

THE ASCENT

ADVANCING EQUALITY IN LOUISIANA



ACLU
Louisiana

FEBRUARY 2023

At ACLU-LA, we have long understood that our role is to be a principled visionary – not just to respond to crises but also to create openings for change. Real change begins when we ALL come together to turn America's most cherished principles into reality. We are a movement, and when we join forces in the fight for civil rights, our collective power is unstoppable.

We are thrilled to debut this newsletter during Black History Month as we pay tribute to the triumphs and legacies of Black Americans throughout our nation's history. While we celebrate their great achievements, we also bear witness to America's truth – one that we know is rife with discrimination and abuse. We are constantly reminded that the South is still ground zero in the fight for equal justice for all, and we have much work to do together in defense of human dignity. The Ascent is a place where we can do just that – we intend for this to be a tool for learning, connection, inspiration, and much more.



AS THE SOUTH GOES...

INSIGHTS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ALANAH ODOMS

Our calling to defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights must carry with it a corresponding duty to address racial and gender injustice in all its forms.

At the ACLU of Louisiana, we refuse to shy away from the truth that the Constitution betrayed the ideals it so eloquently set forth. We stand firm in our commitment to grapple with the painful truth, stated powerfully by Michelle Alexander: "The land of the free was forged out of slavery and genocide."

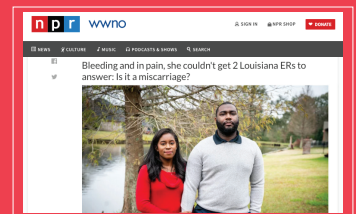
[READ MORE ABOUT OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING



ACLU of Louisiana's Executive Director Alanah Odoms appeared on MSNBC to talk about Tyre Nichols and ongoing police violence

[VIEW](#)



Louisiana's vague abortion laws leave doctors afraid to provide life-saving care, listen to a first-hand experience on NPR

[READ](#)



The Department of Justice has found that Louisiana routinely holds incarcerated people beyond their release dates in violation of the Constitution, Louisiana Illuminator has the story

[READ](#)

SAVE THE DATE

FEB
18

FEBRUARY 18: Orleans Parish Special Primary Election for State Representative, 93rd District

Polls are open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.

MAR
6

MARCH 6: Chisom v. State of Louisiana Oral Argument

Please join us for the oral argument of Chisom v. State of Louisiana at the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans. The argument will take place at 9:00 am in the East Courtroom. The case implicates important questions about voting rights and could determine the future of representation for many African American voters in Louisiana.

APR
10

APRIL 10: Louisiana Legislative Session Begins

The 2023 Regular Legislative Session will convene at noon on Monday, April 10, 2023. Final Adjournment is no later than 6:00 pm on Thursday, June 8, 2023.

LOUISIANA IMMIGRATION BY THE NUMBERS



ACLU of Louisiana has presented **more than 3,000 detainees** with Know Your Rights information, and will continue **bi-monthly** visits to detention centers over the next year

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IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Last year, the ACLU of Louisiana joined the National Immigration Project, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and the Southern Poverty Law Center in launching a legal rights initiative to inform people detained in Louisiana of their rights to seek relief in federal courts. The partners have met with more than 3,000 people at six of Louisiana's eight U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities. They have also created and distributed "Pro Se" materials in eight languages at the ICE facilities.

The initiative was developed in response to the tremendous increase in immigrant detention since the early 2000s, particularly in Louisiana, where for-profit private prisons benefit from the detention. ACLU of Louisiana and its coalition partners continue to visit the ICE facilities regularly, ensuring that the people detained understand their legal rights.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS WORK](#)

PARTNER NEWS

ATTN: NEW ORLEANS –

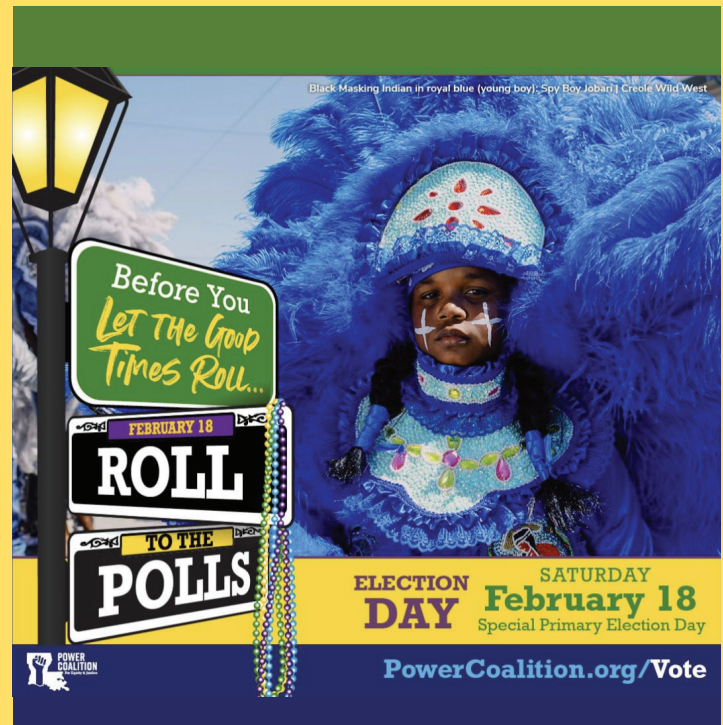
Our community partners at Power Coalition For Equity & Justice want to remind you about the upcoming special election this **Saturday, Feb. 18th!**

In their continuing effort to educate voters, Power Coalition has developed a sample ballot for the Orleans Parish Special Election on February 18, 2023. Their ballots are always broken down by parish, and they include descriptions of the responsibilities of the positions up for election as well as the text of local proposals.

[VIEW A SAMPLE BALLOT](#)

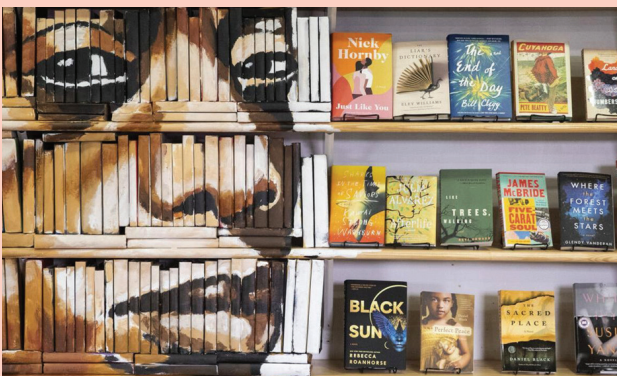


Power Coalition For Equity & Justice is a coalition of community organizations who work together to educate and empower voters across Louisiana. Through their voter engagement and organizing work, they seek to unify our collective voices into a stronger, more cohesive force that can successfully advocate for an agenda of shared values and issues.



LAGNIAPPE

Oprah's Book Club recently featured New Orleans' very own **Baldwin & Co.**, a black-owned independent bookstore serving individuals, schools, businesses, organizations, and more using the power of books to inspire social justice. Inspired by James Baldwin, this vibrant community hub is a center for intellectual discovery where authors, readers, artists, and activists gather in a welcoming, supportive environment. If you're in New Orleans and looking for a few more titles to add to your library, check out [@baldwinandcompany!](#)



[Photo by Sophia Germer, NOLA.COM, The Times-Picayune | The New Orleans Advocate]