



2013 Civil Liberties Agenda December 1st, 2012

Committed to building a stronger, fairer Illinois -- in which government respects basic civil liberties and human rights for all persons -- the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois offers these priorities for 2013 and invites you to join with us in making these goals reality in the year ahead.

The freedom to marry for all persons. We are committed to assuring the freedom to marry for same sex couples in the State of Illinois and around the nation. The electoral victories in November in Maine, Maryland, Minnesota and Washington State further demonstrate that a growing majority of Americans support the freedom to marry for same sex couples. This is true in Illinois. It is time for the freedom to marry to extend to all couples in Illinois. And, it is time for the discriminatory federal Defense of Marriage Act to be repudiated -- through litigation or legislation -- so that all married couples in the many states now recognizing the freedom to marry may enjoy the federal benefits they have earned.

Get ENGAGED:

- Call on the Illinois General Assembly to pass legislation bringing the **freedom to marry** to all in Illinois --regardless of sexual orientation: www.aclu-il.org/marriagebill
- Ask Senator Mark Kirk, to sign on as a co-sponsor of the federal Respect for Marriage Act, which would **repeal DOMA** and end the unfair exclusion of same-sex couples from the freedom to marry: www.aclu-il.org/respectmarriage

Protecting access to reproductive health care. In recent years, women's access to reproductive health care, including contraceptives, has been under attack by elected officials at the state and federal level. These attacks often are advanced under a false assertion of "religious liberty," arguing that the liberty of some business owners is violated if women are permitted to make their own decisions about reproductive health care, based on their own values. This conflict is being played out at the state and federal level. In Illinois, we must continue our efforts to blunt the effect of the most pernicious refusal law in the country. And, at the federal level, we must assure that new rules mandating coverage of contraceptive care are implemented without ceding to employers the ability to deny such critical coverage.

Get ENGAGED:

- Send a letter to the editor about the harms caused by using religion to discriminate, and the right of patients to timely and appropriate medical care, including reproductive health care: www.aclu-il.org/healthcarerefusals

Privacy in the digital age. Smartphones, social media and wireless connectivity have made the world smaller and brought more information to our fingertips. At the same time, these technological advances have made it easier for government and private interests to gather, retain and share information on all of us. The problem is compounded by the reality that most of our nation's electronic privacy laws have not been modernized since the mid-1980s, an age before most of us

had heard of the internet -- let alone carried in our pockets the ability to access the world wide web. We cannot and must not wait for Congress to act. In Illinois, we need to ensure that electronic privacy is protected, including blocking law enforcement from gathering information about where we go based on our cell phones and assuring that new rules about electronic medical records respect personal privacy.

Get ENGAGED:

- Tell Congress it is time to update the **Electronic Communications Privacy Act** of 1986. This outdated privacy law is allowing the government to engage in a shopping spree in the treasure trove of information about who you are, where you go, and what you do, that is being collected by email providers, search engines, social networking sites, and other websites every day. Tell Congress it is time to modernize our privacy protection: www.aclu-il.org/ECPA
- Big changes are underway that will affect the **privacy of your health information** and medical records. The creation of an electronic health records exchange in Illinois has the potential to improve patient care, but also brings significant privacy concerns. Learn more about medical privacy and share the information with your friends and family: www.aclu-il.org/healthcareprivacy

Racial Justice. More than a century after our nation ended slavery, we are painfully aware that injustices based on race still persist across our society, and -- sadly -- within our system of justice. We know that young men of color are far more likely to be incarcerated for crimes that white men do not get sentenced to jail. And, we know that efforts in our public schools to enforce discipline -- like zero tolerance rules and cooperative agreements with local law enforcement agencies -- often serve as a pipeline for driving young men of color into the criminal justice system. As we work on these larger issues, we must end one practice in Illinois that has been plagued with racial bias for years - consent searches. Data collected under an Illinois law passed by then-state senator Barack Obama continues to show that African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be asked by State Police for consent to search their autos, even though State Police are far more likely to find contraband when they ask for permission to search a white motorist's car.

Get ENGAGED:

- Years of data has amply demonstrated: consent searches by the Illinois State police are conducted in a racially disparate manner. Governor Quinn can end this practice with a simple executive order. Tell him the time has come to end the **racially-biased practice of consent searches** by ISP troopers: www.aclu-il.org/consentsearches

Immigration reform. Our immigration system is broken -- that much everyone agrees upon. Yet, for too many years, the various parties in Congress have been unable to agree on the basic, obvious steps for immigration reform. In the vacuum, many have sought to demonize newcomers to our nation, suggesting that these new immigrants pose some sort of threat -- security and economic, for example -- to the future of the nation. The federal government continues to direct cruel policies against undocumented workers, dividing families and detaining for long periods individuals who often have lived and worked in the nation for years. As we await federal immigration reform, steps can be taken at the state and federal level to address some of the most pernicious harms. At the federal level, Congress must move quickly to pass and send to the President the Dream Act -- so that millions of young people can continue their education and service to our nation.

Voting Rights. A democracy that enshrines both voting rights and equality in its Constitution ought to have a voting system that lives up to those promises. In the 2012 election cycle, we witnessed the

most aggressive, most well-funded, most pernicious effort at voter suppression in recent memory, certainly since the days of Jim Crow. States worked to purge voter rolls with the help of partisan groups, often resulting in voters of color discovering that they had been eliminated from the voting rolls. Limitations on early voting resulted in long lines, with many having to wait hours in rainy and cold conditions in order to cast their ballots. Even on Election Day, some communities experienced long lines, with polling sites even running out of ballots. We must work together to develop a system of elections, with easy access to voting (including same-day registration) and the application of new technologies to ease the process.

Get ENGAGED:

- Voters in the 2012 election experienced serious, sometimes disenfranchising challenges as they attempted to cast their ballot. In states from New York to Florida, voters experienced long lines, inexperienced poll workers and erratic implementation of elections laws – not to mention outright attempts to suppress the vote via photo-ID requirements and restrictions on early voting and third party registrars. Send a letter to the editor calling for reform of our national system of voting: www.aclu-il.org/votingreform