

ACLU-TN Launches Voter Empowerment Campaign For November Election



In preparation for the November 4th election, ACLU-TN has launched its state-wide "Let People Vote" campaign to provide Tennesseans with the information and tools they need to exercise their voting rights.

The campaign includes an online voting rights

resource center, participation in public education events, and statewide distribution of educational materials on topics such as getting ready to vote, Tennessee's photo ID law, re-enfranchisement for people with felony convictions, your rights at the polls and more.

These free documents can be ordered or downloaded at the campaign's online resource center at <http://bit.ly/y8BA9Y>.

On Tuesday, November 4, 2014, Tennesseans will vote on Amendment 1, a constitutional amendment intended to ultimately make abortion illegal or unavailable in Tennessee.

ACLU-TN is joining with our statewide partners to mount an aggressive public awareness campaign about Amendment 1's alarming realities. Politicians should not be involved in a woman's personal medical decision about her pregnancy, and woman in Tennessee should have options when making decisions about her reproductive health care.



Want to learn more about the dangers of Amendment One?
Visit www.voteno1.org to find out how you can protect reproductive freedom in Tennessee.

Clergy Discuss Dangers of Amendment 1

The Tennessee Reproductive Justice Network (TRJN) is a statewide group of clergy, organized by ACLU-TN, who support access to comprehensive reproductive health care. Members come from across the religious spectrum, including the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopalian, Disciples of Christ, Congregational, African Methodist Episcopalian, Corinthian, Reform Jewish, United Church of Christ, Unitarian and First Congregational denominations.

The following is adapted from an op-ed by TRJN member the Rev. Laura Bogle of Maryville, which appeared in the Knoxville News Sentinel. To read more op-eds by TRJN members or to join TRJN, visit <http://www.aclu-tn.org/TRJN.html>.



As a minister I am privileged to walk with people through all aspects of life, from birth to death, through joyful times and the most painful times. All of life is sacred, and it is full of making difficult ethical decisions, including whether to end an unintended pregnancy.

If Tennessee voters approve Amendment 1 in November, it would remove women's privacy rights, giving carte blanche to legislators hoping to pass burdensome restrictions to safe, legal and accessible abortion services.

Almost half of all pregnancies in

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Why Ferguson is Any City, USA

The killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed African-American 18-year-old by a white police officer in Ferguson, MO last month threw the racial inequalities in our criminal justice system into stark relief. Then, the excessive military force used by the predominately white local police on the largely African-American community further highlighted the



sobering realities of racial strife.

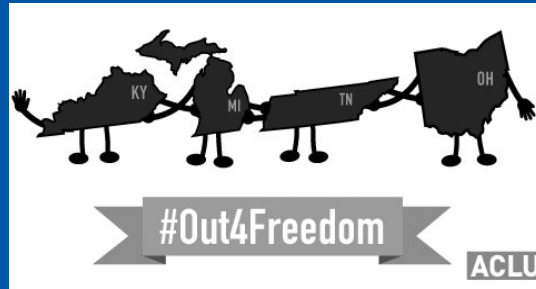
ACLU has been working on the ground in Ferguson and across the country to compel law enforcement to be more transparent, to protect the public and the media's ability to videotape police and to protest, to ban racial profiling, to urge police to use body cameras while properly respecting the right to due process and privacy, and to demilitarize local law enforcement (see ACLU's report "War Comes Home" here: <http://bit.ly/1ooStVf>).

ACLU will continue to advocate for racial justice in communities like Ferguson, in Tennessee and nationwide.

Despite these setbacks, ACLU-TN and its coalition partners are determined to keep fighting to advance equality for LGBT people and their families in Tennessee.

Marriage Equality Goes Before the 6th Circuit

On August 6, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit heard oral arguments in six marriage equality lawsuits from Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan, including Tennessee's *Tanco v. Haslam*. ACLU directly represented parties in one of the Ohio cases and filed amicus briefs in the Tennessee, Kentucky, and Michigan cases, arguing



that laws that discriminate based on sexual orientation should be subjected to a higher level of scrutiny.

ACLU National LGBT Project director James Esseks and staff attorney Chase Strangio joined ACLU-TN legal director Thomas H. Castelli in Nashville for a moot court to prepare lawyers from Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio for oral arguments.

Since the Supreme Court issued its historic opinion striking down the Defense of Marriage Act last year, 34 federal, district and state courts have issued decisions supporting the freedom to marry in states across the country. Three other courts of appeals, the 10th, 7th and 4th Circuits, have already upheld district court decisions in favor of marriage.

There are currently five marriage equality cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Court is considering whether or not to take up marriage equality in the coming term.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?

While marriage equality for Tennessee may be advancing in the courts, two other efforts to advance LGBT equality in Tennessee suffered setbacks.

The city of Chattanooga voted to overturn its non-discrimination and partner benefits ordinance, stripping city employees and their families of protections in the workplace. The loss came despite the efforts of the "YES! Chattanooga" campaign, a coalition of state and nationwide organizations, including ACLU-TN, working to mobilize voters for the August 7th primary. Just a few weeks later, the Shelby County Commission failed to approve a similar nondiscrimination ordinance for its county workers.



The School-To-Prison Pipeline: A Community Conversation

This September, nearly a hundred community activists, policy-makers, students and educators joined ACLU-TN for "Betraying Brown: How the School-to-Prison Pipeline Denies Opportunity to Children of Color." The "school-to-prison pipeline," refers to the policies and practices that push schoolchildren out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The dialogue, led by ACLU National Racial Justice Project director Dennis Parker, explored the reasons for the pipeline's rising presence in American schools and its impact on students.

"There is a central question of 'value' when we discuss the school-to-prison pipeline: how much do we value each of our individual students, regardless of their race or ethnicity or their income level? And until we address that question, we will continue to deal with these problems," Parker said.

Parker described ACLU's work to combat the school-to-prison pipeline and racial bias in the criminal justice system. Please join our e-alert list for more information on how you can be a part of this effort: <http://bit.ly/ACLU-TNAlerts>.



ACLU National Racial Justice Project director Dennis Parker leads the community discussion on the school-to-prison pipeline.

Protect Your Privacy and Your Family's Safety

ACLU-TN is seeking plaintiffs to challenge two dangerous laws that went into effect in Tennessee this summer.

The first requires some TANF applicants to submit to bodily fluid searches without probable cause, while the other singles out new mothers struggling with addiction for criminal assault charges, a violation of equal treatment under the law.

We urge anyone concerned about the impact either law will have on them or their families to contact us at www.aclu-tn.org/gethelp.htm.

Tennesseans' Free Speech is Back in Court

ACLU-TN continued to protect the First Amendment rights of Occupy Nashville protesters this summer, arguing before the 6th Circuit as two Tennessee officials appealed last summer's federal court ruling that they violated the protesters' rights in October 2011.

ACLU-TN filed the lawsuit *Occupy Nashville et. al., v. Haslam et. al* after the State of Tennessee met in secret and revised the rules for engaging in assembly activity on Legislative Plaza, including implementing a curfew and requiring \$1,000,000 in liability insurance for protestors. The state then arrested the Occupy Nashville demonstrators under the new rules. Prior to their arrests, the demonstrators had been gathered at Legislative Plaza in downtown Nashville to peacefully express their frustration with the government for a couple of weeks.



Oral arguments for the appeal were heard on

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ACLU-TN Asks U.S. District Court to Uphold 4th Amendment

Several years after initially filing *Nunez Escobar, et. al., v. Gaines, et. al.*, ACLU recently argued before the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee to protect the Fourth Amendment rights of 14 plaintiffs, including a child. The plaintiffs' rights were violated in a large-scale, warrantless immigration raid on a predominantly Latino apartment complex in Nashville in 2011. During the raid, ICE agents knocked in the front door of one apartment and shattered a window, shouting racial slurs and storming into bedrooms, holding guns to some people's heads.

The Fourth Amendment strictly prohibits warrantless intrusions into private homes and the Constitution's protections apply to both citizens and non-citizens alike. In the absence of a judicially-authorized warrant, *Continued on p. 6*



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Escobar, continued from p.5

there must be voluntary and knowing consent; ICE officers forcing themselves into someone's home does not constitute consent.

Federal District Court Judge Todd J. Campbell denied motions for summary judgment and the case is currently scheduled to go to trial in December.

Occupy, continued from p. 5

August 25 and we are now waiting on a decision.

ACLU-TN trusts that the 6th Circuit will recognize that the state cannot just arbitrarily limit free speech and will safeguard the essential guarantees of the First Amendment for Tennesseans.