

ACLU of Virginia's **STRATEGIC PLAN** 2023-2026



ACLU
Virginia

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Introduction

The ACLU of Virginia is a multi-issue, nonpartisan organization committed to protecting the civil rights and liberties of all Virginians.

The 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for our efforts. It reflects input from staff, the board of directors, donors, and community partners.

Our plan is a living document that will change as the work changes and new issues arise. We have important work ahead of us and we hope our plan gives you a glimpse into our work to create a Commonwealth that is fair for all Virginians.

**IN OUR COMMONWEALTH
BLACK LIVES MATTER
LET PEOPLE VOTE
TRANS PEOPLE BELONG
LOVE IS LOVE
PEOPLE. NOT PRISONS.
ABORTION IS A RIGHT
WE THE PEOPLE MEANS EVERYONE.**

Who we are

Vision

The ACLU of Virginia works alongside fellow Virginians to make liberty, justice, equity, inclusion, and dignity a reality for all people.

Mission

The ACLU of Virginia is a nonpartisan organization that defends and promotes the civil liberties and civil rights of all Virginians, particularly for those who are still fighting to secure the full exercise of those rights. With an unwavering commitment, we fight with and for Virginians for systemic change in our communities, in the legislature, and in the courts to ensure fairness, liberty, and justice and to realize the promise of the U.S. Constitution.

FIGHTING FOR
ALL OF US.

Our values

Acknowledging that white supremacy is deeply ingrained in Virginia's history, laws, and current policies and practices, our commitment to racial justice is a core value that runs throughout our work. We work in partnership with impacted communities and individuals to eradicate those inequities.

The ACLU of Virginia believes and acts upon these values:

Justice

We tenaciously strive for a world where all people are treated fairly, with dignity, and have equality under the law and in practice.

Centering People

Recognizing the value in every person, we affirm everyone's right to dignity and collectively strive to promote a culture of care and justice, marked by mutual respect. We build shared power with communities to foster a just and transformed world

Accountability

We hold government actors to the highest levels of public accountability and hold ourselves accountable to our mission, to our clients and the communities we serve, to our members, and to one another.

Equity

We seek to build and sustain an equitable and inclusive culture internally and externally – one where people feel valued and respected for who they are.

Courage

We remain true to our principles even when doing so is controversial or unpopular. We are willing to risk failure in pursuit of meaningful systemic change, and we persevere in the face of adversity.

We will live these values with a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusivity, and belonging inside and outside of our affiliate.

How we do our work

Systemic change requires the use of varied approaches.

We employ an integrated advocacy approach to employ a variety of skills, tactics, and relationships to achieve our outcomes.

POLICY

We advocate at both the local and state level for policies that will protect and expand civil rights and liberties for all Virginians. Through our work, we seek to correct historical wrongs and ensure equity for marginalized communities.



LITIGATION & LEGAL SUPPORT

We litigate to challenge unconstitutional policies and practices. We advance and defend civil liberties and civil rights and make government more accountable for its actions.



COMMUNICATIONS

We make connections, increase visibility, and inspire action through storytelling that lifts and amplifies diverse, compassionate, and thoughtful stories while countering harmful narratives.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

We seek to build relationships with communities across the state, realizing that real change occurs when you're led by the people who are most impacted by that change.



Strategic priorities

PROTECTING FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

First Amendment rights—the right to speak, assemble, organize, protest, and practice one’s faith (or not to practice any faith)—are fundamental building blocks of a democratic society.

As the premier guardian of civil liberties and civil rights in Virginia, the affiliate bears a special responsibility to protect these rights.

Goal: To prevent government suppression of First Amendment rights in the Commonwealth.

To achieve that, we will:

- Defend Virginians’ First Amendment rights to speak and participate fully in the democratic process;
- Protect the right to protest and organize;
- Ensure that students in Virginia’s public schools are able to receive an honest and complete teaching of history; and
- Oppose governmental efforts to censor ideas by book banning or other unlawful tactics.



Strategic priorities

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Virginia has made significant strides in recent years in expanding access to the ballot box.

That progress has been met with fierce backlash against which we continue to fight.

Goal: To increase the ability of historically marginalized Virginians to participate in the political process.

To do that, we will:

- Build widespread public support for a constitutional amendment to guarantee the right to vote to all Virginians, particularly those convicted of felonies, without a petition requirement;
- Defend progress made on access to the ballot box and threats to our voting system;
- Work to expand Virginians' access to political participation; and
- Advocate for the reform of Virginia's FOIA laws to ensure full transparency in government.



Strategic priorities

FIGHTING FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

The ACLU of Virginia envisions a world where all people can live their truths without discrimination or fear.

We work to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people can live openly with full equality under the law.

Goal: Increase efforts to combat discrimination, harassment, and violence toward the LGBTQ+ community and create a culture in Virginia where LGBTQ+ community members can live openly and authentically.

We will:

- Work toward the removal of the prohibition of same-sex marriage from Virginia's Constitution;
- Work with LGBTQ+ partners to advocate for legislation to close gaps in the state's civil rights laws and to oppose all legislative proposals that seek to roll back current protections; and
- Advocate for policies that protect the rights of trans and gender-nonconforming people.



Strategic priorities

PROTECTING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The ACLU of Virginia believes that all people have an inherent right to bodily autonomy.

The right to decide whether and when to become a parent is fundamental to every person in a free society

Goal: To ensure that abortion and contraceptives are accessible to whoever wants them.

To achieve that, we will:

- Craft a robust communications plan to inform people in Virginia and beyond of the continued legality of abortion in Virginia;
- Advocate for the codification in the Virginia Constitution of reproductive rights of all people in the state;
- Protect Virginia's continued status as a safe haven to which individuals can travel to access abortion care; and
- Build a volunteer network that can mobilize support across the state of Virginia and assist in Virginia's serving as a safe haven state for abortion care.



Strategic priorities

PLANNING FOR THE UNEXPECTED AND NEW

We recognize that one of our strengths is the ability to pivot quickly to focus on new or unexpected assaults on civil rights and civil liberties.

We will preserve capacity to be able to respond to these egregious assaults. This includes, but is not limited to, the following issues:

POLICE

When police killings and other abuses by law enforcement take place, we will be prepared to allocate appropriate resources to respond as needed;

THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

When threats to our democracy arise, we will be prepared to respond to those threats in order to protect the civil rights and liberties of all Virginians;

IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

In collaboration with partners, we will identify ways in which the affiliate can serve immigrant communities across the Commonwealth; and

GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE

We will oppose efforts to increase governmental surveillance and other efforts to violate the privacy rights of Virginians.

How you can help

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

The success of our work depends on our members, donors, and supporters. You can help:

Visit our website www.acluva.org to:

1. Become an ACLU of Virginia member or donor.
2. Subscribe to our newsletter
3. Visit our action and issue hubs to let your lawmakers know your point of view.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at [@acluva](https://www.instagram.com/acluva).

Working together we can ensure that all people thrive in our Commonwealth.



