



ACLU and the Kentucky Legislature

Summary of How Civil Liberty Priorities Faired During the 2014 Session

The American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky is one of the nation's foremost defenders of civil liberties and civil rights. Founded in 1955 as the state affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, we are a not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization with over 2,800 members, 8,500 e-activists, and thousands of supporters across the commonwealth and over 500,000 nationwide.

The ACLU of Kentucky worked with our allies and members to organize and lobby around several core issues for the 2014 session of the Kentucky General Assembly. Here is a summary of our victories, and the work still ahead:

Reproductive Freedom: Stopping Anti-Choice Legislation

VICTORY! As we celebrate 25 years of the Reproductive Freedom Project, **we defeated a record eight anti-choice bills.** They ranged from banning abortions as early as six weeks, forcing women to travel to an abortion provider twice, and undergoing an invasive, unnecessary vaginal ultrasound prior to an abortion. Thank you for helping us make calls and send emails to legislators letting them know these measures would have placed financial, emotional, and procedural obstacles on too many Kentucky families.

LGBT Rights: Statewide Fairness Protections

Building on the grassroots movement for Fairness in Kentucky, we also made tremendous headway towards enacting state civil rights protections for LGBT Kentuckians, barring discrimination in the workplace, in housing, and in public accommodations. During the 2014 Legislative Session we added cosponsors in both chambers, nearly doubling the support in the House including that of Speaker of the House Greg Stumbo. Speaker Stumbo's support helped ensure the **first ever hearing on this legislation since it was first introduced 15 years ago.** We believe that the Senate will hold a hearing on Statewide Fairness over the summer in an interim committee meeting.

Criminal Justice: Abolition of the Death Penalty

For the first time since the 1980's, a conservative Republican, Representative David Floyd, introduced legislation to repeal Kentucky's death penalty. Senator Gerald Neal carried the legislation in the senate. Both men partnered with murder victims family members, and a Kentucky exoneree, to hold a press conference about the issue. Thanks to the financial support of our members, we were able to bring Mississippi death row exoneree Sabrina Butler to the capitol to meet with legislators, and share her powerful story of wrongful conviction. She was introduced, and talked about in floor speeches on both the House and Senate floors. With your continued

support, we can keep making the case throughout the state that our death penalty system is far too broken to fix. Repeal is the only permanent answer.

Voting Rights: Restoration of Voting Rights for Former Felons

Thousands of Kentuckians have permanently lost their right to vote because of a felony conviction. Kentucky is one of a handful of states that permanently bars everyone who has ever received any felony conviction from voting. HB70 would give Kentucky voters a chance to decide whether to restore voting rights to certain former felons once they have served their sentence. Once again, **the bill fell short in the Kentucky Senate**. A compromise bill passed the House on the last day of the session, but was not called for a vote in the Senate before the legislative session ended at midnight.

Immigrants' Rights: Driving Certificates

For the second legislative session in a row, Kentucky driver's certificate legislation was filed to promote safer roads and more secure families in the commonwealth. While **the bill did not receive a hearing** this session, we are hopeful that it will gain some traction in future sessions. Near the beginning of the session, we met with our allies, and Governor Beshear, for a fruitful conversation about immigrants' rights priorities in the Commonwealth.

Surveillance & Privacy Protections

The Kentucky legislature missed an opportunity to advance an important civil liberties bill that would have limited law enforcement's use of drones. A bipartisan bill was filed in the House, but was not scheduled to receive a committee hearing. The timely issue has garnered a lot of media attention. We will continue working to educate legislators in the interim on the importance of reining in the surveillance superstructure, which strikes at the core of our rights to privacy, free speech, and association.

Get Involved and TAKE ACTION!

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