

# DEFENDER'S DEBRIEF

UPDATING YOU ON THE RIGHTS & LIBERTIES THAT YOU DEFEND

ACLUNEBRASKA.ORG / 402.476.8091 / MARCH 2016



## ACLU Leads at the Legislature on a Broad Range of Civil Liberties Issues

- Nearly **5,000 Nebraskans have signed petitions** asking law makers to expand reproductive freedom, end mass incarceration and juvenile solitary confinement, and protect the rights of LGBT Nebraskans.
- In 2015 **ACLU of Nebraska supporters like you spoke out like never before and it led to historic victories** – repeal of the death penalty, drivers licenses for dreamers, an end to Voter ID, and improved protections for pregnant workers – **your voice is needed again this year.**

We are leading the way on our campaign for smart justice to end mass incarceration. We continue to monitor the inhumane and unconstitutional conditions that abound in our crisis riddled prison system. Proposals from the Department of Corrections and Governor Ricketts are too little and too late. If the Legislature fails to enact meaningful front-end sentencing reforms or to make significant investments in capacity, programming, and services – all the topics of bills before the legislature – the ACLU will need to explore sweeping reforms through litigation.

**Read about our ground breaking investigation into solitary confinement and young Nebraskans on page 2.**



The NAACP, the NRA and think tanks from many places on the political spectrum joined together to support Sen. Tommy Garrett's civil forfeiture reform bills. At the press conference, Sen. Garrett expressed his gratitude to the ACLU for making reform possible.



A bipartisan group of Nebraska lawmakers introduced a package of bills aimed at allowing Nebraskans to take control of their privacy (l to r: Sen. Tyson Larson, Sen. Adam Morfeld, Sen. Matt Hansen, Sen. Laura Ebke). Nebraska was one of 17 states and the District of Columbia participating in this incredible nationwide privacy initiative.

## 2016 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

### OPPOSE

Voter ID

A license to discriminate for adoption agencies

Countless attacks on reproductive freedom

### SUPPORT

Reforming police practices (body cameras, surveillance technology and civil asset forfeiture)

Workplace protections for LGBT Nebraskans

Privacy protections for students and employees

Equal pay for women

**Take Action »**

[aclunebbraska.org/legislation](http://aclunebbraska.org/legislation)



This year we welcomed Christopher "Spike" Eickholt as Government Liaison.

# Growing Up Locked Down

*“It was 23 hours a day - no TV or radio. I had one book, a blanket, a mat and a toothbrush. - Jacob*



*Theresa Cusic is a 2nd Year Law Student at the University of Nebraska College of Law.*

Having worked closely with youth who, more often than not, had negative experiences with the foster care system, the juvenile justice system, or a combination of both, I felt immediately drawn to the idea of researching the use of solitary confinement in Nebraska.

Months of digging through logs culminated in the report [Growing Up Locked Down: Juvenile Solitary Confinement in Nebraska](#). A bill addressing procedural requirements for all juvenile facilities using solitary confinement was introduced after the release of the report. Engaging in such sweeping policy work has demonstrated to me just how critical legal advocacy is in making effective and comprehensive change for those who otherwise would remain voiceless. This has been an experience unlike any I have had before, and it has truly inspired me to continue to advocate for Nebraska's most vulnerable populations.



**Jacob was in solitary confinement three times before he was old enough to vote.**

**Read more stories of juvenile solitary confinement:  
[aclunebraska.org/juvenile\\_stories](http://aclunebraska.org/juvenile_stories)**

## **With a Single Sentence, You Can Defend Freedom Now and Forever**

Right now, by adding the ACLU to your will, you can leave a legacy of liberty for generations to come and defend our freedom today.

Through the Legacy Challenge, simply including a gift in your future plans can qualify the ACLU to receive a 20% cash matching donation today from our generous challenge donor.

For simple bequest language to include in your will and for information on other gifts that qualify for the Legacy Challenge, visit [aclu.org/legacy](http://aclu.org/legacy)

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
**LEGACY  
CHALLENGE**

# A USED COMPUTER ON A DESK MADE FROM A DOOR

Legal Director Amy Miller is leaving a legacy for the ACLU with more than just her decades of service.

When I began volunteering, the ACLU of Nebraska was a staff of two relying on donated computers, and my desk was a door balanced on two small filing cabinets. I started as a law clerk in 1993 when the organization was only 27 years old.

Some things have changed as we turn 50 this year. These days the office is only odd because I have a light saber on my desk. Many things have remained the same. We still rely on the help of volunteer students and law clerks. We're still protecting the Constitution in the courts, in the legislature and in communities. I still get to work on fascinating First Amendment issues like the recent work on behalf of an Islamic Center which the city of Lexington was trying to kick out of their downtown.

The ACLU of Nebraska has been protecting our hard-won rights for half a century and I want to make sure it's here for another 50 years. **That's why I've named the ACLU of Nebraska in my will and am asking you to do the same.**

If we don't, who is going to ensure the next generation has someone to stand up to defend liberty, equality, and justice? The ACLU has been able to grow because of supporters like you.

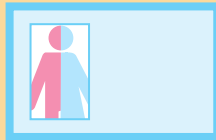
Thank you for standing with us.



*Amy Miller*  
Amy Miller  
Legal Director

## Defending the Rights of Transgender Nebraskans

While visibility for transgender people has increased in Nebraska and around the United States, much work remains. We've successfully intervened on behalf of several transgender students in Nebraska schools. Unfortunately, the Nebraska School Activities Association has passed a policy that effectively prevents transgender students from participating in sports. *Transgender people who have experienced discrimination should contact our office: [aclunebraska.org/gethelp](http://aclunebraska.org/gethelp)*



### IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

While the ACLU successfully negotiated improvements to the process for transgender people updating their driver's license, the process for updating a birth certificate is still prohibitive for many transgender people.



### YOUTH & SCHOOLS

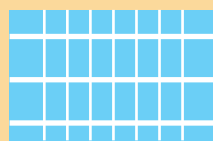
The ACLU has successfully intervened on behalf of transgender youth in Nebraska who have had issues with their schools about bathrooms and dress codes.

[aclunebraska.org/trans\\_youth\\_kyr](http://aclunebraska.org/trans_youth_kyr)



### WORKPLACE & PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

We must pass policies to ensure no one is fired or denied services because of who they are. The ACLU is supporting legislation that would expand existing workplace protections to ensure no one is fired because of who they are or who they love.



### PRISONS

Transgender people in our prison system have a right to be safe and have medical care.



**MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS** Our Transgender Voices video series introduces Nebraskans to their transgender neighbors. [aclunebraska.org/transvoices](http://aclunebraska.org/transvoices)

# RECLAIMING ROE

*“We don’t have anything here we can give you.”*

A young woman in Nebraska needs parental consent for an abortion. But what happens if her parents are abusive or if the young woman has experienced incest? Nebraska’s judicial bypass process exists for that reason but many counties are failing to make this option accessible to vulnerable young women by providing judicial bypass forms in courthouses. We sent investigators to 25 counties in Nebraska and over half the counties we surveyed did not have forms available. When asked in-person about the forms, some county officials even turned our investigators away. A young woman who is in a traumatic situation shouldn’t be turned away when simply asking for a form.

Learn more about our investigation.  
[aclunebraska.org/judicial\\_bypass](http://aclunebraska.org/judicial_bypass)



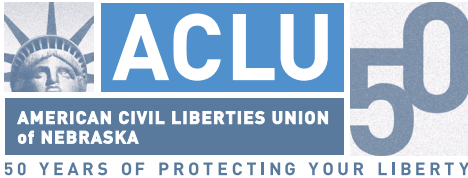
Nearly 200 reproductive freedom supporters joined the ACLU and Film Streams for a screening of *AFTER TILLER*. Following the film, we were joined by filmmaker Martha Shane and journalist Robin Marty for a discussion moderated by Maggie Woods of Inclusive Communities.



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.



We are sharing 50th Anniversary Moments all year long. Do you have a favorite case or memory of the ACLU’s 50 years in Nebraska?

Share your memories and view others: [aclunebraska.org/50years](http://aclunebraska.org/50years)

## Mark Your Calendars!

May 25, 2016  AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK PRESENTS  
**OMAHA GIVES!**  
*powered by the Omaha Community Foundation*

**give**  
To Lincoln Day  
May 26, 2016  
LINCOLN COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

### JOIN OUR BOARD

Board elections are coming up in April. If interested in joining our Board of Directors or to see a list of upcoming meetings visit: [aclunebraska.org/board](http://aclunebraska.org/board)

### PRIVACY POLICIES

We care about your privacy. View our privacy policy at [aclunebraska.org/privacypolicy](http://aclunebraska.org/privacypolicy)