents and paid court costs. Cooperating Attorney: Annie Goldberg.

* *Calderon v. Nielsen*. RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS. Successful habeas corpus petition, filed with ACLU-RI assistance, that has since been amended into a class-action lawsuit, on behalf of a Providence mother of two who was detained by ICE officials after appearing at an interview to pursue a change in her undocumented immigration status. A motion to dismiss the suit was denied. ACLU of Massachusetts Attorney: Adriana Lafaille.

Callaghan v. Darlington Plastics. MEDICAL MARIJUANA/WORKPLACE RIGHTS. Lawsuit on behalf of a graduate student who was denied employment as a paid intern at a fabrics company because of her status as a registered medical marijuana user. The court ruled that the company's actions violated the state's medical marijuana law. Cooperating Attorney: Carly Beauvais Iafate.

Caniglia v. Strom. DUE PROCESS. Federal lawsuit challenging a Cranston Police Department policy of requiring individuals to obtain a court order in order to recover lawfully-owned firearms that were seized and retained without a warrant. Discovery is proceeding. Cooperating Attorneys: Thomas W. Lyons, Rhiannon Huffman.

* *Cox v. Goncalves*. OPEN RECORDS/POLICE MISCONDUCT. Open records lawsuit against the Pawtucket Police Department for refusing to release reports of alleged police officer misconduct. Cooperating Attorney: James Cullen.

City of Cranston v. Morton et al. FREEDOM OF SPEECH. Appellate defense representation of a number of protesters found guilty of violating an anti-panhandling ordinance for distributing literature to drivers from a roadway median. Cooperating Attorney: Jason Knight.

Doe v. Providence School District. STUDENTS' RIGHTS/RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS. Administrative complaint, filed with R.I. Legal Services, charging the Providence School District with violating laws and regulations that require the provision of appropriate educational services to English Language Learner students. Cooperating Attorney: Ellen Saideman.

Eil v. Drug Enforcement Administration. OPEN GOVERNMENT. Freedom of Information Act lawsuit on behalf of a journalist denied access to thousands of pages of public evidence from a criminal trial. Although the suit prompted release of numerous documents, the appeals court reversed a court order for release of other records in redacted form. Cooperating Attorneys: Neal McNamara, Jessica Jewell.

Federal Hill Capital, LLC v. City of Providence. PRIVACY. Lawsuit challenging an ordinance that prohibits more than three college students from living together in certain areas of the city. The court upheld the ordinance, and an appeal has been filed. Cooperating Attorneys: Jeffrey Levy, Charles Blackman.

Ferragamo and Perreault v. Harmony Fire District. SEX DISCRIMINATION. Consolidation of two federal lawsuits on behalf of two EMT/firefighters who were fired after supporting another female firefighter's claims about discriminatory treatment. Discovery is proceeding. Cooperating Attorney: Sonja Deyoe.

Franchina v. City of Providence. LGBT DISCRIMINATION. "Friend of the court" brief filed by a number of groups, urging that the federal law's ban on sex discrimination be interpreted to cover discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The court ruled in plaintiff's favor without addressing that issue. ACLU attorney: Rebecca Tabacco Mar.

Freitas v. Kilmartin. CRIMINAL JUSTICE. Federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a state law barring certain sex offenders from residing within 1,000 feet of a school. A temporary restraining order against enforcement of the law was issued. Cooperating Attorneys: Lynette Labinger, John MacDonald.

Gemmell v. RI Department of Human Services. DUE PROCESS. Federal class-action lawsuit, filed with the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, over the state's failure to provide food stamp benefits in a timely manner. A special master was appointed to oversee compliance with a court-approved settlement agreement, and ongoing monitoring reports are being issued. Cooperating Attorney: Lynette Labinger.

Hunter v. City of Cranston. FREEDOM OF SPEECH. Federal lawsuit challenging the selective enforcement of a city ordinance banning signs on public property. Discovery is proceeding. Cooperating Attorney: Richard A. Sinapi.

*# *J.Y. v Providence School District*. DISABILITY RIGHTS/STUDENTS' RIGHTS. Administrative petition seeking various remedies on behalf of a 12-year-old special education student in a wheelchair who was unable to find transportation to school during a city-wide school bus strike. The district agreed to compensatory remedies and an award of attorneys' fees. Cooperating Attorney: Christine Marinello.

Kurland v. City of Providence. FREEDOM OF SPEECH. Federal lawsuit on behalf of two protesters, one of whom was arrested for disorderly conduct, for being forced to move from the site of a political fundraiser where they were picketing. Discovery is proceeding. Cooperating Attorney: Richard A. Sinapi.

Lacoste v. RI State Police. DUE PROCESS. Federal lawsuit challenging state police actions that resulted in the plaintiff's loss of employment at Twin River Casino after she refused to serve as a police informant in a criminal investigation. Settlement negotiations are ongoing. Cooperating Attorney: James Musgrave.

* *LMG Rhode Island Holdings v. Rhode Island Superior Court*. OPEN RECORDS/ACCESS TO THE COURTS. “Friend of the court” brief in support of a challenge to a judge’s order blocking the release of a juror form in a high-profile murder case, and temporarily barring members of the public from contacting the jurors. Cooperating Attorneys: Thomas W. Lyons, Rhiannon Huffman.

Lyssikatos v. King. OPEN RECORDS. Lawsuit against the Pawtucket Police Department over its refusal to release reports of alleged police officer misconduct generated by its Internal Affairs Division. A motion for summary judgment has been filed. Cooperating Attorneys: James Cullen, R. Kelly Sheridan.

* *Marasco and Nesselbush v. Collins*. ACCESS TO THE COURTS. “Friend of the court” brief, filed with other non-profits, in support of a challenge to Social Security Administration practices that make it difficult for successful attorneys in disability hearing cases to recover their attorneys’ fees. The court rejected a motion to dismiss the case. Cooperating Attorney: Carolyn Mannis.

* *Morgan v. Kilmartin*. OPEN RECORDS. “Friend of the court” brief in an open records lawsuit in support of plaintiff’s request for a waiver of fees to obtain thousands of pages of documents pertaining to the Attorney General’s expenditure of \$50M in funds received from a major class-action settlement, and objecting to various redactions made in documents already provided. The court ordered a waiver of fees, but upheld the redactions. Cooperating Attorney: Lynette Labinger.

Town of Narragansett v. Green Acres et al. PRIVACY. Defense representation of more than two dozen homeowners charged under a town ordinance barring more than three unrelated individuals from living together. The Municipal Court dismissed the charges on constitutional grounds. Cooperating Attorney: H. Jefferson Melish.

* *Parkhurst v. State*. RIGHTS OF JUVENILES. Federal lawsuit on behalf of an individual serving a lengthy sentence for a crime committed while a juvenile, challenging Parole Board practices governing the length of time between Board reviews of the inmate’s parole eligibility. The Board has revised its procedures, and proceedings in the case have been stayed. Cooperating Attorney: Miriam Weizenbaum.

Phoenix-Times Publishing Company v. Hasenfus. OPEN MEETINGS. Open meetings lawsuit challenging both the adequacy of school committee agenda notices and the discussion in executive session of a proposed breathalyzer policy for school dances. The court ruled that the agendas violated the Open Meetings Act, but upheld the executive session discussion. An appeal is pending. Cooperating Attorney: Howard Merten.

In re R.I. Department of Labor and Training. LANGUAGE DISCRIMINATION. Federal complaint, filed with R.I. Legal Services, challenging the state DLT’s failure to provide adequate language interpreter services. Cooperating Attorney: Jennifer Doucleff.

R.I. Housing Advocacy Project v. City of Cranston. FREEDOM OF SPEECH/RIGHTS OF THE POOR. Federal lawsuit challenging an anti-panhandling ordinance that bars standing on a roadway to receive anything from, or distribute anything to, a motor vehicle occupant. A temporary restraining order was issued, and discovery is proceeding. Cooperating Attorneys: Lynette Labinger, Kizzy Mota.

*# *Rhode Island Housing Advocacy Project v. Raimondo*. RIGHTS OF EX-OFFENDERS. Federal lawsuit challenging a law barring state homeless shelters from having more than 10% of its population consist of registered sex offenders. A settlement agreement was entered, allowing the cap to be exceeded if no other shelter appears available. Cooperating Attorneys: Lynette Labinger, John MacDonald.

* *R.I. Legal Services et al. v. Providence School District*. DISABILITY RIGHTS/STUDENTS' RIGHTS. This class administrative complaint seeks various forms of relief for students with disabilities whose education plans were disrupted as the result of a school bus strike in Providence. Cooperating Attorney: Ellen Saideman. RILS Attorney: Veronika Kot.

R.I. Patient Advocacy Coalition v. Town of Smithfield. MEDICAL MARIJUANA. Lawsuit challenging an ordinance imposing numerous restrictions on the growing of medical marijuana by patients and caregivers. The court ruled that the ordinance violated the state medical marijuana law. Cooperating Attorneys: Alexander Chiulli, John Meara.

Richer v. Parmalee. DUE PROCESS. Federal lawsuit challenging a police department's refusal over the course of six years to return to the plaintiff lawfully owned firearms that were seized from him without a warrant. A court ruled the practice unconstitutional. Cooperating Attorneys: Thomas W. Lyons, Rhiannon Huffman.

* *Richer v. Town of North Smithfield*. DUE PROCESS. Federal lawsuit challenging a police department's refusal to remove from its files a note falsely claiming that the plaintiff is "psychologically unstable" and has numerous weapons at his house. A motion for a temporary restraining order was denied. Cooperating Attorneys: Thomas W. Lyons, Rhiannon Huffman.

* *In re: R.V.* TRANSGENDER RIGHTS. Probate Court petition on behalf of a transgender ACI inmate seeking to change her name to reflect her identity. Cooperating Attorney: Sheila Cooley.

* *Scherwitz v. Beane*. DUE PROCESS/RIGHTS OF THE POOR. Federal lawsuit challenging the lack of proper notice given participants in a state-run Medicaid program before being removed from the program. Settlement negotiations are proceeding. Cooperating Attorney: Ellen Saideman.

* *Sojourner House v. City of Woonsocket*. FREEDOM OF SPEECH/DUE PROCESS. Federal lawsuit challenging City's withholding of grant funds from a social service agency without cause, and then retaliating against the agency after it petitioned other government agencies for help in resolving the dispute. Cooperating Attorneys: Matthew Oliverio, Stephen Prignano.

* *SouthCoast Fair Housing v. Saunders*. ACCESS TO THE COURTS. Federal lawsuit challenging a State Supreme Court rule that bars non-profit organizations from obtaining a license to practice law unless they serve only "indigent" clients and are incorporated in Rhode Island. Cooperating Attorneys: Mark Freel, Jeffrey Ankstrom.

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RECENT NEWS



RIDOT Stops Blocking Twitter Critics After ACLU Steps In

ACLU legal action was recently averted when RIDOT stopped blocking critics from its twitter account, @RIDOTNews. The agency halted the practice after the ACLU reminded RIDOT of its free speech obligations. The ACLU sent a letter to the agency after receiving a complaint from a Twitter user who was blocked after posting tweets criticizing a RIDOT project near his residence. The letter emphasized “the important role that social media now play in democratic discourse. Their use to speak out on public matters and to petition the government for redress of grievances is protected by the First Amendment.”

Just Don't Do It: North Smithfield Initially Passes... then Promptly Rescinds... Anti-Nike Resolution

Following heavy pushback from the ACLU on First Amendment grounds, the North Smithfield Town Council rescinded a resolution calling on the Town’s school committee and municipal departments to ban the purchase of Nike products. The resolution was an effort to punish Nike for its high-profile ad campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick, an NFL quarterback who knelt in protest of racial injustice during the National Anthem. The resolution was rescinded one week after the Council passed it on a 3-2 vote that was also heavily criticized by local residents.



Groups Urge Repeal of Central Falls Curfew Ordinance

Seeking to address the issue well before spring, the ACLU and Progreso Latino sent a letter to Central Falls officials urging repeal of the City’s juvenile curfew law. In the letter, the groups make the case for repealing the law on a number of grounds, most notably that curfews don’t reduce crime and may undermine public safety. The letter was prompted by publication of a recent national article documenting the failure of such laws across the country. City officials’ expressed interest in justice reform.



DOH Background Check Rules Criticized

Eight state-based and national advocacy organizations sharply criticized the RI Department of Health (DOH) for a “disturbing trend” of “undermining...criminal justice reform by increasing the barriers for people with past criminal records or substance use disorders to obtain professional licensing.” In a letter to the Department, the groups noted several recent DOH rule enactments that allow for the disqualification of people with any criminal record from obtaining professional licenses in a number of fields – ranging from EMTs to midwives to physical therapy assistants. The ACLU is participating in a legislative campaign to undo the rules.

LEGAL BRIEFS



ACLU Sues Pawtucket Police Again for Shielding Records of Police Misconduct

For the second time in a year, the ACLU of RI has sued the Pawtucket Police for violating their obligations under the state's open records law (APRA). The Department again denied an APRA request, filed by a government accountability group known as APRA Watch, for copies of final reports of investigations of alleged police misconduct generated by the Department's Internal Affairs Division. The denial came despite a pending ACLU lawsuit against the Department on virtually identical grounds and despite past RI Supreme Court rulings supporting the public's access to these types of records.

ACLU Settles Lawsuit Preserving Shelter Access for Homeless Ex-Offenders

The ACLU has settled the "Harrington Hall lawsuit" ensuring that no shelter operating on State property will have to turn away those seeking a bed when one is available. The settlement ended a lawsuit originally filed by ACLU of RI cooperating attorneys Lynette Labinger and John MacDonald, challenging a state law that limited the number of registered sex offenders that could stay at Harrington Hall to 10% of the shelter's population (which amounts to 11 beds). The lawsuit noted that the facility "routinely provided overnight shelter to many more than 11 registered sex offenders" without experiencing any crime problems. Under the settlement agreement, providers will not be deemed to have exceeded the limitations so long as the shelter operator reports to the local police the names of the individuals being housed overnight and concludes that no other shelters are available.



The settlement coincides with public outcry involving another registered sex offender, Richard Gardner, recently released from prison after serving 30 years. Upon Gardner's move to the Washington Park neighborhood in Providence, the ACLU and other groups emphasized the harms generated by state laws related to the sex-offender registry and residency restrictions.



ACLU Sues N. Smithfield Police for Placing Resident in Danger by Falsely Labeling Him Unstable

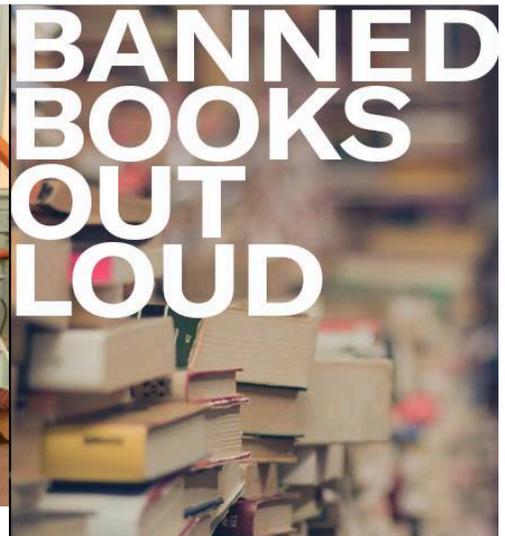
The ACLU filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of a North Smithfield resident, challenging the police department's refusal to remove from its files an internal note which falsely claims that the plaintiff is "psychologically unstable" and has numerous weapons at his house. Police officials acknowledged that they had no basis for the claims in the note, which was uncovered while the ACLU was litigating another pending lawsuit on behalf of the town resident, Jason Richer. Filed by ACLU of RI volunteer attorneys Thomas W. Lyons and Rhiannon Huffman, the lawsuit expresses concern for Richer's safety because of the false information in his police file. The purpose of such notes is to alert police officers of possible dangers when they interact with individuals.

RECENT EVENTS



2018 ANNUAL MEETING

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us on Thursday, October 25th for our Annual Meeting. This year's meeting honored Planned Parenthood of Southern New England as the Raymond J. Pettine Civil Libertarian of the Year. Members and guests enjoyed drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and each other's conversation as they joined together to celebrate the year in civil liberties. The crowd also heard from ACLU volunteer attorneys and a few of our plaintiffs about some of 2018's most noteworthy cases.



WRITERS READ BANNED BOOKS

In honor of Banned Books Week 2018, on September 26th, we invited local authors and artists to read from their favorite banned books! Participants included **Mike Stanton, Michael Willhoite, Mary Capello, Jean Walton, Eleni Sikelianos, Rick Moody and Adam Braver.** Many thanks to everyone who came out, especially our readers – and to the William Hall Library in Cranston.

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MAKE A YEAR-END DONATION TO THE ACLU FOUNDATION OF RI

The ACLU of Rhode Island works in the courts, at the State House, and in the community to protect the fundamental rights of all Rhode Islanders. You may often read about our battles in the news, but just as often, we are accomplishing change quietly behind the scenes. No matter how our victories are achieved, they are always hard-fought and require the support of community groups, cooperating attorneys, volunteers, and you. As a partner in our work, you have helped make us a strong defender of civil liberties in the state.

**Your support is needed now more than ever.
Please make a tax-deductible donation today.**

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Thank you!