

VICTORY

The Historic Win for Renters' Rights

ARTICLE BY: JAVONNE RICH, ACLU-DE POLICY AND ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

This legislative session, Delaware lawmakers took action to ensure all Delawareans – regardless of their circumstances or background – have a fighting chance to remain in their homes when facing eviction. On June 13, The 152nd General Assembly passed Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 1(SS 1 for SB 1), historic legislation ensuring low-income renters a right to representation in eviction proceedings. Delaware now joins just four other states—Connecticut, Maryland, Washington, and Minnesota—in providing the right to representation to renters in both public and private housing.

Until now, only 2% of renters have had representation in court eviction proceedings compared to 86% of landlords.

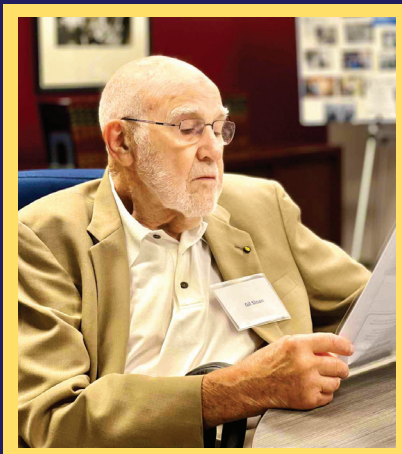


Lack of representation disproportionately impacts communities of color and those who lack the ability to go to court due to employment, childcare, or transportation restrictions. The damaging long-term effects of eviction include poorer physical and mental health, increased risk of homelessness and loss of employment, and greater difficulty finding future housing.

Guaranteeing representation for renters facing eviction helps to keep people in their homes, reduce homelessness, and save taxpayer dollars. A statewide right to representation law would help fund legal aid and expand the reach of diversion programs meant to assist renters in resolving their debt to landlords before an eviction judgment is decided in court.

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REMEMBERING GIL SLOAN (1928-2023)



With heavy hearts, we remember the accomplishments of Gilbert "Gil" Sloan, the last of the ACLU of Delaware founders. Preceded by wife and fellow founder Sonia Schorr Sloan, Gil died on May 25, 2023 following a lifetime of achievements. He was 94 years old.

Gil and his wife Sonia were a force, protesting the Vietnam war and even putting their home up as collateral when local military protesters were arrested. Gil was a man of action and integrity.

Honored with an ACLU Kandler Memorial Award in 1997, Gil and Sonia not only believed in the mission of the ACLU; they helped to shape the organization we are today.

We at the ACLU of Delaware honor his memory, wish comfort for his family and friends, and are very grateful for the years of gracious and hardworking service he provided.

Learn more about Gil's ACLU Legacy at <https://www.aclu-de.org/archives/gil-sloan>



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Letter from the ED

Mike Brickner,
Executive Director

Dear Friends —

Whenever I meet with a supporter or coalition partner, I tell them, “We have the best staff.” Across the board, we have some of the most dedicated and talented civil libertarians in the nation working on critical issues right here in the First State.

Today, I want to recognize some amazing work from our legal department, led by Legal Director Dwayne Bensing, along with Staff Attorney Katie Prevost and Paralegal Jasmine Minhas.

In the course of almost a single week in late June/early July, the ACLU-DE took action on two important issues impacting our criminal legal system, free speech, and economic justice. First, we filed our notice of appearance in

the case of David Holloman, a man incarcerated in Delaware prison who attempted to organize a boycott against the prison’s internet services due to the predatory fees they charge. In retaliation, prison officials put Mr. Holloman in restricted housing, and stripped of his prison job—all because he spoke out about an injustice impacting himself and his community. Over a year later, and he is still in a two-person cell where he can only leave for two and a half hours a day.

Our next lawsuit was against the state of Delaware for laws criminalizing homelessness. Federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have held that homeless people can ask for help and cannot be criminalized for simply existing in public space. Yet that

is precisely how many law enforcement officials are using the state’s antiquated and unconstitutional laws on soliciting and loitering. Despite years of working with lawmakers to repeal these statutes, the political will has not been mustered to follow through, and police and prosecutors continue to enforce them. As a result, the ACLU-DE had to file a lawsuit to ensure no one else is criminalized for simply existing in public space.

And this is all just the latest from our legal team, with much more in store. In the fall, we will be welcoming Andrew Bernstein and Casey Danoff as legal fellows focusing on voting rights, criminal legal reform, and much more.

Mike B.



HaSini Perkins, racial justice organizer, speaks with the Progressive Democrats of Sussex County about renters’ right to representation in eviction proceedings.



Clean Slate Delaware’s Storytelling Training aimed to help impacted individuals gain the tools to effectively share our first-hand experiences living with a record, and use those experiences to impact positive policy change.



Read more about Clean Slate Delaware’s Storytelling Training at aclu-de.org/en/news/csde-storytelling.



Our Smart Justice Campaign held a town hall to hear more about community experiences with policing in New Castle County.



Smart Justice Ambassadors at the New Castle County policing town hall.



Smart Justice Ambassadors, Kevin Andrews (left) and Crystal Chapman (center, right), with Smart Justice Lobby Day participants.

WIN FOR RENTERS' RIGHTS
CONT. FROM FRONT PAGE



Our dedication to the fight for renters' rights never wavered... we made sure elected officials got the message — housing is a human right."

It wasn't easy. This victory comes after SB 101, originally introduced during the 2021 legislative session, was defeated in 2022 by a House vote of 16-23 despite being a common-sense bill with bipartisan support.

But our dedication to the fight for renters' rights never wavered. Led by our Racial Justice Organizers, HaSini Perkins and Shyanne Miller, our broad coalition of housing advocates worked tirelessly to make this SS 1 for SB 1 a reality.

Through efforts like community canvasses, public education events, digital campaigns, patch through calls, rallies, and many other channels, we made sure elected officials got the message — housing is a human right.

Now, all we have left to say is thank

you. This successful conclusion to a three-year campaign could not have been possible without you. We are deeply grateful to the renters, community advocates, and supporters like you, who kept pushing forward. This is your victory. Thank you for sending messages, showing up, and supporting our work. A win for renters' rights is a win for housing justice, racial justice, and economic justice.

We are now turning our attention to moving ahead full-steam with our efforts to ensure Delaware renters know their rights and that no renter has to go it alone.

Local Elections Matter

A Look Inside Our School Board Success

ARTICLE BY: MEERA DEVOTTA, ACLU-DE
CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

A coordinated attack on students' rights is underway nationwide and Delaware is not immune. However, despite making up the largest body of elected officials in the country, school board elections receive little fanfare and consistently suffer from extremely low voter turnout rates. That's why the ACLU of Delaware undertook a statewide voter education campaign this year to help ensure every eligible voter cast an informed ballot.

The campaign elevated critical issues like restorative justice, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and students' right to learn free from viewpoint-based censorship — an issue gaining national attention. Mobilization efforts included the launch of a voter guide in both English and Spanish on ACLU-DE's voter education website, VoteDelaware.org, in addition to a statewide media campaign, mailers, social media advertising, canvassing, virtual candidate forums, and more.

The results point to a changing landscape, especially in priority districts like Red Clay and Christina. This year, Red Clay saw a 50% increase in voter turnout, and Christina saw its highest turnout in 8 years. VoteDelaware.org saw a 27% increase in users since its initial launch in April 2022, with candidate questionnaire viewers making up an estimated 13% of voters statewide.

Whether you have kids in school or not, school board elections give us an opportunity to send a message to lawmakers that we, as voters, hold the power to make decisions about our communities, and ensure that we elect leaders who prioritize the needs of the students and communities they represent. Now let's get to work for 2024!

Read our full voting rights platform at [VoteDelaware.org](https://www.vote-delaware.org).



Sen. Marie Pinkney, prime sponsor of SS 1 for SB 4, speaks with Smart Justice Lobby Day participants about her legislation aimed at eliminating systemic barriers that prevent those recently released from prison from successfully rehabilitating.



Clean Slate Delaware partners at the Kingswood Expungement Clinic hosted at the Kingswood Community Center in Wilmington.



Clean Slate Delaware expungement clinics allow individuals with records the opportunity to learn more about expungement eligibility and begin the process.



Melissa Bryson, development director, received the "She's On Her Way" Award from Delaware Women recognizing the achievements and contributions of talented young women leaders making a difference in Delaware.

Advocate and Empower as an Education Equity Ambassador

ARTICLE BY: SHANNON GRIFFIN, ACLU-DE SENIOR POLICY ADVOCATE

In 2020, the ACLU of Delaware was a part of a historic settlement that required the creation of a non-legal, independent entity to lessen education disparities that leave disadvantaged students behind.

This year, Delaware solidified this settlement by passing House Bill 188 (HB 188). HB 188 codifies the Delaware Education Ombudsperson Program and ensures it will remain funded. The program supports parents and students in addressing disputes concerning issues like

disparate discipline or inequitable access to school programs. Looking ahead, ACLU-DE is excited to launch another step towards involving parents and families in creating stronger public school systems. The Education Equity Ambassadors (EEA) program recruits,

trains, and empowers Wilmington parents to advocate for schools and children through six paid sessions. EEAs will grow the skills to champion issues like budget equity, restorative justice, inclusion, and health and safety. To learn more and apply, visit aclu-de.org/eea.



Clean Slate Delaware Second Chances Month Lobby Day, from left to right: John Reynolds, deputy policy and advocacy director; Jesse Kelly, Clean Slate Initiative campaign strategist; and Sheena Meade, Clean Slate Initiative CEO.



Clean Slate Delaware advocates with Rep. Melissa Minor-Brown (center) and Sheena Meade, Clean Slate Initiative CEO (right).

Looking Ahead: The Path to Criminal Legal Reform

ARTICLE BY: JOHN REYNOLDS, ACLU-DE DEPUTY POLICY AND ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Delaware is set to make significant progress towards criminal legal reform in 2024. Clean Slate automatic expungement legislation, passed in 2021, is officially one year away from implementation with more than 290,000 Delawareans meeting eligibility criteria for automated record sealing. The process, set to begin in August 2024, will eliminate financial, logistical, and bureaucratic barriers individuals face when seeking access to a second chance. To learn more about



the Clean Slate Delaware Campaign and our efforts in preparation for implementation, visit CleanSlateDE.org.

Additionally, this year the Delaware Senate

laid groundwork for 2024 to be the year probation reform becomes reality. Senate Bill 4 (SB 4), legislation that will assist people in successfully completing their probation sentences, was voted out of the

Senate Corrections Committee. Advocates are optimistic that this bill remains primed for full passage next session. To learn more and add your voice in support, visit PeopleNotProbation.com.



Clean Slate Delaware (CSDE) advocates joined ACLU-DE staff in engaging lawmakers in conversations about Delaware's expungement policies and the needed next steps to ensure equitable access to second chances during CSDE's Second Chances Month Lobby Day.



Clean Slate Delaware leads with Sen. Marie Pinkney.



ACLU-DE staff and criminal legal system reform advocates at our Smart Justice Lobby Day in support of SS 1 for SB 4, probation reform legislation.



Mike Brickner, executive director, speaks with the media about the ongoing housing crisis at our Right to Representation Rally ahead of the final vote on SS 1 for SB 1.



John Reynolds, deputy policy and advocacy director, at our Right to Representation Rally ahead of the final vote on SS 1 for SB 1.



The Clean Slate Delaware Team at the second annual Clean Slate Convening in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to learn more about the nationwide movement for second chances.



Lead Smart Justice Ambassadors, Kevin Andrews and Vonderlear Smack (Smack), joined ACLU-DE staff and Clean Slate partners at the Clean Slate Convening. Read more about Smack's experience at aclu-de.org/news/csi-convening.



The Continued Fight for Reproductive Freedom

ARTICLE BY: HELEN SALITA, ACLU-DE CAMPAIGN MANAGER

It has been more than one year since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. While Delaware has already been a leader by joining 17 other states in guaranteeing abortion rights in state law, it's not nearly enough. Codification does not mean abortion is accessible — especially for young people, low-income people, those who live far from medical providers, and disabled people.

This year, Delaware lawmakers missed a critical opportunity to ensure abortion services are accessible for all who need it by failing to pass House Bill 110 (HB 110). HB 110, legislation that would allow Medicaid funding for abortion services, would have taken steps to ensure that cost never prevents someone from being able to have full autonomy over their healthcare.

We are disappointed to have seen HB 110 stall, but encouraged

by the passage of Senate Bill 158 (SB 158), legislation that expands protections for abortion care providers' personal information. SB 158 takes steps to ensure Delaware remains safe not only for those seeking abortions, but also for those providing care.

In 2024 we call on lawmakers to further demonstrate their commitment to reproductive freedom by funding training programs to ensure abortion care providers are prepared to handle an influx of out-of-state patients and enshrining abortion rights in our state's constitution.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT!

Mariyam Asadova Digital Media and Communications Intern

Hey everyone, my name is Mariyam Asadova! I joined the ACLU of Delaware team in April as the Digital Media and Communications Intern. In this role, I assist our Communications department in managing social media accounts, graphic design, and community outreach.

As an asylum seeker, I joined the ACLU-DE because I am passionate about issues that

impact Delaware's immigrant population, especially the intersection of LGBTQ+ rights and immigrants' rights. I have previously volunteered abroad with organizations that advocate on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community and victims of domestic violence, and worked with feminist organizations working to empower women of the Global South.

KANDLER

2023 EQUITY FOR ALL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18 @ 6PM

HONORING

BEATRICE "BEBE" COKER
Leading Civil Rights and Education Advocate

JOHN WHITELAW
Esq., Advocacy Director, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.

For more information, visit bit.ly/kandler-2023



Introducing Our New Board Members

We are excited to welcome our newly elected ACLU-DE board members!

CHARITO CALVACHI-MATEYKO

Charito Calvachi-Mateyko is a Restorative Justice international consultant, and a passionate promoter of racial justice and the Latinx/Hispanic causes and culture. A lawyer turned peacebuilder, she has been a key-note speaker and trainer in Latin America and Africa as well as the United States. Currently, Charito is the co-host of *Entre Nosotr@as Radio*, supported in part by ACLU-DE, a segment that promotes immigrant stories connected to civic engagement. She is the founding member of the Latino Initiative on Restorative Justice (LIRJ), and the Principal of Rosario Calvachi-Mateyko & Associates, LLC, in Delaware that provides restorative justice services domestically and abroad.

CAITLIN MCANDREWS

Caitlin McAndrews is currently a shareholder with McAndrews Law Offices, P.C., where she concentrates her practice on Special Education matters and Estate Planning. A dedicated advocate for individuals with disabilities and their families, Ms. McAndrews has continuously represented individuals with special needs and their families, both at McAndrews Law Offices and through a clerkship with Delaware's Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (CLASI). She routinely presents on special education and disability related topics across multiple states and for national organizations.

JAMES NOLAN

James Nolan, Ph.D. is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at West Virginia University where he teaches courses relating to institutional reform,

structured inequality, and social control. His publications focus largely on police reform, hate crime, and crime measurement. In 2014, he was appointed to the National Academy of Science Panel on Modernizing the Nation's Crime Statistics. Dr. Nolan's professional career began as a police officer in Wilmington, where he rose to the rank of lieutenant during his 13 years with the department. He is a 1992 graduate of the FBI National Academy. Just prior to joining the faculty at West Virginia University, Dr. Nolan worked for the FBI as a unit chief in the Crime Analysis, Research and Development Unit that provided management oversight for the National Hate Crime Data Collection Program.

JENNIFER SIEW

Jennifer Siew was an executive member of Tulane Law School Moot Court and a coach for the Tulane Law Mock Trial and Black Law Students' Association Trial Team. Upon graduating from law school, she was inducted into the Order of the Barristers. Jennifer focuses her practice primarily on

intellectual property litigation and labor and employment matters in Delaware's state and federal agencies and courts. Prior to law school, Jennifer was awarded the National Security Education Program David L. Boren Scholarship and U.S. State Department Critical Language Scholarship.

SARA HILDEBRAND

Sara S. Hildebrand is an Assistant Professor of Law and teaches Criminal Procedure and Criminal Law. Her published scholarship focuses on racial disparities in the criminal legal system. Professor Hildebrand joined the faculty from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, where she was a Christopher N. Lasch Clinical Teaching Fellow in the Criminal Defense Clinic and earned an LL.M. Professor Hildebrand began her legal career as a public defender in the Colorado State Public Defender system, a role in which she represented clients charged with misdemeanor and felony offenses, first in the Durango regional trial office and then in the Arapahoe County trial office.

Join us!

CLEs, Screenings, and Sneak Peeks at What's to Come

ARTICLE BY: MELISSA BRYSON, ACLU-DE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The ACLU-DE Development department has been hard at work curating community events these past few months.

In May, we hosted a conversation on the local and national movements for probation reform and how our legal community can help move the needle. In

recognition of Pride Month, we organized two screenings of the moving documentary, *From Selma to Stonewall: Are We There Yet?*. After the screening, guests joined facilitated discussions to discuss the intersections of the civil rights and LGBTQ+ movements.

Attendees at both of these events were eligible for Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

credit, offered free for members of our Amicus Society. Visit bit.ly/ACLUDEamicus to learn more and join.

If you haven't had the chance to join us, it's not too late! We hope to see you at our Amicus Society Breakfast on August 24. You can register now at bit.ly/amicus-breakfast.

It's never too early to save the date for our

38th annual Kandler Memorial Awards Celebration. This year's celebration on October 18 will celebrate John Whitelaw, Esq., Advocacy Director, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc., and Beatrice "Bebe" Coker, leading civil rights and education advocate, for their achievements advancing civil liberties for all Delawareans.