

**What's Inside**

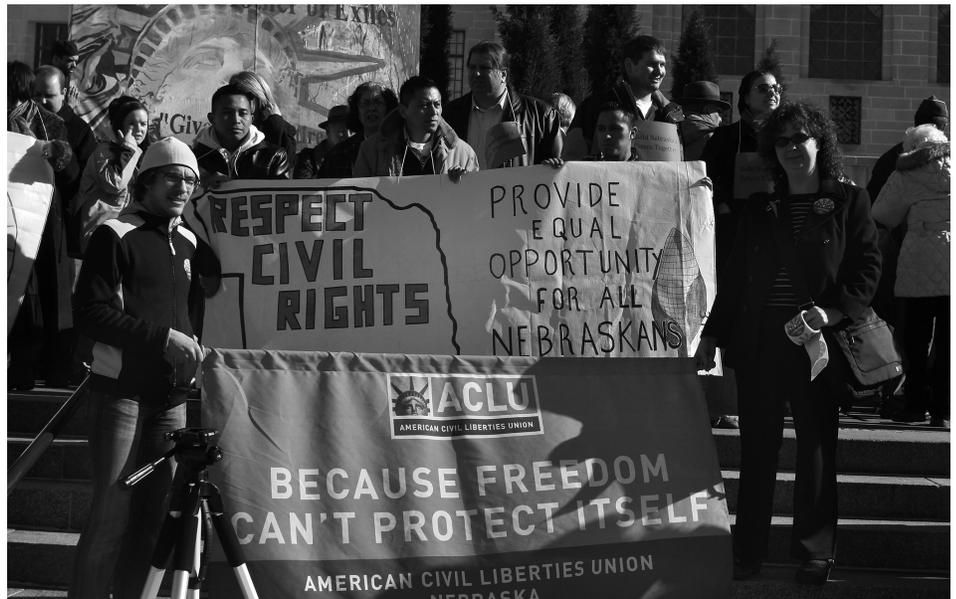
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## **Immigration, Immigration, Immigration**

We face an uphill battle in Nebraska when it comes to protecting the rights of new immigrants. With your support, a voice for civil liberties is being brought to the courts, the legislature, and the field of public education to send a message that Nebraskans care deeply about equality for everyone, regardless of their immigration status.

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*Hundreds gathered outside of the Nebraska State Capitol on Thursday, January 20th to unite for fairness and respect in immigration reform. You can send the same message by going to [www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org) and clicking on "What Happens in Arizona Stops in Arizona."*

ACLU's lawsuit against Fremont for its anti-immigrant city ordinance is moving through the federal courts. Paola Mercado, a US citizen, speaks English with a heavy accent and faces discrimination from people who assume she is illegal. Mario Martinez is a native Nebraskan whose wife is a legal permanent resident and she faces discrimination that he cannot protect her from. The case was bought on behalf of three additional legal citizens who each have a different story about how Fremont's ordinance is affecting them.

These clients are challenging Fremont's law despite great public pressure and disapproval. Their bravery is one reason we've given the umbrella organization One Fremont, One Future our *Defender of the Bill of Rights* award, which will be handed out at our upcoming banquet on April 1<sup>st</sup>. (See the next page to reserve your ticket!)

**In addition to battles in the courts, you can speak out against several anti-immigrant measures in the State Legislature, including:**

- **LB 48** would bring an Arizona-like law to Nebraska. Among other provisions, the law would require local police to act as immigration agents, affectively enforcing federal laws that are outside of their jurisdiction.
- **LB 569** would require all employers to use E-Verify - a database the federal government admits is riddled with errors and frequently returns false information on Spanish surnames.
- **LR 28** will require all law enforcement to participate in Secure Communities, a Department of Homeland Security program that requires police to run the fingerprints of those arrested even for minor offenses through a national database, checking for past criminal history and immigration status. There have been cases where the system has given police a false-negative match, setting criminals free, giving us a false sense of security while putting a heavy financial burden on police departments and damaging community policing efforts.

**Victory for Fairness in Education**

- **LB 657** would have repealed Nebraska's Dream Act. Thanks to supporters speaking out, Nebraska will continue to benefit from allowing students who graduated from a Nebraska high school to qualify for in-state tuition, regardless of legal status.

**Support real solutions and true immigration reform**

- **LR 39** calls upon Congress to “enact thorough, common sense, workable and human reform [to our immigration system] that reflects the realities of our country’s workforce needs and our families and represents America at its best.”
- **LB 500** which makes “windshield obstruction” a secondary offense so police cannot pull you over for it as a primary offense. Our office fields many calls from Latino and Black drivers who were racially profiled and harassed on the basis of an air freshener or religious medal hanging from their rear view window.

# *Journeys of* **JUSTICE**

**Will you join us to celebrate on  
April 1?**

**We're meeting on April Fool's Day, but we're serious about having fun with fellow civil libertarians. Please join us!**

April 1<sup>st</sup> will be our annual banquet celebrating “Journeys of Justice.” The keynote speaker is Susan Herman, current President of the national ACLU Board of Directors. She is also a law professor and long time ACLU advocate.



In addition to hearing her inspiring reflections on the state of civil liberties today, we will honor local heroes whose work for the Constitution in Nebraska have earned them awards this year: Leola Bullock (posthumously), Dr. A. Dwayne Ball, and One Fremont, One Future.

The event is in Lincoln at the Grand Manse, 129 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$45, with reduced fee tickets available for students and people with a limited income. Reserve your seat today! Online at: [www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org) Contact Tyler: [trichard@aclunebraska.org](mailto:trichard@aclunebraska.org) 402.476.8091

## Still No Answers to Omaha Evidence Planting Scandals

*We won't give up  
until we get clear  
answers.*

Laurel Marsh, ACLU  
Nebraska Executive Director

Two police officers were suspended while the Omaha Police Department investigated whether they were working together to plant drugs on a man. The news of these scandals broke in May and June of 2010 – so why is there still no resolution? “Clearly, investigating internal allegations of corruption can be a complex matter,” said ACLU Nebraska Executive Director Laurel Marsh. “But there is no transparency explaining whether OPD is taking this issue seriously.”

Champions of civil liberties, speaking out through ACLU Nebraska, are the only reason this issue hasn't died quietly in the back rooms of the Omaha Police Department. Following repeated calls from ACLU to bring in a neutral investigator from the FBI or Attorney General's office, Omaha Police Chief Alex Hayes finally admitted in January 2011 that the investigations were still ongoing, that the FBI had been contacted, and that criminal charges might be a possibility. No information has been provided to explain what is taking so long, and one of the suspended officers, Frank Platt, has retired from the force with a full pension.

## Be a Leader in the Fight for Freedom!

The Board of Directors are elected by you, the members, to serve three year terms. They volunteer to meet six times a year to provide direction to the fight for civil liberties in Nebraska. If you are interested in being a board member in the upcoming year, please email Nominations Committee Chair, Brendy Ealey (bsealey@windstream.net).



**Front Row:** Christy Abraham, Dwayne Ball, Joe Brown, Jean Amoura. **Middle Row:** David Moshman, Leslie Seymore, Gloria Romero-Downing, Jean Eileen Durgin-Clinchard, Fritz Hudson, Laurie Thomas Lee. **Back row:** Alan Peterson (Lobbyist), Jim Bender, Eric Evans (President), Kerry Fina, Brenda Ealey, Rich Juro, Russ Alberts.

“We want to know what steps are being taken to ensure that other prosecutions weren't tainted by evidence planting as well,” said Marsh. “This is a fundamental question of whether the public can have trust in the criminal justice system in Omaha, and we won't give up until we get clear answers.”

Email [info@aclunebraska.org](mailto:info@aclunebraska.org)  
to learn how you can be a part  
of a Nebraska where no one is  
above the law.

### Win Cash Prizes in Youth PSA Contest Deadline March 28<sup>th</sup>

More than \$1,200 in cash prizes are available in our Public Service Announcement contest for high school students.

Tell the students in your life there's a chance to educate and win cash prizes!

For complete rules and a flyer, visit: [www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org)



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## Take Action to Stop an Arizona-Style Immigration Law from Passing In Nebraska!

Take action!  
[www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org)  
Send a message to your elected representatives by clicking "What Happens in Arizona, Stops in Arizona."  
Tell them you value fairness and equality and don't want to see an Arizona-like law in Nebraska. It's easy and it's an effective way to add your voice to many others!

### **Local People. National Impact.**

Whether you write a check to ACLU Nebraska or send it to the national office, the impact is the same. Your contributions make it possible for those in Nebraska who have had their rights violated to have a place to call.

As part of a nationwide organization, your contributions have a ripple effect towards victories in every state. Thank you for making a difference in Nebraska and around the country.

**You can now make your contributions conveniently and safely online at [www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org).**