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YEARS

Idaho

FALL / WINTER 2023

IDAHO
LIBERTY

30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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Dina Flores-Brewer COMMUNITY INTAKE MANAGER

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Leo Morales EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Logan Self DONOR RELATIONS OFFICER

Nissa Nagel OFFICE COORDINATOR

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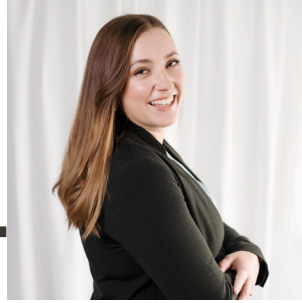
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Joining the Team



**Emily
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Staff Attorney

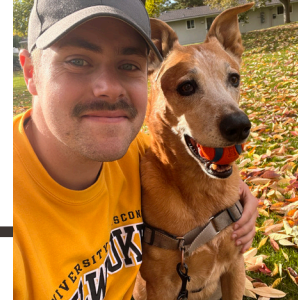
Emily Croston (she/her) joins the ACLU of Idaho as staff attorney from her home state of Virginia. She is excited to bring her federal civil rights litigation experience to advance the organization's current litigation projects. Emily attended James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where she studied political science, gender, and economics, and graduated at the top of her class. While there, she also worked with the local legal aid organization and staffed an intimate partner violence helpline.

After graduating, she enrolled in the University of Virginia School of Law where she volunteered with civil rights and prisoner justice organizations, including the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Legal Aid Justice Center, and the Virginia Law in Prison Project.

Emily also worked with the ACLU National Prison Project during winter breaks and later as a legal fellow. While with the Project, she helped develop a report on the growth of immigrant detention centers entitled *Justice Free Zones: U.S. Immigration Detention Under the Trump Administration*. She supported litigation in the long-running Duvall and Parsons cases and worked on a Ninth Circuit case on the ability to seek release from prison based on unconstitutional conditions of confinement under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

After graduating law school, Emily represented over 700 incarcerated people in the *Scott v. Clarke* litigation challenging deficient medical care in a women's prison in Fluvanna County, Virginia. Her greatest joy was speaking with her clients nearly every day. She is passionate about the protection of human dignity and civil rights and is excited to bring her experience to serve the people of Idaho.

Emily spends her free time endlessly playing fetch with her dog, reading mystery novels, and learning new recipes. She will teach anyone who stands still long enough how to make the perfect brown butter chocolate chip cookies or creamy, spicy Italian risotto.



**Logan
Self**
Donor Relations Officer

Photo courtesy of Logan Self

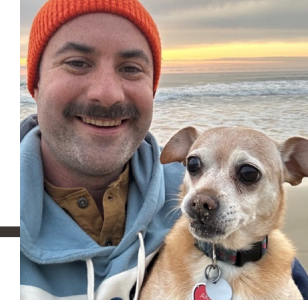
Logan Self (he/him) joins the ACLU of Idaho as the donor relations officer in the Development department.

Logan was born and raised in South Texas, where he attended Sam Houston State University and Texas State University. After graduating, he moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There, Logan began his career working in the LGBTQ+ community as a community engagement coordinator for an HIV clinic focusing on HIV healthcare within marginalized communities. His work entailed engaging with community members to help promote HIV testing and removing stigma surrounding sexual health. Although based in Milwaukee, his work took him across all of Wisconsin.

Logan would later transition to development work at Cream City Foundation, a small non-profit focusing on the LGBTQ+ communities in southeastern Wisconsin. While there, he was the sole employee responsible for day-to-day operations, including communications, development, special events, and programs. In his short time, Logan helped grow the Cream City Foundation LGBTQ+ Scholarship Program and worked to revitalize the organization's annual fundraising event after a two-year hiatus.

In August of 2022, Logan made the move to Boise, Idaho. Once here, he knew he wanted to continue working within the LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities and jumped at the opportunity to work with the ACLU of Idaho.

Outside of work, Logan enjoys exploring the Boise foothills with his partner and two dogs. They are first-time home buyers and spend all their extra time fixing up their fixer-upper. Logan does all of these activities while listening to Taylor Swift.



**PAUL CARLOS
SOUTHWICK**
Legal Director

Photo courtesy of
Paul Carlos Southwick

Paul Carlos Southwick (he/him) joins the ACLU of Idaho team as legal director with 14 years of litigation experience. Paul has extensive experience in litigating civil rights cases on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community and youth in the child welfare system, as well as cases contesting religious exemptions from civil rights laws and First Amendment issues.

Most recently, Paul served as the head attorney and Director of the Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP). Here, Paul led landmark civil rights litigation on behalf of LGBTQ+ students by challenging the religious exemption to Title IX, which permits taxpayer-funded, religiously affiliated educational institutions to deny Title IX protections to women and sexual and gender minorities. He has served on the Lawyers Committee for the ACLU of Oregon, as well as on the board of Cascade AIDS Project. Paul approaches his legal work as an anti-racist and with a growing understanding of the effects of colonialism and white supremacy. Paul has collaborated with organizations like Americans United for Separation of Church & State, Know Your IX, Campus Pride & Athlete Ally.

In addition to his experience at REAP, Paul litigated a variety of civil rights and complex commercial cases for a decade at a large law firm based in the Pacific Northwest.

Paul graduated from the University of Michigan Law School and is an Oregonian who is excited to work and live in the beautiful city of Boise and to advance civil rights and civil liberties throughout Idaho. In his leisure time, Paul enjoys hiking, house projects, and spending time with his husband and dog.

ADVANCING CHANGE

THE ACLU OF IDAHO LEGAL DEPARTMENT IS TAKING ON RACIAL JUSTICE, LGBTQ+ RIGHTS, & REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS.

Dina Flores-Brewer | COMMUNITY INTAKE MANAGER

This fall was bittersweet for the ACLU of Idaho legal department. In August, we said goodbye (for now) to our Legal Fellow, Erica Rodarte. She will be law clerking for the next two years, so we hope to see her back in 2025! On a bright note, we welcomed our new staff attorney, Emily Croston, to the ACLU of Idaho family. Emily jumped right in, taking on assignments from our litigation teams, and is doing great!

Nonetheless, even though we've been short staffed, the ACLU Idaho legal department, with the help of national ACLU legal staff, out-of-state litigation firms, and local legal partners, continues to protect the civil rights of our communities with multiple new lawsuits and legal actions.

LGBTQ+ Rights

In March, the Idaho Legislature passed H.B. 71. The new law makes it a felony for doctors to provide puberty blockers, hormone treatments, or surgery to transgender minors in Idaho, or to help a minor seek gender-affirming treatment. These hormone therapies are provided to cisgender children without any interference from the government. In late May, ACLU of Idaho filed a lawsuit to challenge H.B. 71, representing two transgender children and their parents. The lawsuit, called ***Poe et al. v. Labrador et al.***, challenges the new law as a violation of the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution because it bans medical treatment solely based on the gender identity of the child. As part of the lawsuit, we asked the court to block the law from going into effect in January 2024 as scheduled, while the case makes its way through the courts. A hearing for that request is scheduled for early November 2023.

Racial Justice

In July, we published our *Proud to be Brown* report on discrimination and disparate discipline faced by Latine students in the Treasure Valley. The report received significant media attention from multiple outlets, from local print and TV news to international news outlets, including Telemundo and Univision. Focusing on the Treasure Valley, ACLU of Idaho Legal Fellow Erica Rodarte conducted investigations, interviewed Latine community members, and drafted the report, documenting instances of discriminatory treatment and excessive discipline by the Nampa and Caldwell school districts. She followed up her report by filing a Federal complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice against the Nampa School District.

Rodarte's work led to the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section assigning attorneys to investigate.

That district's vague dress code policies target Latine students' cultural and religious clothing and unfairly discipline Latine students for cultural expression.

Reproductive Rights

In March, Idaho Attorney General Raúl Labrador issued a legal opinion at the request of Idaho State Representative Brent Crane about whether Idaho's abortion bans prohibit 1) the provision of abortion pills, 2) the promotion of abortion pills, and 3) "referring women across state lines to obtain abortion services or prescribing abortion pills that will be picked up across state lines." Labrador's opinion said Idaho law prohibits each of those activities. In April 2023, ACLU of Idaho joined ***Planned Parenthood Great Northwest, Hawai'i, Indiana, Kentucky v. Labrador et al.***, a lawsuit filed by Planned Parenthood challenging Attorney General Labrador's opinion as a violation of doctors' free speech and due process rights. The attorney general's office withdrew the opinion but refused to say it disagreed with its analysis, or that Idaho doctors can refer and prescribe out-of-state care without fear of criminal prosecution. On August 29, the Court granted our request to block his office from prosecuting providers while we move forward with the lawsuit.

Separately, on August 8, we filed ***Idaho Federation of Teachers et al. v. Labrador et al.***, representing university professors and unions in challenging Idaho's No Public Funds for Abortion Act. The law criminalizes any speech by a public employee—including academic instruction, discussion, and research at Idaho's public universities—that expresses a viewpoint that can be viewed as supporting abortion. Because the law clearly violates the free speech and academic freedom rights of college faculty, the Idaho attorney general's office recently published another opinion that the law "does not prohibit university employees from speaking on abortion in their academic teaching or scholarship, even if that teaching or scholarship could be viewed as supporting abortion or abortion rights in general." We are currently negotiating with the attorney general's office on next steps.

Other ACLU of Idaho wins include reaffirmation of the preliminary injunction in our lawsuit challenging Idaho's ban on trans women and girls' participation in school sports (H.B. 500, passed in 2020), once again blocking the law from going into effect. We also received a favorable court opinion in ***K.W. v. Armstrong*** (challenging Idaho's assessment process for determining Medicaid support for adults with developmental disabilities) that said withholding the user's manual for the state's assessment tool during the Medicaid appeals process is unconstitutional, violates due process, and "defies logic and is antithetical to principles of due process."

People in Idaho Jails & Prisons Still at Risk

THE STORY OF OUR INTAKE UNIT DATA.

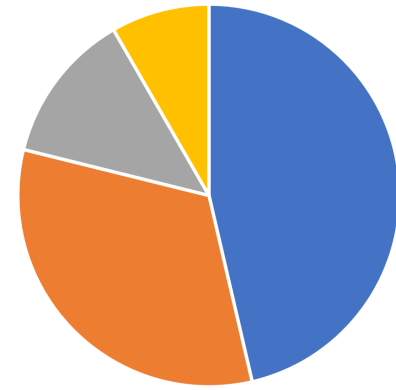
Dina Flores-Brewer | COMMUNITY INTAKE MANAGER Julianne Donnelly Tzul | ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Many Idahoans tell us about rights violations happening across the state. The ACLU of Idaho reviews every request for assistance submitted to us from our complaint intake process, whether via letter or website form submission (intake.acluidaho.org). We are on track to receive more than 1,000 complaints in 2023; by the time this newsletter goes to print, we will have received more than 800 complaints, with two months still left to go in the year. The complaints tell a story of civil rights violations across Idaho.

First: the highest number of complaints, by far, are from people who are incarcerated. What people who are incarcerated tell us is that they are often denied needs that are fundamental to life: medical care, food (specifically nutritious food, food that is appropriate for inmates' medical needs, and food that is not in conflict with inmate's religious or ethical beliefs) and mental health care.

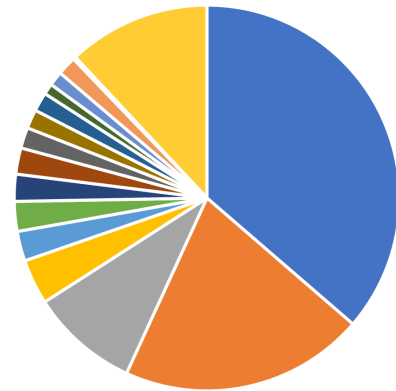
Second: a large number of people believe their incarceration stems from a due process failure by the system that confines them. This aligns with our *Tucker v. State of Idaho* lawsuit, which critiques the funding and organizational structure of public criminal defense representation for Idahoans who cannot afford private representation.

Complaints Received from People in Prisons and Jails



■ Incarcerated Rights ■ Medical Care ■ Mental Health Care ■ Food

Complaints to the ACLU in 2023



■ Incarcerated People's Rights ■ Criminal Procedure Violations ■ Being a Victim of a Crime
 ■ Discrimination ■ First Amendment Violations ■ Complaint re Attorney Performance
 ■ LGBTQ+ Rights ■ Personal Injury ■ Education
 ■ Disability Rights ■ General Information Request ■ Racial Justice
 ■ Employment ■ Housing ■ Elections
 ■ Miscellaneous

Both patterns are concerning for a state that incarcerates a higher percentage of its own residents than any other state in the country. While we watch to assess the impact of the funding and structural changes brought to the Idaho public defense system by the Idaho legislature last year, what we hear from people living in jails and prisons is unchanged: Idahoans are still being jailed more often than they should, and the conditions and treatment they experience while on the inside are often terrible.

Each One Teach One

RE-DISCOVERING THE ESSENCE OF KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS.

Ruby Mendez-Mota | CAMPAIGN STRATEGIST

Throughout the 2023 summer, the ACLU of Idaho conducted various Know Your Rights (KYR) training sessions for communities across Idaho. The topics included immigrant and LGBTQ+ rights, voter rights, and interacting with law enforcement, among others.

One training that stood out for staff involved our collaboration with students from Breaking Chains Development Academy in Nampa, at the request of Executive Director, Luis Granados. We specifically tailored the training for the group of 14 students who had previous encounters with law enforcement. Given their firsthand experiences, the training deeply resonated with the students; they eagerly

engaged with the content and were excited to share the information within their wider communities.

Throughout the session with Breaking Chains Academy, we received poignant remarks like "I wish I would have known that..." and "If I had been aware of this, things would have been different." Moreover, it was disheartening to hear common sentiments such as "I didn't know they could do that!" [referring to law enforcement officers]. These reactions shed light on the gaps in knowledge and understanding within the community, emphasizing the critical importance of education on legal rights and what to do during law enforcement interactions.

The stories shared by the students about their encounters with law enforcement, including instances of excessive force and abuse of power, left a profound impact on our staff. It served as a stark reminder of the urgent need to continue these training sessions, not only for the students, but also for their parents or guardians. Our commitment to empowering communities across the state remains unwavering, and we are dedicated to fostering a comprehensive understanding of legal rights and responsibilities among our youth and their families.

Moving forward, we encourage all Idaho communities to explore the resources provided by the ACLU of Idaho. Let's delve deeper into what it truly means to know our rights and how to effectively exercise them. By educating ourselves, we can collectively work towards building a more informed, empowered, and just Idaho.





A Legacy of Movement Work

THE ACLU OF IDAHO HAS BEEN A FORCE FOR GOOD FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS.

Leo Morales | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2023 has been an incredible year

for reflection as the ACLU of Idaho celebrated its 30th anniversary since affiliation with the national ACLU. It has also been a year of significant staff growth, with some key positions taking longer to fill than others, but ultimately I am happy to report that we are a much stronger and well-positioned organization to take on the work ahead of us.

A good entry point for reflecting on the past 30 years is our anniversary dinner. In late September, we hosted national ACLU Deputy Legal Director and Director of the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Center for Liberty Louise Melling, as our keynote speaker for the event. No stranger to Idaho, Louise was the lead attorney 30 years ago in our *Roe v. Harris* case, a state constitutional challenge

that blocked the exclusion of abortion from the state's Medicaid program. During the early '90s, she also partnered with the ACLU of Idaho and Planned Parenthood on cases involving parental consent.

The anniversary also created an opportunity to reflect on the organization's rich history of advocacy here in Idaho. During the early years, Jack Van Valkenburgh, ACLU of Idaho's first executive director, set the tone for what was to come in challenging government encroachment of our civil liberties. He pushed back on proposed state voter initiatives curtailing the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, fought

government promotion of religion in our public schools, and worked to challenge Idaho's attack on women's reproductive rights, including more than a dozen anti-abortion bills.

In addition to *Roe v. Harris* early on, the ACLU of Idaho had an incredible victory in *Van Valkenburgh v. Citizens for Term Limits*. In that case, the Idaho Supreme Court held, for the first time, that voting is a fundamental right under the Idaho Constitution. Throughout the years that followed, the ACLU of Idaho would challenge numerous unconstitutional actions by government, including a 2010 federal lawsuit, *Kelly v. Wengler*,

to put a stop to the culture of rampant violence that led to carnage and suffering among prisoners at the Idaho Correctional Center (ICC). In 2012, we filed a class action lawsuit against the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, *K.W. v. Armstrong*, on behalf of adults with developmental disabilities requesting the Department disclose the formula they used to severely cut funding for support services. This case remains active today.

In 2014, we participated in *ALDF v. Wasden*, successfully challenging the state legislature's

"Ag Gag" law prohibiting speech that is critical of industrial agriculture. Under the law, journalists, workers, activists, and members of the public could have been convicted for documenting animal cruelty, life-threatening worker safety violations, or threats to public health in our food supply. And, in 2015, we filed *Tucker v. State of Idaho* to challenge the State's existing, underfunded, unconstitutional criminal public defense system.

Since 2010, the ACLU of Idaho has participated in 23 legal cases that range from prisoner rights, free speech,

reproductive justice, and separation of church and state, to LGBTQ+ justice, due process, and government transparency issues. This year alone we filed three cases: one to affirm access to gender affirming healthcare for transgender youth; a second case stopping Attorney General Raúl Labrador from prosecuting health care providers for counseling their patients with options to seek legal out-of-state abortion; and a third case to protect the speech rights of university professors to engage in academic discussions about abortion.



(ACLU Deputy Legal Director and the Director of the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Center for Liberty Louise Melling, speaking at ACLU of Idaho's 30th Anniversary dinner.)



It's hard to imagine that most of the work we achieved over the last 30 years was made possible by a very small team on a shoestring budget. During the last few years, we have been positioning ourselves to be much bigger, both in terms of budget and staff. We will end this year having achieved exactly that. In 1993 we were a staff of two. By 2013 we had grown to become a staff of nine, with an operating budget of \$161,000. By the end of 2023, we will be a staff of 15 with an operating budget of \$1.7 million.

In our legal department, we'll have three full-time staff members and several legal

interns and fellows. In our advocacy department, we'll have three full-time staff, two part-time staff, and legislative interns. For the first time in the organization's history, we will have two full-time senior communications staff, plus interns as necessary. Lastly, we have two full-time staff in development/ fundraising, two in finance and administration, plus the executive director with shared responsibilities. The ACLU of Idaho is the largest we've ever been.

Our growth is in direct response to the consistent attacks on our civil liberties. Perhaps no surprise to you, since 2016, the audacious behavior of both government and non-

government actors has been relentless. The Dobbs decision from two summers ago that gutted our constitutional right to an abortion was devastating and life altering for millions of people across the country. The notion of bodily autonomy suddenly vanished as the U.S. Supreme Court destroyed a federal protection and fundamental right by simply allowing states to do whatever made sense to them. Idaho, like several other red states across the country, had already passed "trigger" laws, making the Court's decision go into effect almost immediately.

A Christian-right view of the Constitution, with limitations for certain members of society,

is detrimental to safeguarding civil liberties for all Americans. The ACLU of Idaho is very concerned about the increased influence such views have on our state legislature, where we've seen religious doctrine infused into legislative policy, creating real-life consequences for Idahoans, including those who do not share the same religious views. For example, over the last few years lawmakers have passed laws limiting access to reproductive rights. We've seen attempts to legislate the LGBTQ+ community out of existence by attacking gender-affirming healthcare, prohibiting the ability of youth to choose a bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity, and forcing school counselors to disclose instances where students bring up topics like gender identity during their confidential conversations. Beyond attacks on bodily autonomy, we also see attacks from the far-right on public education, libraries, access to voting, and speech and expression.

This is the juncture we find ourselves at as we think about civil liberties and civil rights in Idaho. The growth in staffing across all departments at the ACLU of Idaho positions the organization to respond to these relentless attacks and it

provides room for proactive work. In July, our former 2023 legal fellow, Erica Rodarte, published a seminal report on Idaho's treatment of Latine/Hispanic students, focusing on the Nampa and Caldwell school districts. The year-long investigation concluded that, among other things, Latine/Hispanic students are consistently singled out and punished for expressing their culture and for wearing certain clothing or religious regalia that non-Latine/Hispanic students are allowed to wear. The report, *Proud to Be Brown: Punishing Latine Culture in Idaho Schools*, was key in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division decision to investigate the Nampa School District's treatment

of Latine/Hispanic students.

There is much work to be done in Idaho. Far-right national organizations are investing significant resources in our state to diminish the rights of women, the LGBTQ+ community, communities of color, destroying the civil liberties of all Idahoans in the process. While we celebrate 30 years as an official non-profit in 2023, our Idaho roots are deep, and our mission is more than a century old. With a larger, bolder, and more strategic ACLU of Idaho, count on us to continue defending, restoring, and advancing the civil rights and liberties of all Idahoans for decades to come.



Miss Cali Je

Drag Queen/Activist

Photo courtesy of Miss Cali Je

Miss Cali Je is a lifelong Idahoan, drag queen, activist, and president and co-founder of Reading Time with the Queens, a southeast Idaho non-profit whose mission is to have drag performers read stories that will teach children, teens, and adults how to love and accept themselves and others.

Miss Cali Je is passionate about queer and trans justice and has proven to be a powerful organizer in the fight for trans and queer liberation in Idaho. “I do this work because I know that there are youth growing up in this state that are like I was: unsure of what’s next, not having answers to their questions,” said Cali Je when asked why she does this work. “I want to make sure they have a better community to grow up in than I did.”

In late 2022, Miss Cali Je collaborated with drag performers and other community leaders to launch the campaign *Protect Drag in Idaho*, as a response to anticipated legislation in 2023 that would criminalize and effectively ban all public performances by those dressed in drag. Together with other activists and drag performers across the state, Miss Cali Je gathered around 5,000 postcards in support of drag performance in Idaho, and coordinated an effort to mail those postcards to lawmakers from their constituents in various districts. When the legislation was introduced, lawmakers decided to hold it in committee—effectively preventing the bill from moving forward—largely thanks to the broad-level awareness created by Miss Cali Je and other Idaho activists.

Miss Cali Je is a proud Episcopalian guided by her Christian faith. “My faith dictates that I create a better world than the one I came into, and the people in my life affirm that every time I meet with them,” she said.

At the ACLU of Idaho, we are lucky to work alongside powerful and integral community leaders like Miss Cali Je. We are thankful for people like her who will stand up for trans rights and work tirelessly to ensure that queer people have a safer, more inclusive, and accepting community to grow up in.



Brenda Hernandez

Idaho Student Activist

Photo courtesy of Brenda Hernandez

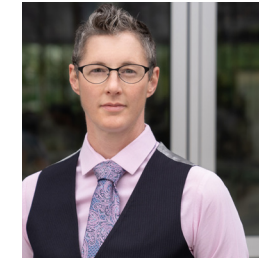
My name is Brenda Hernandez. I was born and raised in Caldwell, Idaho. On January 17, 2023, I started the Brown Pride protest at Caldwell High School with the help of more than 50 students. This was important to me because the school told me that my hoodie with “Brown Pride” on it was racist and likened it to [promoting] white pride. I organized a protest to prove that Brown Pride is none of those things and never will be. Brown Pride is what makes “la raza,” and I will keep standing up for my beliefs no matter what.

I decided to do the protest because when the school told me that Brown Pride was similar to [promoting] white pride, I knew right there and then that it wasn’t right. Why all of a sudden is Brown Pride such a bad thing? Since when is it such a bad thing to show my pride for my culture? I started a petition to show that other students want to wear Brown Pride clothing. I started the protest to show that we have pride for our culture, and that Brown Pride is not the same as white pride. I started the protest to call out the school for what they said about my hoodie; there were a lot of people who disagreed with me and a lot of people who agreed with me.

I started the protest so that the world can open their eyes to see that schools are discriminating against us. Idaho was so surprised about this protest because no one has stood up--because we have always been silent. I decided not to be silent anymore. Even after the protest, people told me that I was overreacting, how it’s “not a big deal,” and to “let it go,” but those people will never understand how it feels to be discriminated against in your own school that is supposed to be a safe space and a place that celebrates your cultural holidays.

But yet, not allowing Brown Pride [clothing] shows that my pride can’t be celebrated. Even though I’m not in school, I still want to try to get justice for myself and for every other kid that faces discrimination at Caldwell High School. It’s a little difficult because I’m not in school so it’s harder to get people to come forward and speak up, but I’m not going to give up so easily.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS



Dr. Sarah Lynch

Executive Director,
North Idaho Pride Alliance

Photo courtesy of Dr. Sarah Lynch

I am Dr. Sarah Lynch, the Executive Director for the North Idaho Pride Alliance (NIPA). NIPA is a small nonprofit whose mission is to create a more inclusive North Idaho for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) people, allies, and community groups, through networking, educating, and advocating. We envision a community where LGBTQIA+ folks belong, can connect, and are empowered to thrive.

In my “previous life,” I was an Air Force command pilot, serving 20 years before retiring honorably. I originally chose to serve my country to protect our most vulnerable, and that philosophy, along with the servant leadership lessons I learned in the military, are what drive me to continue giving back to my community through the nonprofit sector today. Our country, and North Idaho especially, are in desperate need of a civil dialogue to move us towards awareness, understanding, and appreciation of diversity. Additionally, a critical need exists in North Idaho for safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ folks.

Uplifting queer visibility and voice are paramount in this work, and a stark contrast to what I experienced under the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” ban for the majority of my Air Force career. As such, NIPA aims to offer year-round programming, expanding our activities from Pride month to include the “off-season.” I am blessed to be supported by a phenomenal Board of Directors, an amazing corps of volunteers, and an incredibly generous donor base!

When I’m taking a break from being an executive director, I am an active flight instructor, and I thoroughly enjoy exploring the beautiful inland northwest outdoors!

BACK TO SCHOOL WITH THE ACLU OF IDAHO

Amy Dundon | LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIST



During summer of 2023, the ACLU of Idaho advocacy team launched a new campaign: *Back to School with the ACLU of Idaho* (B2S). Part report and part in-person public education gatherings, our B2S campaign centers LGBTQ+ students' civil rights. We created the campaign because we know LGBTQ+ folks' rights are under attack. In 2023, we watched Idaho lawmakers pass numerous bills that threaten the freedoms, safety, and dignity of LGBTQ+ Idahoans. Even more troubling, most of Idaho's anti-LGBTQ+ legislation appeared to target queer and transgender youth. The B2S campaign was also inspired by listening to folks in the LGBTQ+ community across the state. Whether at a Pride event in North Idaho, during a conversation in the halls of the statehouse, or through an email, we heard your concerns about Idaho's new anti-LGBTQ+ laws and how these laws might impact you, your children, your students, or your peers.

Using community feedback, our advocacy team went to work: first, we created *Back to School with the ACLU of Idaho*, a report that offers insight into Idaho's anti-LGBTQ+ laws and key information on understanding and protecting students' rights. We open the B2S report with an in-depth look at recent legislation, then explain how the laws work, and what they might mean for student rights. The B2S report also includes resources for

understanding key players in Idaho public schools, gives context to the recent increase in anti-LGBTQ+ laws, and charts the rules and laws that protect students' civil rights. We hope the B2S report is useful for students and families directly impacted by anti-LGBTQ+ laws – and for all of those working toward LGBTQ+ justice and inclusion in Idaho. We invite you to read and download the report on our website at acluidaho.org/backtoschool.

In 2023, we watched Idaho lawmakers pass numerous bills that threaten the freedoms, safety, and dignity of LGBTQ+ Idahoans.

Beyond just sharing information and resources, our team knew the *Back to School with the ACLU of Idaho* report would be made even more powerful by offering in-person training sessions. We worked with communities and organizations across Idaho to craft a summer *Back to School with the ACLU of Idaho* tour. The Advocacy team held B2S training sessions in three cities: Coeur d'Alene, Pocatello, and Boise. Each B2S session involved a two-hour, in-person meeting; we shared key insights from our B2S report, including an overview of Idaho's newest anti-LGBTQ+ laws and ways to better understand – and protect – students' rights.

Each B2S training session sought to bring together community members directly impacted by Idaho's anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. We met dozens of parents, community leaders, organizers, school personnel, and students and invited attendees to share their thoughts. Did school staff, students, and parents have specific concerns about Idaho's new laws? Did students feel confident about knowing and protecting their rights in schools? After listening to attendees' insights, we moved into a discussion of the B2S report, gave an overview of students' rights, and flagged additional resources.

B2S showcased the ACLU of Idaho responding in real time to community needs. It gave community members knowledge to help push back against policies and misinterpretations of the laws that limit our rights.

Read the Back to School report here:



Building an Advocacy Powerhouse

THE ACLU OF IDAHO ADVOCACY DEPARTMENT IS POSITIONED TO DO MORE AS WE APPROACH THE NEW YEAR

The Advocacy team at the ACLU of Idaho has a strong bench of experience in community education and organizing, and fresh energy in legislative strategy. Meet our five dedicated advocacy team members and learn about the work we're lining up for 2024.

Julianne Donnelly Tzul | ADVOCACY DIRECTOR



Ruby Mendez-Mota

CAMPAIGN STRATEGIST

Ruby brings expertise in centering community, building trust, and successfully campaigning for policy change across Idaho. Whether in communities of immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, youth, and people in prisons and jails, Ruby designs projects from the insights and work of community leaders. Ruby grows the skills of both well-established leaders, like non-profit staff and management, and emerging leaders, like mothers who host dinners and find pathways to help for loved ones in need. Ruby also has a unique superpower: the ability to project a field of calm for herself and her colleagues, allowing the team to strategize effectively about where to invest time in the most chaotic moments, especially during the thick of Idaho's legislative session.



Amy Dundon

LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIST

Amy harnesses an encyclopedic knowledge of policy, a passion for building more just political systems, and incredibly fast research skills. Amy works to foster trust as they meet individually with lawmakers, stakeholders and community members. Amy's ability to build trust in individual meetings with lawmakers and key stakeholders gives them insider information that helps the ACLU of Idaho be more successful at achieving our legislative policy goals.



Rosseli Guerrero

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER FELLOW

Rosseli activates emerging community leaders, especially Latinx /Latine Idahoans, through strong teaching skills and a fierce commitment to highlighting communities' lived experiences through storytelling. We dare you to find someone else more joyful at inspiring youth and community members to lead. Rosseli's keen eye and attention to detail make her a powerful visual and social media designer and analyst. Her work teaching storytelling techniques and showcasing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) Dreamers has helped launch national campaigns, establishing the ACLU of Idaho as a forerunner among ACLU affiliates.



Jenna Damron

ADVOCACY INTERN

Jenna is a tireless advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and transgender justice. Jenna is an excellent facilitator and researcher. They bring heart, dedication, and precision to the advocacy team. The activist spaces they convene are community hubs for information sharing, action, and rejuvenation for advocates across the state. Their lightning-fast ability to curate data and shape it into what is needed to advance campaigns and other advocacy work is unrivaled. Jenna's efforts help Idahoans from many communities understand, protect, and defend their rights.



Julianne Donnelly Tzul

ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Julianne is the new voice on the team. Julianne honors the advocacy team skills and strengths that already weave together. She adds to the existing team strengths solid experience setting campaign target outcomes and co-developing team plans on how to achieve them.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE ADVOCACY TEAM IN THE YEAR TO COME?

The advocacy team will be growing our workshops to build the skills of community leaders, with particular emphasis on supporting emerging LGBTQ+ leaders around the state, and emerging immigrant rights leaders in three counties. We will continue Storytelling, Lobbying 101 and Activist Academy trainings, and Power Mapping workshops. We will expand our trainings to include more formal public speaking and project management content.

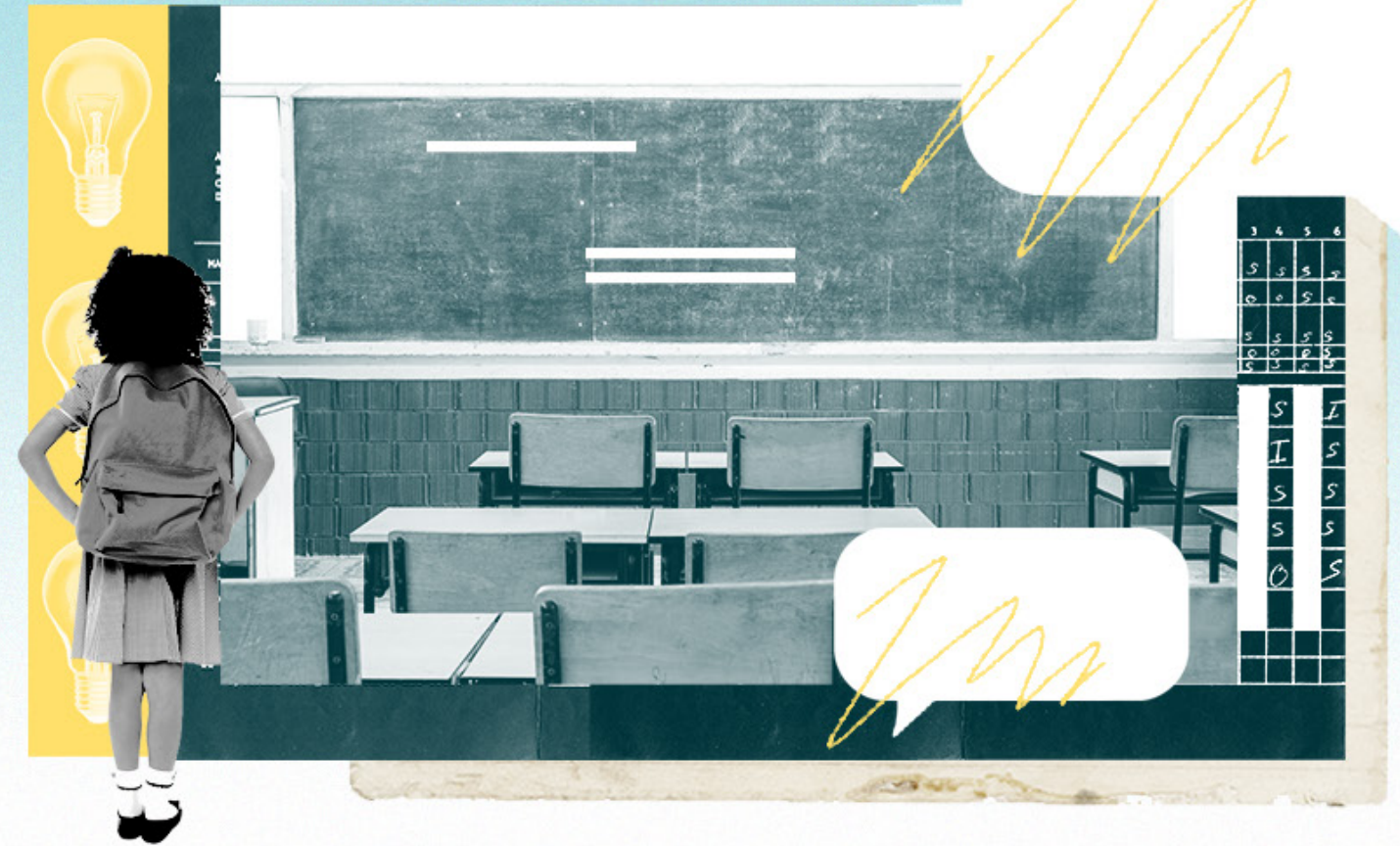
We will be your eyes and ears in the Statehouse. We will work to stop harmful bills and pass favorable ones. We will keep you informed on the movement of different bills through the Statehouse via our social media channels and our Fast Democracy bill tracker. We will continue fighting for better state and local policies for LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, immigrant rights, and First Amendment rights. We are excited to expand our work in criminal justice reform and education equity.

We look forward to a very active year in 2024!

Free to Learn. Free to Be.

DEFENDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM THROUGH COMMUNITY EDUCATION.

Rosseli Guerrero | COMMUNITY ORGANIZER FELLOW



Efforts to undermine academic freedom, particularly by discouraging the teaching of subjects related to race, history, and gender in public schools, have hindered our collective capacity to construct a future in which all individuals, regardless of race, religion, or gender, can thrive and be treated as equals. In a proactive response to these challenges, the ACLU of Idaho created a summer youth program: Freedom School. The Freedom School program educates, inspires, organizes, and integrates youth aged 16 to 25 into the movement for justice. Students who successfully complete this five-week program receive a \$125 stipend. At the end of Freedom School, participants co-create presentations about what they learned during workshops for their fellow participants, ACLU staff, and invited community members. Participants chose what to present based on several prompts:

Which workshop inspired you the most and how do you plan to apply what you learned in your personal activism?

How have these workshops helped you understand your identity and how has it shaped your leadership development?

Which workshops were eye opening for you and how did they shift your worldview?

In 2022, the inaugural year of the Freedom School program, we had nine participants; in 2023 participation nearly doubled with 17 participants.

“This is definitely a great opportunity for anyone that is looking to learn more about how to get involved and learn how to use your voice. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and to be yourself!”

– 2023 Freedom School Participant

Education as a Foundation for Change

It was amazing to hear how eye-opening Freedom School has been for participants, and even more exciting to hear how Freedom School provided the understanding and motivation for participants to take what they’ve learned and apply it in their communities. One Freedom School student mentioned that, thanks to Freedom School, they were encouraged to start a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club in their school. Another student mentioned that the highlight of Freedom School for them was connecting with others who are passionate about helping different communities, growing as activists, and learning (or re-learning) new tools and strategies for making change.

Education is the foundation of change. The ACLU of Idaho Freedom School focuses on educating Idaho youth about the history of social justice movements, the power of advocacy, and the importance of inclusivity. Workshops cover a range of topics, from white supremacy to self-care, allowing youth to gain a critical understanding about the historical context surrounding the issues they care about most, as well as strategies for how to avoid burnout and recuperate. The workshops are designed to help young individuals develop critical thinking skills, engage in open dialogue across differences, and learn about the root causes of various injustices. Understanding the history and context of these issues is essential for building a solid foundation for advocacy to bring about needed change.

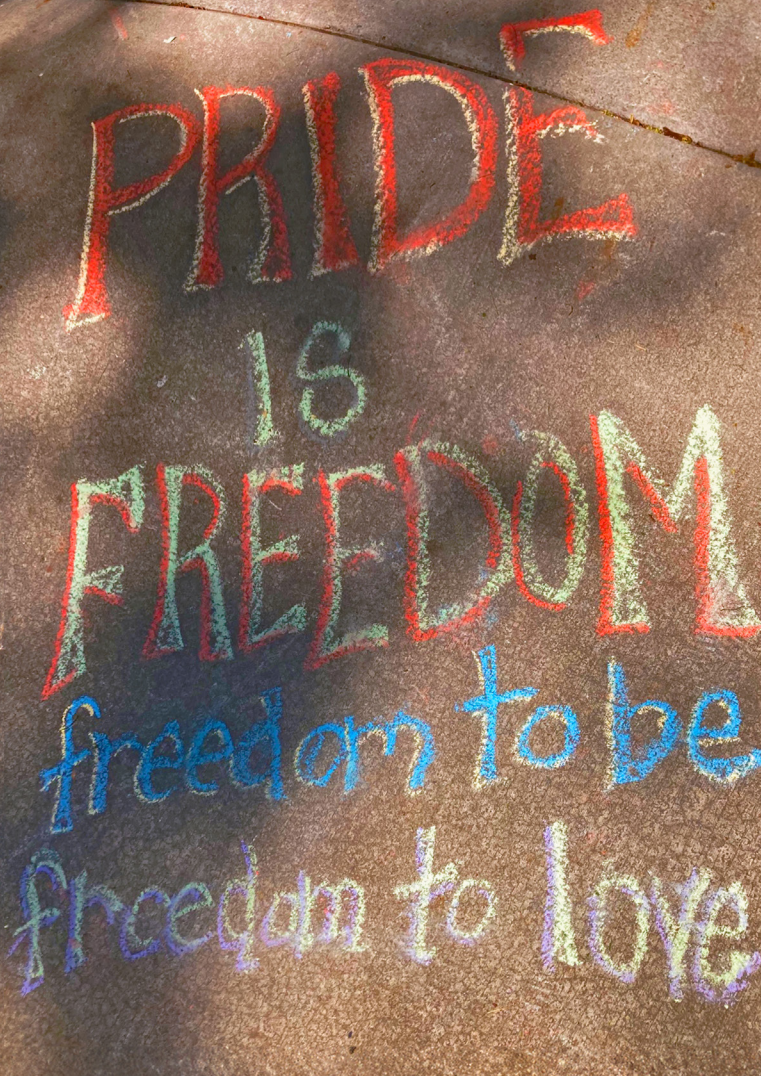
In creating the Freedom School curriculum, we recognize and acknowledge that youth have the energy, creativity, and determination to challenge systemic injustices in various forms. We also recognize the importance of providing participants with practical tools to help combat the racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of injustice that they experience and witness in their own lives.

As we look to the future, it’s evident that programs like Freedom School have the ability to play a crucial role in shaping a more just and equitable society. We look forward to Freedom School 2024 continuing to provide a platform for young advocates to amplify their voices and make a difference in communities across Idaho.



2023 Pride Tour

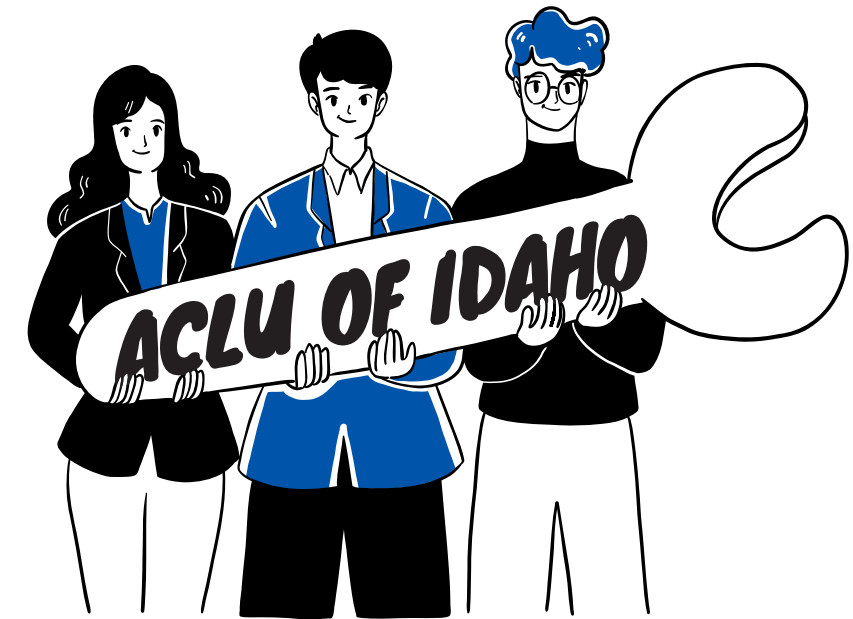
Jenna Damron | ADVOCACY INTERN



During spring 2023, the ACLU of Idaho advocacy team planned a Pride tour, spanning six cities, to attend local Pride festivals across the state. Kicking off in June, the team aimed to be intentional about meeting with local organizers and community members in each city on the tour, with the goals of listening directly to community concerns and strengthening local efforts.

As the tour progressed and we met with local organizations, such as North Idaho Pride Alliance in Coeur d'Alene and Southern Idaho Pride in Twin Falls, it became clear that we were up against a substantial amount of misinformation within the LGBTQ+ community, particularly surrounding various laws passed during the 2023 Idaho legislative session. We heard requests for deeper discussions and training around knowing your rights, citizen lobbying, understanding power, and how to effectively organize. Based on that feedback, we pivoted to publish the 2023 *Back to School with the ACLU of Idaho* (B2S) report and paired it with its own separate tour. In all, we met with nearly 50 participants across three B2S community information sessions in Pocatello, Boise, and Coeur d'Alene, in addition to attending Pride festivals in Coeur d'Alene, Twin Falls, and Moscow.

We met with parents, students, teachers, administrators, LGBTQ+ organizations, community leaders, and drag performers while on tour. Through these combined efforts, we were able to distribute a wealth of quality information, bolster involvement in our 2023 Freedom School and other programs, and hear about the issues that matter most while learning how ACLU of Idaho can best support people affected by anti-LGBTQ+ legislation passed in recent years. Most importantly, we celebrated the resilience of queer Idahoans and witnessed the kind of joy that is uniquely found when people are free to choose and live their most authentic lives.



2024 Board of Directors Elections

Each year our Board Development Committee carefully considers the applications of potential board members to join the group of people who govern and direct the Idaho affiliate of the ACLU. If you would like to be considered for nomination by the Board Development Committee, you must be a member in good standing and submit a brief statement of interest.

Nominations may also be submitted by petition. Nomination petitions must include a statement of interest with a short statement of petitioner's background and qualifications and be signed by ten (10) current ACLU of Idaho members that includes the name and address of the nominee.

All submissions must be received in the ACLU of Idaho office at **PO Box 1897, Boise, ID 83701, by December 18, 2023.**

Members of the ACLU of Idaho Board of Directors serve three-year terms. The election results will be announced at the **Annual Membership Meeting on February 7, 2024.**

If you have questions on the nomination or petition process, or the Annual Membership Meeting, please contact Nissa Nagel at (208) 344-9750 ext. 1209 or at admin@acluidaho.org.



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ACLU of Idaho P.O. Box 1897 Boise, ID 83701 208-344-9750



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P.O. Box 1897
Boise, ID 83701
208-344-9750

FALL / WINTER 2023
IDAHO LIBERTY
30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION