



the TORCH

The Newsletter of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico

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SLAPP SUITS: *Putting a price on* FREE SPEECH

How much does free speech cost?

Most people would laugh this question off as nonsensical—it's in the name; it's free. But Norm Guame of Santa Fe, New Mexico isn't laughing. The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) just sent Guame a \$100,000 bill for speaking out against what he believed amounted to illegal activity by the ISC.

This story starts at the headwaters of the Gila River where it begins its descent down through the rugged canyons of the Gila Wilderness and flows past the state line into neighboring Arizona. The Gila River is unique in that it is the last undammed river of size in New Mexico, and one of the few remaining in the United States. That may change, however, as the Interstate Stream Commission, the government body tasked with protecting, conserving, and developing

waters and streams in New Mexico, prepares a diversion project that would dam the river and use the water for agriculture and urban use in southwestern New Mexico. The project is highly controversial on environmental, practical, and economic grounds, and a spirited opposition has developed to preserve the Gila in its undisturbed state.

Norm Guame is one the project's most vocal critics. A retired engineer and a former director of the ISC from 1997 to 2002, he believes the project is deeply flawed. He testified before the Water and Natural Resources Committee that the project will provide little usable water, be cost prohibitive, and destroy and dewater the wild Gila River. In the course of his work opposing the diversion project, Guame came to realize that the ISC was conducting a great deal of

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Updates from the Front Lines of ABQ Police Reform

Federal monitor selected for APD reform agreement

One of the key players over the next several years in the struggle to reform the troubled Albuquerque Police Department (APD) will be the independent federal monitor appointed by the court to oversee the settlement agreement between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and APD. One of the main short-term goals for the ACLU of New Mexico and the APD Forward coalition—a group of Albuquerque organizations and community members dedicated to reforming APD—was to secure an experienced monitor with a proven track record in monitoring reform agreements like the one we have in Albuquerque. We also felt that it would be crucial for this monitor to come from out of state to enhance impartiality and preclude the possibility that the monitor would have any existing inside connections with New Mexico law enforcement.

The ACLU of New Mexico and APD Forward filed a public records request on all of the individuals and firms who had applied for the monitor position and researched their suitability. On January 13, APD Forward released its top three picks for the role of federal monitor. The following week, the City of Albuquerque and the DOJ announced their top



choice and submitted Public Management Resources—also APD Forward's top pick—to the court for approval.

APD Forward felt Public Management Resources (PMR), was one of two highly qualified candidates for this critical role. Not only does PMR bring extensive experience from monitoring the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and the New Jersey State Police, but in their submissions to the City, they outlined a sophisticated plan for monitoring which included a formal process for community engagement.

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Putting a Price on Free Speech

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the decision making and planning process through a special “Gila subcommittee” without prior public notice.

Believing this to be a violation of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, Guame petitioned a court for a temporary restraining order, alleging that the subcommittee’s work was conducted secretly, with no notice or opportunity for public participation. The judge granted the restraining order, and halted further action by the ISC on the proposal until the alleged violations could be resolved.

The ISC was furious. Afraid that the delay would cause them to miss a 10-year-old deadline to secure 62 million dollars in federal funding for the project, they scrambled to get the restraining order removed. The ISC claimed that Guame’s allegations were unfounded, and slapped him with a countersuit claiming that Guame sought the temporary restraining order “for the wrongful purpose, and with the wrongful intent.” In their counter suit, they demanded that Guame pay more than \$100,000 in damages that they allege his restraining order caused the ISC in associated fees and delays.

Guame vehemently denies the allegations in the ISC’s countersuit:

“My actions have always been a good faith effort to hold the ISC accountable to the laws of our state and the best interest of the people of New Mexico,” said Guame. “Now they’re retaliating against me simply because I spoke out against activities I felt were unlawful.”

One of the key speech rights enshrined in the First Amendment is the right to petition one’s government for the redress of grievances—exactly the sort of activity Guame engaged in when he filed his suit seeking a restraining order. The ISC countersuit serves no purpose other than to punish Guame for exercising his rights, using the courts in a transparent attempt to intimidate him and other critics into silence. This heavy handed intimidation tactic even has a name: Stratigic Law-suits Against Public Participation, or “SLAPP suits.”

SLAAP suits are a classic school yard bully tactic that the big kids (usually large corporations) use to beat up on little kids (usually individuals or advocacy organizations) in order to silence and discourage dissent. Nobody wants to speak out against the bully if they know it means being sued by a high-power corporate litigation team and incurring ruinously high legal costs.

The ACLU of New Mexico, a longtime opponent of SLAPP suits, took up Guame’s case in January and is providing legal defense against the ISC’s countersuit.

“Governments shouldn’t use the courts to bully concerned citizens into silence,” said ACLU-NM Cooperating Attorney Daniel Yohalem, one of the attorneys representing Guame. “People in our country have a fundamental right to petition their government concerning matters of public importance. When the ISC files a lawsuit seeking exorbitant amounts of money in retaliation for the simple act of speaking out, it has a chilling effect on the ability of citizens to participate in public processes.”

One of the things that makes the ISC’s case against Guame unusual is that the ISC is a government agency. Usually, corporations are the main culprits in these types of cases. Yohalem recently told the Albuquerque Journal that in his 27 years as a New Mexico civil rights attorney he’s never seen a public agency sue a private citizen. The Albuquerque Journal editorial board was appropriately alarmed, and came out strongly against the ISC’s lawsuit, writing:

A reasonable person would think the general public has a legitimate stake in knowing how the agency charged with overseeing projects involving the state’s most precious commodity – water – reaches its decisions. ...The commission’s countersuit seems to be a move to punish Gaume for what it says was his use of the open meetings act to achieve a political objective by delaying the project and taking away the possibility of federal funding. But there is no question there is a chilling effect that will be felt by others who would seek to hold the government accountable.

Though this case is the most recent, it is far from the first time that the ACLU of New Mexico has tackled the SLAPP suit issue. In 2000, ACLU-NM legal panelists Jane Gagne and Phil Davis successfully fended off a SLAPP suit that a real estate developer filed against three homeowners associations, accusing them of causing “lost profits” because of their opposition to a proposed big box store shopping center complex on the West Side of Albuquerque.

By 2001, the people of New Mexico were fed up with big corporations using the courts to stifle free speech. A large cross section of New Mexican community members and organizations—including the ACLU of New Mexico—formed a coalition to push for a law to make it harder for bullies to use SLAPP suits against those who oppose them. The ACLU of New Mexico, along with the others involved in the “No-SLAPP Alliance” successfully lobbied the legislature for an Anti-SLAPP law that expedites judicial review and dismissal of SLAPP suits, effectively blunting the teeth of frivolous lawsuits. Bolstered by the Alliance’s advocacy, the bill passed both houses and was signed into law by Governor Gary Johnson.



Middle fork of the Gila River

“This is certainly a full circle kind of moment for us at the ACLU,” said ACLU-NM Executive Director Peter Simonson. “We have the satisfaction of using a law we helped lobby for to help defend one of our own clients. It just goes to show how our integrated approach to protecting liberty can pay off in the long-term.”

“This case in particular also is a perfect example of how the ACLU’s defense of the First Amendment lies at the intersection of all of the other issues that are important to us,” said Simonson. “It’s hard to be an environmentalist if you’re afraid someone will slap you with a lawsuit every time you speak out in defense of the environment. Without Free Speech, we are powerless to affect the changes we want to see in our communities. That’s why we can never let the government, corporations, or anyone else bully us into silence.”

Executive Director's Notes:

Tijerina and Our First Big Case



PETER SIMONSON
Executive Director

New Mexico history is filled with colorful moments, not the least of which is the day, almost fifty years ago, when two dozen men took over the Rio Arriba County courthouse in an effort to reclaim Spanish and Mexican land grants in northern New Mexico. The man who led that raid, Reies Lopez Tijerina, died in January, inviting media to retell the story of Tijerina's florid life and the tumultuous land grant dispute which he touched off.

Overlooked in those accounts is the small part that the ACLU played in New Mexico's land grant history. On the day that Tijerina and his followers burst into the courthouse—shooting two policemen and taking two others hostage—the National Guard stormed a nearby picnic and placed 50 northern New Mexicans—mostly women and children—under detention. Even though the families had nothing to do with the raid, the guardsmen held them at gunpoint in a barbed wire sheep's pen for 48 hours without access to potable water or restrooms.

The year was 1967, just five short years after the founding of an ACLU affiliate in New Mexico. Although the ACLU-NM was run at that time by an all-volunteer staff operating out of living rooms and kitchens, it managed to organize volun-

teer attorneys to represent some of the detained women and children in claims of unlawful arrest against the National Guard. The suit resulted in monetary damages for some of the families, and a measure of justice for the indignities they had suffered.



PHOTO: Tierra Amarilla residents being marched towards the detention camp

Since that time, the ACLU-NM has often played a key role in New Mexico history when civil rights and liberties were at stake. The organization has helped to shut down some of the state's worst detention facilities. We and our allies won the freedom of same-sex couples to marry. The state Medicaid program must pay for medically-necessary abortions because of an ACLU lawsuit. And the list goes on.

The ACLU of today bears little resemblance to the ACLU of 1967. With a staff of over a dozen and offices in Albuquerque and Las Cruces, our capacity to make history is much the greater. But the passion for justice that moved that band of ACLU volunteers to rush to the defense of Tierra Amarilla families burns as brightly today as it did during the height of Tijerina's activism. That's why the ACLU will forever be New Mexico's guardian of liberty.

This envelope is where defending freedom starts.



Like what the ACLU of New Mexico is doing to protect freedom in our state? Generous gifts from supporters like you are what has enabled the ACLU of New Mexico to continue its critical work for more than 50 years. We encourage you to use the envelope provided in this newsletter to invest in the future of freedom here in New Mexico. You can also donate online at www.aclu-nm.org/secure/support-aclu-new-mexico.

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Police Reform

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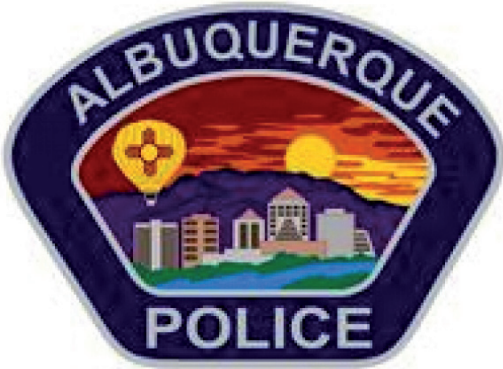
Putting the community at the heart of police reform in Albuquerque

On March 6, the ACLU of New Mexico, Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM), and the Native American Voters Alliance (NAVA) filed a motion to intervene in the settlement agreement between the DOJ and the City of Albuquerque. Were the court to grant this motion, these local community organizations would become parties to the agreement with the City, increasing the community’s say in how police reforms in Albuquerque will be implemented.

“We have always maintained that local community involvement is essential to the success of the effort to reform the Albuquerque Police Department,” said Alexandra Freedman Smith, Legal Director for the ACLU of New Mexico. “The most vulnerable populations in Albuquerque suffer the brunt of unconstitutional policing practices, and their voices must be a part of the conversation. Together, we can strengthen the efforts to build APD into the responsible, community-friendly police force our city deserves.”

The three organizations will act as plaintiffs on behalf of Albuquerque communities that are most vulnerable to police excessive use of force.

- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Mexico will represent Albuquerque community members



- who are experiencing homelessness
- Disability Rights New Mexico will represent people in Albuquerque living with mental illness
- The Native American Voters Alliance will represent the Native American community living in Albuquerque

“Among the names of those whom APD has killed are many people who were living with mental illness,” said Nancy Koenigsburg, DRNM Executive Director. “In order to face and fix this problem, we need to change how law enforcement interacts with people in crisis. That is why it is so important that advocates for people with mental illness have a seat at the table when it comes to reforming our police department.”

“The Native community has long felt unfairly targeted by police in Albuquerque,” said Laurie Weahkee, NAVA Executive Director. “As we move forward in the important work reforming APD, we want to be able to provide input on how the our city’s police can better serve and protect Native people living in Albuquerque.”

If the court accepts the motion to intervene, the ACLU of New Mexico will have a seat at the table, along with DRNM and NAVA, where we can better fight for the kind of substantive, long-lasting reforms that will protect vulnerable communities in Albuquerque and literally save lives by preventing excessive and unnecessary use of force by police.

Albuquerque law firm Freedman, Boyd, Hollander, Goldberg, Urias, & Ward P.A., ACLU-NM legal panel member Phil Davis, and Nicholas Davis are partnering with attorneys from the ACLU and Disability Rights New Mexico on the motion.



www.APDforward.org

News from the Southwestern Chapter

At the January Chapter meeting, held in Deming, the ACLU of New Mexico Southwestern Chapter approved the membership of Bonne Beavers to fill the vacancy that existed on the chapter board. Bonne was a former Staff Attorney at the Center for Justice in Spokane, WA for ten years. Prior to her highly praised career there (cforjustice.org/2012/04/01/the-pillar/), she had served as a Public Defender in Boulder, CO, and a wire service reporter in New Orleans.

Chapter meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of odd-numbered months. The next three meetings are scheduled for 6:00 PM in Silver City on May 14, July 9, and September 10. ACLU members and the public are encouraged to attend. The chapter also plans to have a booth at Silver City’s 4th of July celebration.

The Chapter continues to monitor the Grant County and Luna County Detention Centers. In addition to periodic visits to the jails, the chapter has responded to inquiries from both institutions and, when warranted, informed the ACLU-NM Office of situations. On other occasions we have been able to resolve minor issues through discussions. Anyone interested in chapter activities should contact William Hudson, HC 71 Box 765, San Lorenzo, NM 88041, Williamhudson43@msn.com, (575) 536 3092.

Who Decides: The Courts or the Legislature?

The ACLU’s Battle to Win Physician Aid in Dying in New Mexico

Last year, the ACLU of New Mexico won a favorable ruling from a District Court judge establishing that terminally ill, mentally competent patients have a fundamental right to seek a physician’s aid in dying if their dying process becomes unbearable. However, the Attorney General’s office maintained its position that the issue of physician aid in dying should be decided in the state legislature, not the courts, and appealed the decision to the New Mexico Court of Appeals.

The ACLU of New Mexico firmly believes that the district court got it right: physician aid in dying is a fundamental right. And we don’t just put our fundamental rights to an up or down vote. This January, we went before the New Mexico Court of Appeals and argued that it is the right thing for the courts to allow suffering terminally ill patients more control over the end of their lives.

However, shortly after we presented our arguments, the Albuquerque Journal published an opinion editorial agreeing with the Attorney General’s Office that the decision to allow physician aid in dying in New Mexico should be made by the legislature. Taken aback by the alarming lack of understanding that the Journal demonstrated by its editorial, the ACLU of New Mexico arranged for one of its expert witnesses, Dr. Eric Kress, to respond. Dr. Kress, who is Board Certified in Family Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine, has a full time clinical practice in Missoula, MT and serves as hospice director for several facilities in town.

His editorial appeared in the Albuquerque Journal on February 19 and is reprinted below:

Let Doctors Decide Care for Terminally Ill

It was a difficult experience for me the first time a terminally ill patient asked me to provide physician aid in dying. It was soon after a Montana court ruled that doctors could not be prosecuted for providing aid in dying to terminally ill, mentally competent adults. This patient, a rugged individualist with advanced, terminal ALS, wanted me to write a prescription which he could take to bring about a peaceful death if his suffering became unbearable.

At that time I did not know enough about aid in dying to write a prescription. This once powerful man, who was wasting away to skin and bone, called me a coward for not having the courage and knowledge to help him. He began stockpiling his own pain medication, and soon after hastened his own death by overdose.

This affected me deeply, so I decided to learn all I could about aid in dying. After much research, consultation, and deliberation, I felt confident that I knew enough to write a prescription for a patient who requested it. Since then, over a four year interval, I have written more than 10 prescriptions for terminally ill patients. All of these patients and their families were extremely grateful and thanked me profusely for providing this care to them.

Because of my background, I was called to give expert testimony in New Mexico a little over a year ago concerning the practice. My experience is especially relevant, because like New Mexico, Montana had a court ruling rather than a statute to determine the legal status of the practice. I testified that over the past 18 years of clinical experience in Oregon, Washington, Vermont, Montana, and Hawaii, medical professionals have developed a standard of care governing aid in dying that makes the practice consistent with the rigorous standards of ethical medicine.

That’s why I was disturbed to learn that the Albuquerque Journal editorial board recently published an editorial claiming judges are “ill-equipped” to determine the legality of aid in dying.

“What is ‘terminal?’ Who is ‘competent?’ How do we avoid coercion?,” the editorial board asks. By far the most qualified people to answer these questions are the physicians who spend months or years caring for and getting to know these patients.

The editorial board believes this framework can only be established by the state legislature. In reality, very little medical care is governed by statute—nor should it be. Most people don’t want their legislature voting on the best way to perform a heart transplant, for instance. Had the editorial board revisited the testimony that I and other physician expert witnesses provided to the court, they would have found this framework is already well-established in medical best practices developed through 18 years of clinical experience. This standard of care is then regulated and enforced by state medical boards, the doctor’s desire to do what is right for his/her patient, and all doctors’ motivation to prevent malpractice lawsuits.

A New Mexico district court has already issued a strong and decisive ruling that aid in dying is a fundamental right. If that decision is upheld by higher courts, we should trust New Mexican doctors to adopt the established best practices for physician aid in dying as they would with any other medical procedure.

All of this will be done without any legislative input. All it takes is compassionate, engaged doctors who want to provide their terminally-ill patients autonomy, comfort, and peace of mind at the end of life.



Eric Kress, MD

“In reality, very little medical care is governed by statute—nor should it be. Most people don’t want their legislature voting on the best way to perform a heart transplant, for instance.”



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2015 ACLU-NM Board of Directors Candidates

ACLU of New Mexico Board Members are elected to serve staggered three-year terms with a third of the positions becoming vacant each year. This year, the Board Administration Committee of the ACLU-NM Board of Directors has nominated seven candidates to fill seven board openings. Because there is no competition for the openings, the Committee concluded that there is no need for a vote by the membership. We publish the candidate statements here to introduce the board members who shall begin three-year terms on April 1, 2015.

Mark Ayers

It has been a privilege to be a part on the ACLU-NM board for the past six years. I have served the board in a variety of capacities: Secretary, Chair of the Personnel Committee, Interim Chair of the Development Committee, Advisor for the Youth Advisory Board, and currently National Board Representative. I have truly appreciated the opportunity to be of service.

I welcome the prospect of serving for another three years. I enjoy my service at the National Board Level and have just been elected to the Nominating Committee. I am committed to doing my utmost to represent the interests of our affiliate at the national level with integrity and commitment. Moreover, I want to continue contributing to the ACLU-NM affiliate board.

Ellen Bilodeau

The ACLU of New Mexico defends our constitutional rights in communities across the state while its staff and board members also devote long hours to building the capacity of the organization to continue and expand its work, including a focus on ensuring a truly diverse board of directors. It is an honor to dedicate my time and energy to an organization that gets results.

I have worked to protect the civil liberties and human rights of people in America since I was a child growing up in the Deep South during the Civil Rights Movement. Since that time, my career in non-profit management has been devoted to ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy the civil and basic human rights they are guaranteed by law. I came to New Mexico to prove that segregated services for people with severe disabilities could be replaced by inclusive community services. We successfully fought long-held prejudices and outmoded service models. The people we serve now work at real jobs and enjoy typical lives in the community.

In addition to my work for the statewide organization, as a board member in Northwest New Mexico, I have supported ACLU staff at the local level with campaigns including domestic partnership and marriage equality. In recent years, I have worked on local public awareness campaigns, communicated with local elected officials, and undertaken other successful actions in response to serious issues involving the rights of members of Gallup's very diverse community, including the harassment of the Arab Muslim community following the passage of the USA Patriot Act.

I would like to continue to represent the organization in this part of our state using the skills and connections I have gained through 25 years of work in various advocacy-based organizations. As a longtime member of the organization with a lifetime of fighting for social justice, it has been a pleasure to serve as a board member and officer in New Mexico.

Michelle Chwastiak

I am an associate professor of accounting at the University of New Mexico, Anderson School of Management. Most of my research has focused on how accounting helps to rationalize or normalize fraud in the defense industries, as well as atrocities such as war and torture. My last publications concerned the Bush Administration's "extraordinary rendition" program and the CIA's use of "enhanced interrogation techniques" to extract intelligence from detainees. My research relied extensively on the documents the ACLU acquired through the Freedom of Information Act for the Accountability for Torture project, and the two court cases the ACLU filed on behalf of several victims of the "extraordinary rendition" program. Recently, I have begun researching the militarization of policing in the US, which is also a concern of the ACLU of New Mexico. Thus, my interest in being on the Board of Directors of the ACLU arises from the fact that I share many of the same concerns and passions of the organization. I also admire the work the ACLU does to defend human rights and seek justice for the victims of state crimes. I have excellent accounting, administrative, educational, research and community skills. By joining the Board of Directors I would be able to use these skills to support an organization whose work I strongly believe in.

Joe Sackett

I believe in the work of the ACLU and wish to continue to serve on the board of directors for the New Mexico affiliate because I think civil liberties as guaranteed in our Constitution are fundamental. Without such protections and guarantees, political activity and artistic innovation finally can occur only at the discretion or under the imprimatur of various powers-that-be, which inevitably suppress such activity when it becomes troublesome. If politics and art aren't troublesome, they become corrupt and pointless, and change does not occur. Therefore, the defense of civil liberties is vital, basic work. ACLU does that work. As an educator and artist, I think I bring a useful perspective to the board of ACLU-New Mexico. I've been a board member now for several years, and the experience I've gained will be useful as our affiliate goes forward in some challenging times.

Andy Schultz

I very much would like to remain an active member of the ACLU-NM Board of Directors.

I have served on the Board for the past five years. I have been a member of the Executive Committee for the past two years, and in 2014, I was fortunate to be selected by the Board to serve as Vice-President. In addition to this work, I also continue to serve as a Cooperating Attorney for the ACLU-NM in the area of Church-State issues.

The ACLU-NM has been at the forefront of many of the most highly visible civil rights issues our State has faced in the recent past: immigration reform, equal marriage, police misconduct, freedom of speech and religious liberty. The very breadth of these issues – and the fact that the ACLU-NM is seen as the leading group for effective organization, forceful advocacy and meaningful dialogue – is the primary reason why an active and dynamic Board of Directors is so essential. The Board has been a successful sounding board for debate for many of these difficult concerns, and at the same time, it has served as a careful steward of the organization’s resources.

I am a proud member of the ACLU-NM Board of Directors. I very much would like to continue on the Board in order to assist the ACLU and its essential mission.

Paulina Inigo

I have been a member of the ACLU since 1994. In the last ten years I have intermittently served on the board of directors of my local affiliate. I took a 2-3 year hiatus from the board but returned three years ago. In the interim, I continued to support the organization, read the Torch, the national publication and informative email updates.

The break afforded me time to reflect upon my involvement with the organization. I realized how much I enjoy my involvement in an organization that defends many of the liberties we enjoy in our society. The ACLU keeps me informed about national and local events and the board work affords me the opportunity to make an impact when needed. For me, the right to marriage and APD Forward Campaigns were the two most salient efforts in the last two years. One was successful and the other is still in the works.

It is always enjoyable to work with our staff and fellow Board members. The work on the board allows me to stay informed and continuously learn about current events. The decision to return to the board was correct and it would be a true honor and pleasure to continue my work on the New Mexico ACLU affiliate BOD.

Peter M. Ossorio

During my first term on the ACLU-NM Board of Directors, I was part of a task force crafting our affiliate’s policy on immigration. Last year, I contributed to a task force examining the effects of marijuana prosecutions in New Mexico and helped define our policy on drug legalization. But urgent work remains to be done.

As a former Army officer trained in creating barriers to stop people and vehicles -- and as a former federal prosecutor who proudly worked closely with the Border Patrol – I am worried about the current immoral and ineffective militarization of the border. It affects everyone, not just immigrants.

The corrosive effect of money in politics is currently at work in Las Cruces, where outside radical right forces are trying to recall City Councilors who supported a citizens’ petition to increase the minimum wage. Since the 2010 Citizens United decision, the Supreme Court has upheld still greater influence for the rich and corporations – while attempts at increased funding disclosure have been defeated legislatively.

Thanks to my fellow board members’ intellect and integrity, my views on marriage equality, diversity, and drug penalties have evolved. I would like to continue to add experiential and geographic diversity to ACLU-NM’s consideration of other issues -- and sometimes respectfully offer differing views.

For example, there are strong reasons -- grounded in the ACLU’s history – for the ACLU to oppose a Constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United. However, empirical data also support limitations on equating dollars as speech and conscienceless entities as people -- to preserve the integrity of the vote (including votes for many states’ judges), without which all other civil liberties will be strangled. And so it goes.

APPOINTED BY ACLU-NM BOARD

In the event that a board member vacates their seat before his/her term is complete, the ACLU-NM board appoints a replacement to serve out the remainder of the term. The following board members have been appointed to fill vacancies on the board:

Molly Molloy

I’ve been interested in justice since my childhood in south Louisiana. Injustice lived all around in the poor, mostly African American small town where my father practiced law and served on the parish school board. When I was in 8th grade our schools were finally desegregated and most white students left for “segregation academies.” I learned first hand that separate was never equal: a teacher asked me to help grade papers and I saw that many high school seniors from what had been the black school couldn’t read or write. In the 1980s I lived in Nicaragua during a revolution where poor people struggled against native elites and U.S.-sponsored cold war terror. At home I found an immigration prison had opened up in the pine woods of Louisiana where people were deported daily back to the death squads they had fled. Not a single lawyer or judge in a 200-mile radius spoke Spanish or knew anything about Central American wars, asylum or immigration law. I interviewed asylum seekers and helped to document their cases. Eventually I became a librarian—a profession with intellectual freedom in its DNA. For years I have worked to raise awareness on border issues, especially the violence pushing a new wave of refugees to seek asylum and justice in the US. I’ve provided pro-bono expert testimony in political asylum cases and I work with non-profits that represent asylum seekers. An immigration judge once asked me: Why are you doing this? Simple. I believe in justice. Poor immigrants are those least afforded due process in our system and justice can’t exist without it. For these reasons I want to contribute to the work of ACLU in New Mexico.

Ramon Gonzales

Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve the ACLU of New Mexico Board of Directors. Our community needs a credible, respected, clear voice to guard and advance civil rights and liberties. In New Mexico, the ACLU serves that role with distinction. As a stable, well-run organization with dedicated and talented staff and volunteers, the ACLU has advanced the cause of civil rights and liberties in many critical issues in New Mexico.

I am a New Mexico native from a long-time New Mexico family. I grew up in Albuquerque, attended college in Denver and Stanford Law School. I have practiced employment and labor law for 35 years, first as a member of the Sutin Law Firm in the 80’s. While at Sutin, my good friend, Ray Schowers, introduced me to the important work of the ACLU. More recently, I’ve served as in-house counsel and had leadership roles in the Human Resources Departments

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Have you liked the Regional Center for Border Rights Facebook page yet?

Are border rights issues like immigration reform, border militarization, Border Patrol accountability, and internal checkpoints important to you?

Make sure to ‘like’ our Regional Center for Border Rights Facebook page to get breaking news updates about border issues and learn more about what we’re doing to defend civil liberties in the border region.

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THE TORCH

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Board Candidates

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of two of New Mexico’s largest employers. I have also contributed many years of service to several New Mexico non-profit organizations, frequently at the state and national board level.

I’ve spent my career working in the field of employment. I understand the importance of protecting the legal and civil rights of all who are involved in this sensitive intersection of interests. I look forward to contributing my talents to continue the ACLU’s important work.

Roslynn Gallegos, LMSW

Six years ago I began fighting a battle that has become one of the most influential experiences of my life. I began work on seeking justice for victims of modern day slavery and women exiting the sex industry with nothing other than the desire to find a voice that would shed light on this violation of human rights. In the beginning I sought out to tell anyone who would listen the story of hundreds and thou-

sands of men, women, and children who hide in plain sight every day of our lives. Little did I know I had joined forces with a network of thousands of other individuals across the globe that continue to stand united as one voice for the formerly voiceless.

Since then, I have learned many things about life and the importance of service to others. Of most importance I have learned that no person is exempt from experiencing loss of some of the liberties we often take for granted. In knowing this I have also learned that no matter what, we all carry the ability to overcome and to use our experiences to become a bridge to justice for others.

It is my desire to continue this journey through board service with the ACLU, New Mexico. As a woman, mother, human trafficking advocate and social worker it is my hope and sincere mission in life to continue to represent the human rights of others. I hope that through service, mentorship, and with the united passion of the individuals who devote their time to defend human rights, not only we will all live in a world where everyone can become a witness to the end of modern day slavery, but we will also live in a world where our united voice continually stands in support of protecting the rights of others.

New ACLU-NM Staff



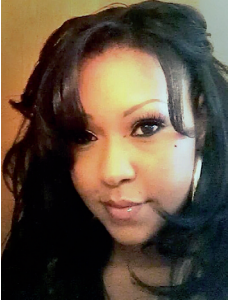
Alanna Offield, Field Organizer

Alanna Offield joined the ACLU of New Mexico in February as the Field Organizer, working to expand access to reproductive health in New Mexico and decrease the shame and stigma surrounding abortion in our communities. She is a queer Chicana from northern New Mexico and a senior at the University of New Mexico graduating in May 2015 with a BA in Liberal Arts concentrating in Chicano/Chicana Studies, Women’s Studies, and American Studies. She is passionate about youth organizing and served as the Student Activist Coordinator for New Mexico with Amnesty International for many years. She was the Program Coordinator for Railyard Stewards of Santa Fe and most recently the Campaign Coordinator for Media Literacy Project. When she isn’t organizing with her community for social justice, Alanna is hanging out with her daughter Hickory in their historic Martineztown home or dreaming about cruising northern New Mexico in a 1976 Cadillac DeVille.



Kristin Love, Staff Attorney

Kristin Greer Love joined the ACLU of New Mexico in March as an attorney and the Civil Rights Fellow with the ACLU of New Mexico, focusing on protecting the civil rights and civil liberties of people on the U.S.-Mexico border. For several years, Kristin has worked with migrants, immigrants, and activists to improve human rights conditions in Mexico and the United States and to build financial support and security for human rights work. She has investigated and written on human rights abuses against migrants and immigrants and has used litigation and policy advocacy to hold governments and employers accountable. Before joining the ACLU, Kristin worked with Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. in Mexico and the Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights in the Rio Grande Valley. A graduate of the University of Chicago Law School and the University of Chicago, she was a 2009 Skadden Fellow and a 2005 Truman Scholar. Kristin is the proud mom of Manú.



Dominique Martin, Office Manager

Dominique Martin joined the ACLU of New Mexico team in January, stepping into the role of Office Manager in the Albuquerque office. She is a California native, and this is her second go round in Albuquerque. She is very proud to be a part of such a noble organization and is pleased to work with staff that realizes the importance of civil liberties and freedoms. Previously, she worked in Communication Relations and served on the boards of the New Mexico Association for the Continuity of Care and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Outside of the ACLU, Dominique has a passion for animals, reading and traveling.