

DEFENDER'S DEBRIEF

UPDATING YOU ON THE RIGHTS & LIBERTIES THAT YOU DEFEND



ACLUNEBRASKA.ORG / 402.476.8091 / SEPT 2016

50 Years of Defending Freedom

1966. The Voting Rights Act had just been passed. The Warren Court issued the seminal *Miranda* decision. The Nebraska Cornhuskers played for the national championship in their first night bowl game. Racial tension in Omaha erupted into riots that caught the attention of the nation.

And a small group of advocates from Omaha and Lincoln gathered to form the ACLU of Nebraska. Ministers. Attorneys. Community advocates.

Many things have changed in the 50 years since 1966, including the ACLU of Nebraska itself. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary we have evolved from a small volunteer organization into one of the most exciting and effective professional advocacy organizations in Nebraska. Our dedicated staff fights tirelessly in the courts, is recognized as an emerging legislative powerhouse, and works statewide to empower individuals and communities through our innovative public education programs.

But the heart of the organization is still you – passionate individual activists who invest time, talent, and treasure to defend freedom and make change possible.

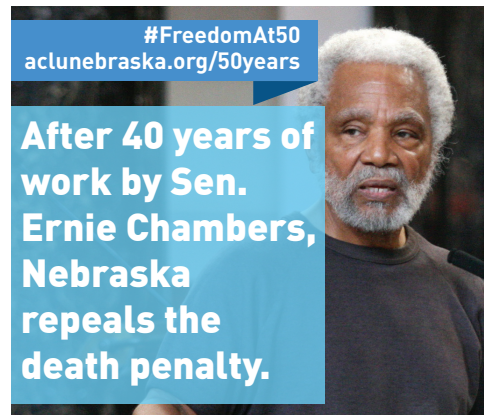
Our 50th Anniversary has provided a special opportunity to leverage the existing high public profile of the ACLU of Nebraska to engage our members, to grow and diversify our base of support, and to inspire the next generation of civil rights leaders. I hope you enjoy the many important milestones compiled in this newsletter along with an update about just a few of our recent victories. As you reflect upon this critically important work for civil rights and civil liberties past and present **please join me in renewing your personal commitments to ensure a robust future for the ACLU of Nebraska now and for the next 50 years to come.**



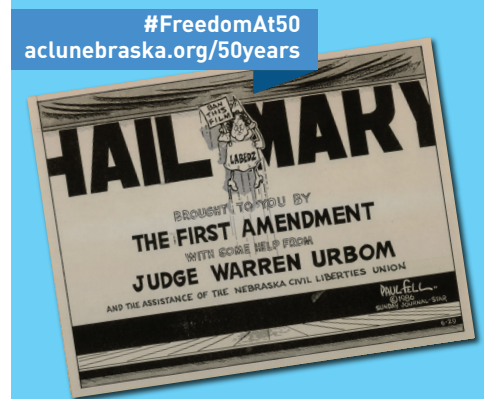
In friendship and freedom,

Danielle Conrad
Executive Director

CHECK OUT ALL OF OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIES
aclunebraska.org/50years



ACLU 50



ACLU 50



ACLU 50

DEFEND FREEDOM! ACLUNEBRASKA.ORG/DONATE

For LGBTQ Students Our Work Is Not Done

All Americans now have the freedom to marry but that does not mean the fight for LGBT rights is over. A recent ACLU victory on behalf of a student at Elkhorn High is just one example of our work that doesn't generate headlines but is making a positive difference in the lives of Nebraskans.



Left: The first official T.E.A. club meeting at Elkhorn High.

Bottom: A bulletin board at Elkhorn High with affirming hearts for Valentine's Day.

BY DYLAN MIETTINEN, ELKHORN HIGH

When my best friend Frenchie talked to our vice principal at Elkhorn High School about forming a club to raise awareness about LGBTQ students, he said we could not advertise in the halls and wanted to treat us differently than other clubs.

Despite the obstacles, we chose to pursue our goals and created the T.E.A. Club, (Tolerance, Equality, and Acceptance). By second semester we were meeting every week with a steady membership of 10-25 people at each meeting. It was difficult gaining attendance, however, because we mostly had only word of mouth to advertise the club.

About halfway through the school year, we approached administration to become a school-sponsored club with the same rights and privileges as other clubs. We were told no and appealed directly to the superintendent, and we were rejected.

That's where the ACLU stepped in and contacted my school. We're now being treated the same as other extracurricular clubs. We gained more members and were able to advertise in the hallways and hold meetings during homeroom. We had Elkhorn High's first ever T.E.A. Party with over 50 students in attendance.

That being said, our battle is far from over. Our principal and vice principal have yet to display the ally signs.

A student ripped up an ally sign, saying he didn't want gays "taking over his school." But it's not just his school. It's our school too.

And if that's not enough evidence to show why this club needs to exist, to drive out hate and ignorance through education, then I don't know what is.



T.E.A. Club

Tolerance Equality and Acceptance

To create a judgement free, safe environment for all students regardless of gender expression, identity or sexual orientation in order to promote academic, social and acceptance in life.

EVERY MONDAY

3:30 - 4:30

Library TA Room

There will be snacks!



Community
Services Fund
of Nebraska

**Defend civil liberties
just by going to work!**

ACLU of Nebraska is a proud member agency of the Community Services Fund workplace giving campaign.

The ACLU has fought for the First Amendment rights of LGBTQ students in cities around Nebraska, and secured victories in Bellevue, Elkhorn, Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln, Norfolk, Ralston and Waverly.

In addition to continuing to fight for free speech rights of LGBTQ students in schools, the ACLU is also working to make sure curriculum such as comprehensive sexuality education is appropriate and inclusive for all students.

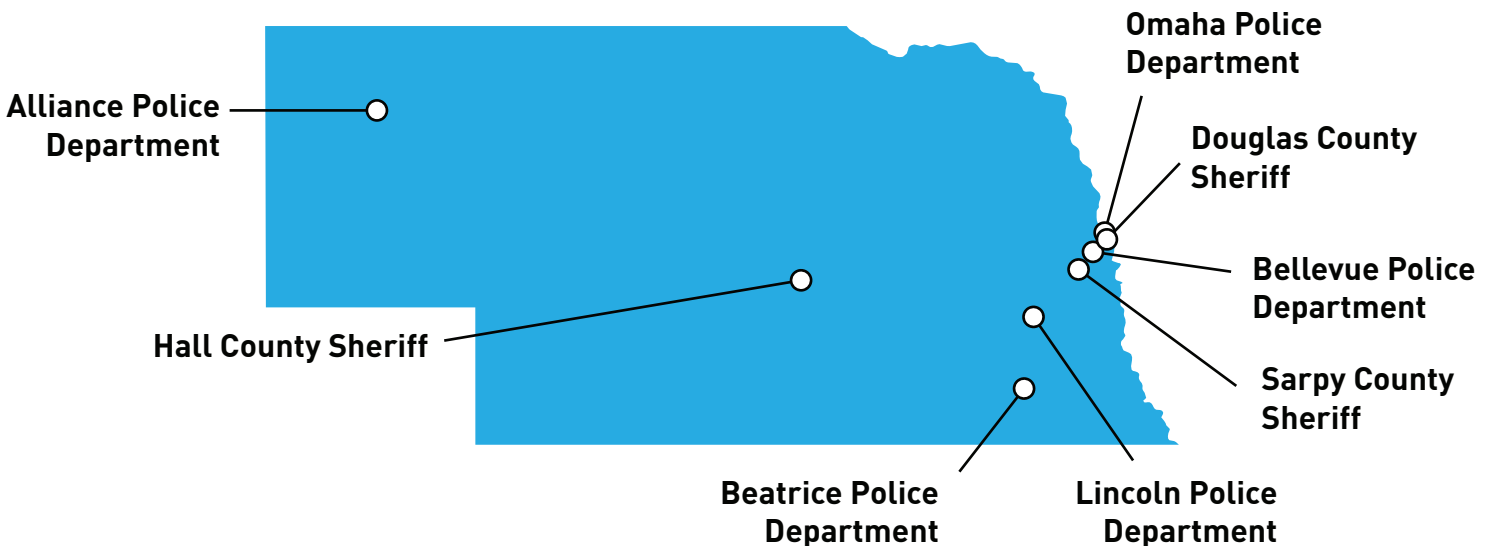
Improving Police Accountability in Nebraska

In 2014, as the nation's eyes were on Ferguson, Missouri, the ACLU of Nebraska released the results from a series of investigations into law enforcement practices. We looked at policies and practices related to use of force and Tasers, racial profiling and civilian complaints.

We found in all three of the areas many Nebraska law enforcement agencies were not following best practices suggested by the Department of Justice or other law enforcement associations.

This fall, we are updating our analysis of civilian complaint procedures. The good news is that several agencies took our recommendations to heart and have made it easier for members of the public to provide feedback about their interactions with law enforcement.

CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS | LOCAL AGENCIES WITH GOOD POLICIES

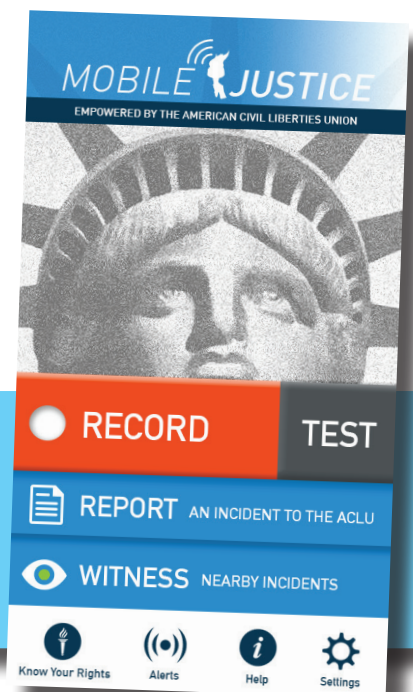


This is just one example of our work to bring meaningful reform to police practices. Learn more about our report, other law enforcement reform projects and ways you can take positive action.

» aclunbraska.org/police_accountability

Over 4,600 people have downloaded **Mobile Justice Nebraska**, our free community empowerment tool. This smartphone app tells you about your rights and lets you record interactions with law enforcement and send to the ACLU for review.

aclunbraska.org/mobilejustice



WORKING WOMEN IN NEBRASKA

With a woman as the presidential nominee of a major political party, some have said that the glass ceiling for women has finally been broken. While tremendous strides have been made, there is still work to do in Nebraska and around the country.



Photo: Tim Butz

PAY EQUITY

Thanks to the leadership of Senators Heath Mello and Tanya Cook, Nebraska women won't have to wait until 2066 for equal pay. A 2015 study from the National Women's Law Center showed that Nebraska women earned 80 cents per every dollar earned by men for similar jobs. Legislation the ACLU helped draft and pass will strengthen our equal pay laws to ensure equal work deserves equal pay.

BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

In 2015 the ACLU of Nebraska helped draft and pass one of the strongest bills in the nation to provide equal opportunity and job protections for pregnant and breastfeeding employees. In 2016 we are partnering with public health experts to empower working moms to know their rights in the workplace.

FAMILY LEAVE

Aside from the federal Family Medical Leave Act, Nebraska has very few protections and work supports in place for working families after birth of a child or to care for a family member.

HEALTH CARE

When it comes to reproductive healthcare, Nebraska fails women. Nebraska places many unnecessary barriers to abortion access, fails to take advantage of programs to expand access to contraception, and only provides minimal outreach and funding for STI screenings or treatments.

Join us
to celebrate
50 years

of defending
freedom in
Nebraska

ANNUAL EVENT | Get your ticket today! aclunebraska.org/celebration

September 15, 2016
6:00 pm social hour
7:00 pm program
Heavy hors d'oeuvres & cash bar

Livestock Exchange Bldg.
4920 South 30th Street
Omaha, NE 68107

2016 Award Winners

- Carol Gendler
- Omaha & Lincoln Chambers of Commerce
- Senator Heath Mello & Senator Tanya Cook

Featuring **Louise Melling** | Deputy Legal Director of the ACLU & Director of the ACLU Center for Liberty.

JOIN OUR BOARD

Board elections happen every April. If interested in joining our Board of Directors or to see a list of upcoming meetings visit: aclunebraska.org/board

PRIVACY POLICIES

We care about your privacy. View our privacy policy at aclunebraska.org/privacypolicy