



# the TORCH

Vol. 45 | No. 2 | Spring 2010

The Newsletter of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico

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## “Your Papers Please!”

### **What are the implications of Arizona’s new “show me your papers” law for New Mexicans?**

It’s an important question to consider since Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed SB 1070, the discriminatory and un-American law that requires all Arizona state and municipal police to request proof of citizenship or lawful residence based only on “reasonable suspicion” that an individual is in the country unlawfully. Essentially, the law encourages, even demands, racial profiling, as police officers are most likely to develop suspicion based on criteria such as skin color, language or ethnicity. What other criteria can they use?

Under this law, people who look or sound “foreign” are more likely to be stopped for minor infractions—having a broken taillight, jaywalking or having an overgrown lawn—and then asked for their papers. This means that U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike will be required to carry documents on them at all times that prove their legal residency. These tactics are the hallmarks of a “police state,” more often associated with totalitarian regimes.

The ACLU and other civil rights groups have filed a challenge in federal court to stop the law from taking effect on July 29th. The lawsuit is based on the grounds that SB 1070 violates the



Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of equal protection by inviting law enforcement to target people based on their race, ethnicity or language. The suit also claims that the law interferes with the federal government’s authority to regulate and enforce immigration laws and therefore violates the supremacy clause of the Constitution.

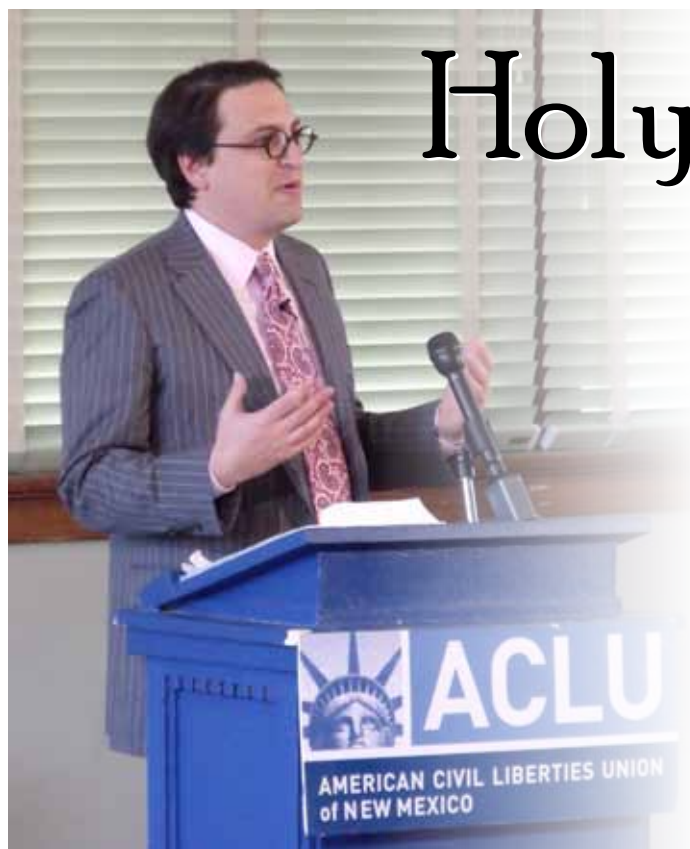
Meanwhile, thousands of New Mexicans travel to Arizona for work, vacation or merely to pass through, and, unless the law is stopped from going into effect, we will not have valid “papers” under SB 1070.

In the interest of public safety, the State of New Mexico does not require proof of legal residence to obtain a driver’s license, rendering our

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## Holy Hullabalooos

What do a motorcycle-riding Amish man, a Santaria animal sacrifice and an imagined golf course debate on school prayer between Justices Kennedy and Scalia have in common? If you answered, “the ACLU-NM Annual Meeting,” then you were probably one of the 100 people who showed up at the Harwood Art Center on May 22nd to hear special guest Jay Wexler speak. Wexler, a humorist, author and constitutional law professor at Boston University, regaled the audience with excerpts from his new book, *Holy Hullabalooos: A Road Trip to the Battle Grounds of the Church/State Wars*. The book is an account of his adventures tracking down the people and places responsible for some of the most

*Left: Jay Wexler at the 2010 annual meeting*

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Visit [www.aclu-nm.org](http://www.aclu-nm.org) to learn more about our work!



## THE TORCH

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## “Papers Please”

Continued from page 1

licenses useless as identification in Arizona. When you consider that state drivers' licenses are far and away the most widely used and accepted form of identification in the country, this places any New Mexican visiting Arizona at greater risk for interrogation, detention and possible unlawful searches and seizures. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, we may find ourselves in the bizarre position of needing a valid U.S. passport to safely travel from one U.S. state to another.

It's outrageous that New Mexicans are more likely to be harassed by Arizona law enforcement because of one of the things we treasure most about our state—our cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity. According to recent census data, more than 40 percent of New Mexico's population is Hispanic, the majority of whom were born in the United States but still speak Spanish as a primary or secondary language.

Fearing police harassment and worse, two New Mexicans joined the class action lawsuit that the ACLU, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and National Immigration Law Center filed against SB 1070 on May 17<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the group filed a preliminary injunction to prevent the law from taking place on June 4<sup>th</sup>. The New Mexican plaintiffs—the ACLU-NM's own Vicki Gaubeca and Arizona State University student Jesús Cuauhtémoc Villa—both hold New Mexico drivers' licenses and travel frequently between Arizona and New Mexico for work or studies and to visit friends and family members.

Gaubeca was born in Mexico and is a dual U.S.-Mexico national. “Since I only carry my New Mexico driver's license when in Arizona, a law enforcement officer would be forced to ask me for my country of birth,” explains Gaubeca. “I worry about what would happen next.”

A law like SB 1070 is unlikely to pass in the New Mexico legislature, but recent developments in the City of Albuquerque have many people concerned that local municipalities may move ahead with policies and ordinances based on racial profiling. On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry announced that Immigration and

Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents will maintain a permanent, 24-hour presence in the Prisoner Transport Center and will check the immigration status of every person who is arrested on suspicion of a crime. ACLU-NM believes that this ill-conceived policy will jeopardize public safety by making victims or witnesses of crime afraid to go to the police for fear that their immigration status will be examined.

When he announced the new policy, Mayor Berry stated that victims or witnesses will not be checked for immigration status if they come forward to report a crime to the police, however, most people do not make the distinction between

law enforcement officials and jail authorities. ACLU-NM fears that this new policy will reinforce the immigrant community's existing perception that local law enforcement officials enforce federal immigration law.

As Albuquerque becomes increasingly cozy with ICE, the Santa Fe County

Jail takes the opposite approach and refuses to allow ICE agents unfettered access to their facilities because they believe that they target inmates based on race. Santa Fe County Jail Director, Annabelle Romero, was recently quoted in the Albuquerque Journal, saying, “The individuals they do select to interview are mostly Hispanic and have hyphenated names. The way it was conducted I thought was unfair.”

Romero also claims that ICE officials don't always properly identify themselves when interviewing prisoners, and prisoners are often unaware that they are speaking with immigration enforcement agents.

The developments in Arizona have taught us that nothing exists in a vacuum. When Arizona passes a discriminatory law, the impact is felt well beyond state borders. In an increasingly hostile, anti-immigrant climate, it is essential for New Mexicans to remain vigilant against laws, policies and practices that violate the constitution, promote racial profiling and diminish public safety. When legislators and policy makers propose unfair, unconstitutional laws, we hope you will stand with the ACLU in saying, ¡No!, what happens in Arizona stops in Arizona.



## ACLU Ambassadors Wanted

Development Director Kathleen MacRae is looking for a handful of volunteers to assist with a fundraising campaign to be launched in September 2010. Comprehensive training and support provided. If you love to talk about civil liberties, you are a perfect candidate for this fun, important work. Please call Kathleen at 505-266-5915 x1001 or email [kmacrae@aclu-nm.org](mailto:kmacrae@aclu-nm.org).

## Executive Director's Notes

### Immigration: In Search of a Positive Solution



#### A Message from Executive Director Peter Simonson

**Our ACLU-NM chapter in Silver City recently held a well-publicized meeting to discuss Arizona's new immigration law. The gathering attracted opponents as well as supporters of SB 1070, including one who asked: "The ACLU always seems to be against things. Do you ever have any positive ideas?"**

That critique could apply to almost any area of the ACLU's work, not just immigration. Our mission is to ensure that all levels of government pass and enforce laws that are consistent with the country's values, so we say 'no' when the government takes an action that violates the constitution. Nevertheless, let's consider the critic's question from an immigration policy perspective.

Most Americans would agree that the U.S. immigration system is broken. In recent years, the government has spent billions of dollars to deport immigrants who are here without proper authorization, or prevent them from entering the country in the first place. But workplace raids that target workers based on race, deportations without a fair hearing and indefinite detention prior to deportation are unconstitutional. They are out of step with American values of fairness and equality and do little to staunch, or even temper, immigration flows. Only the economy can do that.

A 2004 study by the Pew Hispanic Center shows that Mexican immigration to the U.S. between 1992 and 2004 tracked precisely with the U.S. employment rate. During this period, the unauthorized share of the immigration flow overtook the number of authorized immigrants entering the country. *This despite a more than 300 percent growth in the budget for immigration enforcement.* In 2006, immigration into the country peaked and steadily declined ever since. According to Pew research, between 2006 and 2008 unauthorized immigration from Mexico to the U.S. declined by at least 40%. The recent economic downturn has helped to continue that downward trend.

What the government's enforcement-focused immigration policy *has* accomplished is the creation of a separate class of people who are vulnerable to civil rights abuses such as racial profiling, illegal arrests and detentions and denial of due process.

If the immigration problem is framed as one of finding a more effective way to rid the country of undocumented immigrants, no, the ACLU-NM doesn't have positive ideas to add to the mix. Imagine what it would take to purge 12 million immigrants from the U.S. What kind of country would we have to become to achieve such a mass displacement of people? We only need to look to Arizona to know that this goal cannot be accomplished without the mass suspension of constitutional rights.

If we allow the government to deny due process to some people, the rights and freedoms of all people are threatened. Instead of following Arizona, we call upon Congress to rectify some of the egregious immigration practices set in place by the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, including mandatory detention of immigrants for minor crimes; delegation of immigration enforcement and verification to states and localities; and denial of judicial review to immigrants facing deportation and permanent separation from U.S. citizen family members.

ACLU-NM can get behind immigration reform that comports with due process, the Constitution and international human rights norms. We need to set aside racism, acknowledge the real-life circumstances of immigrant families and capitalize on the benefits they offer the country. Immigration reform must bring immigrants out of the shadows and offer them opportunities to contribute to the advancement of our nation—by learning English, by pursuing citizenship, by paying taxes. There is a win-win solution to the current "immigration problem" if we remember that one of our country's greatest strengths is that we are a nation of immigrants.



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## Upcoming Events

### June 26

#### Santa Fe LGBT Pridefest

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Santa Fe Plaza

To volunteer call Diane at (505) 982-8181

### August 15

#### Freedom of Expression in the Arts

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe

#### Panelists:

- **Aden Fine**, National ACLU 1st Amendment Senior Staff Attorney
- **Teresa Gomez**, Adjunct Professor SW Indian Polytechnic Institute Native American Literature, History of Indian Education and awarding winning writer and playwright
- **Brent Michael Davids**, American Indian film composer
- **Susie Sonflieth**, Librarian at the Santa Fe Public Library

#### Moderated by:

**Bird Runningwater**, Director of Native American Programs for the Sundance Film Institute

#### Sponsored by:

- ACLU-NM
- The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture
- Friends of the Santa Fe Public Library
- National Indian Telecommunications Institute.

*Continued in page 6 sidebar*

## Holy Hullabaloo

*Continued from page 1*

controversial Supreme Court cases involving the first amendment protection against the establishment of religion and the free exercise of religion.

In his presentation, Wexler offered a unique blend of compelling, witty story telling and easy to understand explanations of the murky, often turbulent legal waters of church and state separation. His entertaining and informative take on First Amendment religious issues and the lively question and answer session that followed left one thing clear: how the courts define and maintain the separation of church and state is still evolving and as controversial as ever.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees our right to freely exercise our religious beliefs and prohibits the government from establishing a state religion or becoming entangled in religious matters in which it does not have a legitimate interest. As a nation, we chose to enshrine religious freedom in our constitution because many of our founders were critical of church power and influence in Europe or concerned about religious persecution.

Despite our country's proud tradition of religious diversity and tolerance, vigilance against government officials' attempts to impose a particular view of morality or religion on others is always required. Over the years, ACLU-NM has stood up against inappropriate school sanctioned prayer, unlawful suppression of street preaching, attempts to inject religious morals into reproductive healthcare policy and many other similar violations of the constitution.

In recent months, ACLU-NM has challenged a series of church and state separation incidents throughout the state. Hodayah Johnson, an inmate at the Regional Correctional Center (RCC) in Albuquerque, alerted us that RCC refused to provide him kosher meals or permit visits



**A constitutional monument?**

from a rabbi. Johnson, an African American, has been practicing Judaism his entire life, but RCC staff refused to accept that his beliefs were sincere because of his race. ACLU-NM filed a legal complaint to secure the same religious accommodations required under the law that are afforded to other inmates in RCC. Johnson is now receiving kosher meals after five months of eating only tuna fish that he purchased at the commissary.

ACLU-NM is investigating another church/state issue in Albuquerque's Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) where cell block D-4 is commonly known as the "God pod." The cell block is ostensibly an interfaith initiative, where inmates participate in faith-based rehabilitation programs and other religious activities, but it is largely dominated by one local fundamentalist Christian prison ministry. Recently, a Jewish inmate was assigned to the "god pod" where fellow inmates and corrections officers threatened him with punishment when he refused to participate in Christian prayers and activities. ACLU-NM is currently discussing with MDC how

they can provide religious services and programs to inmates in a way that is consistent with the First Amendment.

Violations of church and state separation in New Mexico aren't confined to jails and prisons. In January, a controversy erupted in Clayton, NM over the proposed placement of a monument featuring the Ten Commandments at the county courthouse. Supporters claim that it is a "constitutional monument," not a religious monument and therefore its placement on courthouse grounds isn't a government endorsement of religion. However, re-branding the Ten Commandments as a "constitutional monument" is a transparent attempt to disguise its overt religious nature. The Supreme Court ruled that placing biblical laws on government property is only permissible when it is clearly displayed in a historical context. After pressure from concerned community members and ACLU-NM, the county commission is expected to scrap plans for installing the monument.

### STREET ARTS

*A Celebration of Hip Hop Culture & Free Expression*






**FALL 2010** Visual Art • Spoken Word • Music • Film & more

**ACLU-NM** has teamed up with 516 ARTS and other local arts organizations to present STREET ARTS: A Celebration of Hip Hop Culture & Free Expression during October and November 2010 in Albuquerque, featuring local, national and international artists in a major exhibition at 516 ARTS, performing and literary arts events, mural projects, tours of street arts projects, panel discussions, workshops, a Spoken Word Festival and a Hip Hop Film Festival.

# The *NEW* **aclu-nm.org**

**Whether** you want to sound off on an issue or learn more about your rights, the ACLU of New Mexico's new and improved web site was built with *you* in mind. The civil liberties news you want is now presented online with a fresh look, easy navigation and interactive features that invite you to join the discussion.

*Enhanced navigation* makes getting to where you want to go a breeze.

*Featured content.* This is where we put important stuff that you'll definitely want to know about.

Looking for anything and everything related to the *issues* you care most about? Look no further.

*Seek and ye shall find.*



All the latest ACLU-NM *multimedia* is right at your fingertips. Take 'er for a spin!

Check out upcoming ACLU-NM shindigs on our new *events calendar*

*Stay up to date* with all the breaking civil liberties news in New Mexico and around the nation. You can also use our RSS feeds to have news fresh off the ACLU-NM press delivered straight to your email inbox or online reader.

Visit the *Freedom Forum* blog for in-depth commentary on civil liberties topics. As you know, we're all about free expression here at ACLU-NM. That's why we've opened up all our posts to your comments so you can say what's on your mind.

*We are a democratic nation,* and democracy means voting! To do our part, we have added fun polls that you can take to find out how you stack up against other online community members.

## Events Continued

### OCTOBER

#### 2010 Bill of Rights Celebration

**October 9**  
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Albuquerque Museum of  
Art and History

Save the date for our  
premiere event of 2010 and  
join us to celebrate  
freedom in New Mexico with  
an evening of food, drink  
and music.

### November 6

#### STREET ARTS: Diction and Contra Diction

7:30 PM  
at the KiMo Theatre  
in Albuquerque

Featuring Cecil Taylor,  
Amiri Baraka, Idris Goodwin  
and Chaz Bojorquez

Don't miss Diction and  
Contra Diction, an evening  
of poetry, performance,  
music and graphic arts in  
celebration of hip-hop  
culture and free expression.

Visit the [aclu-nm.org](http://aclu-nm.org)  
events calendar for a  
special Diction and Contra  
Diction preview.

## RCBR Dispatch

### An Evening with Dolores Huerta

Over 300 people attended the ACLU-NM sponsored event, "Reclaiming Our Civil Rights on the Border: An Evening with Dolores Huerta" on Tuesday, April 13th at the Court Youth Center in Las Cruces. Featuring live music from students at La Academia de Dolores Huerta Charter School and local artist Veronica Carmona, the event was as much a celebration of Dolores Huerta's 80 years of life as it was an inspiring call to action.

Huerta was one of the seminal organizers of the farm workers' rights movement in the 1960s, fighting alongside civil rights icon César Chávez for fair wages and better conditions for laborers in California's produce industry. In 1960, she co-founded the United Farm Workers Association and directed the organization's national grape boycott five years later. The boycott resulted in the entire California table grape industry signing a three-year collective bargaining agreement in 1970. For over 60 years Huerta has been a vibrant and outspoken activist fighting for workers rights, LGBT rights, women's rights, economic justice and immigration reform.

ACLU-NM's Regional Center for Border Rights (RCBR) Director Vicki Gaubeca set the context for Huerta's speech by describing the rapid increase in border enforcement resources over the past fifteen years which threaten the civil liberties of residents living within 100 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border. Huerta followed up Vicki by challenging the audience to find their own power and use it to organize for progressive change along the border.

"You have power in your person," said Huerta, "Nobody is going to make changes for you. You are the only one who can change your life."



RCBR Director Vicki Gaubeca (Left) and Dolores Huerta (Right)

Huerta encouraged building collective power by joining movements such as the peace movement, the LGBT movement and the women's movement with the immigrant rights movement. She also highlighted the importance of speaking out and educating others about why immigration reform is needed to make the United States a more just and humane nation.

Huerta suggested we start by looking at U.S. economic policies which have led to social injustice for our neighbors to the South and created a push factor for immigration to the United States. Huerta's inspiring call to action for border communities to take back the constitution culminated with an energized audience chanting, "Si, se puede!" (Yes, we can!) —the ubiquitous activist phrase that she herself coined.



## Double Your Impact in 2010

A portion of your next gift to the ACLU-NM can now be doubled. Just like that, \$500 becomes \$1,000, or \$5,000 becomes \$10,000—all to support our critical work defending freedom and fighting for equality here in New Mexico.

The matching funds for this generous program are made available by the national ACLU. The dollar for dollar match applies to a 25% increase in support or a minimum of \$500 over last year's giving. Here are a few examples:

- In 2009, you gave ACLU-NM \$250. This year your gift of \$750 triggers a match from the national office of \$500. Total support provided to ACLU-NM equals \$1,250.
- Your family generously supports the ACLU with a contribution of \$2,500 every April. This year with an additional gift of \$625 (25% of \$2,500), national ACLU will also kick

in \$625. As a result, you have given and leveraged \$3,750 to support the work of ACLU-NM. Thank you!

This program is available to supporters in New Mexico because we are a key state in the plan to expand the ACLU's presence in strategic areas of the country. The ACLU has a history of taking visionary, principled stands on the most pressing issues of the day and, as a result, we help create a future for America that is more just and free. With your help, we will continue to preserve the principles of liberty embodied in our constitution. Please consider making a gift today.

All gifts made to the ACLU-NM Foundation are tax-deductible. The base amount used to determine the match is calculated on the ACLU-NM fiscal year that ran from April 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010. If you would like more information about this program, please contact Kathleen MacRae at 505-266-5915 Ext. 1001 or [kmacrae@aclu-nm.org](mailto:kmacrae@aclu-nm.org).

- Kathleen MacRae, *Development Director*

## Legal Highlights



The ACLU-NM Legal Department litigates 30 to 40 cases per year in order to advance and defend civil liberties in the State of New Mexico. You can see our full docket and learn more about our work on our website at <http://aclu-nm.org/tag/legal-advocacy-and-litigation/>.

### Defending Student Free Speech

Most people recognize that teenagers occasionally exaggerate when they are upset. However, one high school girl in Ojo Caliente, NM learned the hard way that not everyone can tell the difference between teenage hyperbole and a legitimate threat. When Raphaela Viereck, 15, posted a tongue-in-cheek “death threat” against the school IT administrator—she wrote that she wanted to strangle him, followed by a smiley face :) —Mesa Vista School District suspended her for ten days.

Viereck, a model student on the school honor roll, wrote the post from her home computer in a moment of frustration after the IT administrator blocked school computer access to the online art community, deviantART.com. Viereck regularly displayed her artwork on the Web site and was upset that she could no longer use the school’s broadband connection to upload her art. She never dreamed that anyone who wasn’t part of the art community would read her post, much less take it seriously. She was wrong.

The school not only suspended Viereck for ten days; they also informed her that she faced possible expulsion. Feeling that this response was a gross overreaction to the point of violating her free speech rights, Viereck’s parents contacted the ACLU-NM legal staff and asked that they represent her at the disciplinary hearing that would determine her fate. ACLU-NM argued that the school district’s response was a knee-jerk reaction that took none of the specifics of the incident into account when meting out punishment. When forced to examine the incident closely, the school district agreed and returned Viereck to her studies.



Raphaela Viereck

“We’re so pleased that the ACLU system worked so well, thanks I believe to you and your attention to detail,” said Raphaela’s father, Tim Viereck. “It’s amazing these days to find that someone is actually truly paying attention. Your presence was so very helpful...I think it sent a very clear message to the school system”

*ACLU- NM Staff Attorney Leon Howard and Managing Attorney Laura Schauer Ives represented Viereck at the hearing.*

### Protecting Access to Libraries in Albuquerque

In a case brought by ACLU-NM, U.S. District Judge M. Christina Armijo ruled that Albuquerque’s regulation banning sex offenders from public libraries is unconstitutional. The court determined that the ban infringed too broadly upon the First Amendment right to receive information and creates “an unacceptable risk of the suppression of ideas.”

“No one questions the City’s purpose of ensuring public safety, but this regulation sacrificed library access for too many people who present no threat to library goers,” said ACLU-NM Executive Director Peter Simonson. “A regulation like this must be narrowly tailored if it is going to infringe on a right as fundamental as the public’s ability to receive information. For many people, public libraries are, as one court put it, ‘the quintessential locus of the receipt of information.’”

Unfortunately, not only did the city decide to appeal the court’s ruling, just weeks later Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry announced that he is reinstating the ban with slight modifications. Under the amended ordinance, registered sex offenders are now banned from all libraries except the main branch on Thursdays and Saturdays. ACLU-NM came out strongly against the new ban, maintaining that the ordinance is still overbroad and insufficiently tailored to meet a specific public safety need. ACLU-NM legal staff is considering possible responses to the new ban and defending the original ruling against the city’s appeal.

*ACLU- NM Cooperating Attorneys Brendan Egan and George Bach represented the plaintiff in the original case. Managing Attorney Laura Schauer Ives is handling the appeal.*



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Receive email alerts and take action on key civil liberties issues when it matters most.

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action



### SUPPORT THE ACLU!

The need has never been greater for freedom-loving people to join the ACLU and take a stand against the growing threats to our most cherished liberties.

Become a card-carrying member of the ACLU or renew your membership today!

You can join or renew online at [aclu-nm.org](http://aclu-nm.org) or contact the Development Department at (505) 266-5915 ext. 1001 or [supportus@aclu-nm.org](mailto:supportus@aclu-nm.org).



To make a donation online right away, visit [www.aclu-nm.org](http://www.aclu-nm.org) and click the **Donate Now** button. You may also fill out the envelope accompanying this newsletter to mail your contribution.

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Las Cruces, NM  
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Fax: (575) 527-0111

Visit us on the web:  
[www.aclu-nm.org](http://www.aclu-nm.org)

## New Staff



### Valerie Torrez Joins ACLU-NM Development Staff

The ACLU of New Mexico has hired Albuquerque native Valerie Torrez as its new Development Assistant. Her main responsibilities will be to work closely with Development Director, Kathleen MacRae, organizing interaction with members and donors, coordinating events and launching a volunteer initiative.

Valerie attended the Albuquerque Academy and the University of Portland (UP) in Oregon. At UP, she earned a BBA, cum laude, with specialties in Global Business, Marketing and Management. To date, Valerie is the only Business Major to graduate from the UP Honors College with endowed awards for Excellence in Business.

After school, Valerie moved to Washington, DC and worked as a manager of research for a lobbying firm. She then completed two years of AmeriCorps service in Hartford, Connecticut and New York City. Valerie also worked for Teach for America's National Institute Data and Operations Team in New York City, administered an Emergency Food Program in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and taught English as a Second Language in Milan, Italy.

Most recently, Valerie was the New York-based Program and Administrative Officer for Mercy Corps, managing over \$3 million in federal, state and local grants as well as coordinating fundraising events for the Action Center to End World Hunger.

Valerie is excited to be back home and working with ACLU-NM. She is active in the Albuquerque running community and currently training for her first half-marathon. She is also interested in international travel; most recently visiting Thailand and Cambodia and planning a trip to Bulgaria sometime in the next year.



### Leon F. Howard Joins ACLU-NM Legal Staff

The ACLU of New Mexico has hired Albuquerque attorney Leon Howard as its new Staff Attorney. Leon is a proud graduate of Highland High School and a product of the University of New Mexico School of Law. While in law school, Leon was a mentor to at-risk minority students, served as a research assistant for the UNM School of Law Innocence and Justice Project and was a law student advocate for New Mexico's adjudicated youth. He also served as president of the Black Law Student Association and the Student Bar Association.

Before joining ACLU-NM, Leon clerked for Freedman, Boyd, Hollander, Goldberg & Ives, PA. where he worked on cases involving complex constitutional issues such as defamation, prohibition and preemption. After joining the bar, Leon became Assistant District Attorney in the First Judicial District of New Mexico; primarily prosecuting domestic violence and DWI cases in northern New Mexico.

"We are all fortunate and extremely excited to have Leon join our legal team," said ACLU-NM Managing Attorney Laura Ives. "His demonstrated commitment to the state of New Mexico and passion for protecting civil liberties will be tremendous assets to the ACLU of New Mexico."

Leon is also the self-proclaimed "best basketball player at ACLU-NM." As of this writing, this claim remains undisputed.

### ACLU OF NEW MEXICO CHAPTERS

#### Are you part of your local ACLU of New Mexico chapter?

The ACLU of New Mexico has a number of vibrant, active and effective chapters throughout the state. Find an ACLU of New Mexico chapter in your area below.

#### Northern New Mexico Chapter (Santa Fe)

Frank Susman, President  
[LTCSusman@Comcast.net](mailto:LTCSusman@Comcast.net)

#### Southwestern Chapter (Silver City)

Peter Falley, President  
[falley@q.com](mailto:falley@q.com)

#### UNM Law School Chapter (Albuquerque)

Jerry Archuleta, Co-President  
[archulje@law.unm.edu](mailto:archulje@law.unm.edu)

Lou Ann Branch, Co-President  
[branchlo@law.unm.edu](mailto:branchlo@law.unm.edu)