



This fall, the ACLU and ACLU-D.C. released our analysis of stop-and-frisk data collected by the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. Our analysis revealed that in 2022 and 2023, Black people made up more than 70 percent of police stops, despite making up just over 44 percent of the D.C. population. In comparison, white people made up under 13 percent of police stops, despite making up nearly 40 percent of the D.C. population.

Police stopped about **one Black person every 11 minutes** in those two years, a **total of 97,107 stops**. With this newest data, we have now seen a consistent pattern of racial disparities in stop-and-frisk practices since D.C. police started releasing data in 2019.

This pattern raises serious concerns about racially biased policing, especially when combined with

BIAS AT THE CORE?

POLICE CONTINUE TO DISPROPORTIONATELY STOP BLACK PEOPLE IN D.C.



the results of a 2023 cultural assessment of the Metropolitan Police Department.¹ Among other troubling practices that could suggest bias, this assessment found that focus group

participants from majority-Black Wards 7 and 8 experienced an aggressive and disrespectful style of over-policing not seen in other wards.

We know that racially biased stop-and-frisk tactics perpetuate cycles of harm and violence and breed distrust of the police. Research has shown that constant interaction with police harms people's economic and social wellbeing as well as their physical and mental health.²



CONT...

1. https://mpdc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mpdc/publication/attachments/PERF%20MPD%20Cultural%20Assessment_032923.pdf

2. <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/the-social-costs-of-policing.pdf>

In D.C., where jump-outs, a more insidious version of stop-and-frisk, are quite familiar to majority-Black neighborhoods, some residents have developed a visceral reaction to seeing police and will simply raise their shirt to show their waistband unprompted to try to avoid harm.³ And communities who are more frequently subjected to police encounters are less likely to report a crime even if they, themselves, are the victim.⁴ In 2023, D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson noted that a major barrier to solving homicides in the District was people not coming forward.⁵

In addition to documenting racial disparities, our report revealed that stop and frisk is not effective at taking guns off D.C. streets. In 2022, only 0.9 percent of stops resulted in the seizure of a gun, and, in 2023, only 1.2 percent of stops resulted in the seizure of a gun. This report shows that there is much work to be done to



From left to right: Tracee Wilkins, Scarlett Aldebot, Scott Michelman, Paul Butler, Vida Johnson

ensure that D.C. police officers respect our constitutional rights and keep our communities safe.

We at the ACLU-D.C. are ready to work with our members, supporters, and partners to move away from harmful policing and work toward achieving true public safety for everyone. At our Membership Meeting in September, NBC4 investigative reporter Tracee Wilkins moderated a stop-and-frisk panel featuring our own Policy Advocacy Director Scarlett Aldebot and Legal Director Scott

Michelman, as well as Georgetown University Law Center Professors Paul Butler and Vida Johnson.

Together, the panel discussed the report's findings and explored possible solutions. To us, it's clear that District leaders need to question stop-and-frisk practices that cause significant harm and erode trust in the criminal justice system. We continue to urge District leaders to build a public safety system that protects us from bias, increases accountability, and keeps all our communities safe.

READ FULL STORY

www.acludc.org/bias-at-the-core



3. <https://www.newsweek.com/jump-outs-dcs-scarier-version-stop-and-frisk-300151>

4. <https://www.vera.org/newsroom/study-reveals-stop-and-frisk-significantly-impacts-trust-in-new-york-city-police>

5. https://dc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=8387

MEET POLICY ADVOCACY DIRECTOR SCARLETT ALDEBOT



Scarlett Aldebot joined the ACLU-D.C. team as Policy Advocacy Director in May 2024. She leads our organizing and legislative advocacy team to advance civil rights and civil liberties in the District through legislative, institutional, and community-driven advocacy. Scarlett arrived at the ACLU-D.C. with extensive experience in policy, implementation, and advocacy. Most recently, she was the Chief Executive Officer for Amara, a non-profit organization based in Seattle that provides services, programs, and advocacy for families

at risk of or impacted by the child welfare system. She has also served in multiple leadership roles in Washington State's King County government. As the county's Adult Services Division Director for the Department of Community and Human Services, she led community-centered work in all aspects of funding, program administration, and related policy development. She also led work on criminal justice and human services issues as a Principal Policy Analyst for the King County Council. Scarlett has held leadership roles at the University of Washington Center for Human Rights and within the YouthSave Project in the Asset Building Program at New America. In addition to her extensive experience, Scarlett holds a J.D. and a Ph.D.

COURT ISSUES RULING AGAINST ABUSE OF POWER BY POLICE

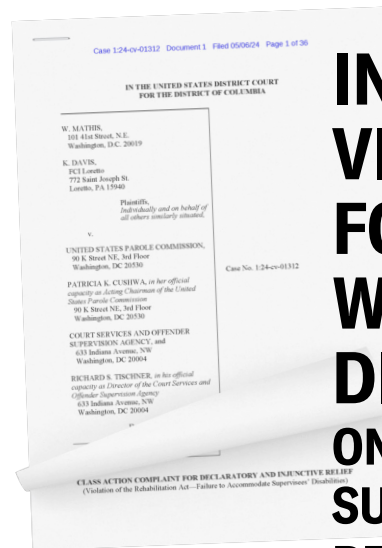


In a major win against police abuse of power, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit recently ruled that the Fourth Amendment prohibits police officers from keeping property they seize—like cell phones, cameras, or vehicles—for an unreasonable amount of time.

This landmark decision stems from two cases filed by the ACLU-D.C. on behalf of journalists and demonstrators who were arrested during racial justice protests, including the ones that took place in D.C. after the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. In *Asinor v. District of Columbia* and *Cameron v. District of Columbia*, we argued that police unlawfully held people's items for months and even years after their arrest and release. Journalists and demonstrators had to replace their cell phones and lost vital work data, cherished personal photos, and other irreplaceable content.

In a troubling pattern stretching at least as far back as 2015, D.C. police have regularly retained cell phones seized from people they arrest long after any legitimate law enforcement need for the items has passed. Keeping people's cell phones can leave people stranded when they are released. It can also have a chilling effect on protest, causing people to fear that demonstrating will mean losing their belongings.

The appeals ruling is critical for challenging such abuses in D.C. and across the nation, where police commonly take a person's car, phone, or clothes and never return them. As these cases continue, this decision is a powerful reminder that our rights must be respected, especially when protesting injustice.



INITIAL VICTORY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ON PAROLE AND SUPERVISED RELEASE IN D.C.

Mr. Davis, a middle-aged Black man on lifetime parole, lives with chronic pain and mobility limitations stemming from third-degree burns as well as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. When Mr. Davis's disabilities prevented him from contacting his parole officer for less than two weeks, he clearly needed accommodation. Instead, Mr. Davis was thrown behind bars. While incarcerated for this technical parole violation, Mr. Davis missed necessary surgery for his burns.

Mr. Davis and other people with disabilities are set up to fail by the federal parole and supervised release system in D.C. Even a minor violation, like missing an appointment, can send someone back to jail. And people with disabilities are overrepresented among people punished for technical violations.

That's why the ACLU, ACLU-D.C., and our partners recently filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of Mr. Davis and other people with disabilities. The lawsuit challenges the U.S. Parole Commission's violation of the Rehabilitation Act, showing how the commission systematically ignores the needs of people with disabilities on parole, increasing their risk of sanctions and incarceration. Four months after we filed the lawsuit, a federal judge ordered the agencies to accommodate our clients and denied the government's motion to dismiss the case. As the case proceeds, we will fight to ensure that people with disabilities on parole and supervised release are given a fair chance to succeed.

For more on the case, *Mathis v. United States Parole Commission*, visit:

www.acludc.org/mathis-v-parole-commission



LAWSUIT CHALLENGES CENSORSHIP OF PRO-PALESTINIAN STUDENT SPEECH



This spring, we filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Arab Student Union at Jackson-Reed High School that challenged the school administration for unlawfully censoring the student club's pro-Palestinian speech.

For months, the administration of Jackson-Reed High School barred the Arab Student Union, a recognized student club at the District of Columbia Public School, from engaging in activities like those that other student groups organize at the school. The administration stopped the club from showing a documentary film critical of Israel's public relations campaign in the United States, canceled the club's Palestinian Culture Night, barred the students from distributing literature that depicted Palestinian cultural symbols, and prohibited the club from handing out stickers with the outline of Palestine or ones that read "Free Palestine."

The lawsuit outlines how the administration violated the students'

First Amendment rights and their rights under the federal Equal Access Act and the D.C. Student Bill of Rights. The First Amendment prohibits all government agencies, including public schools, from censoring, discriminating against, or applying rules inconsistently to speech based on its viewpoint. This principle is called "viewpoint neutrality," and it means that government agencies can't allow expression on a given subject from one point of view but not another. The complaint argues that the administration suppressed the student group's speech "because the school does not want their viewpoint—which concerns the ongoing war in Gaza and its effects on the Palestinian people—to be heard." The lawsuit also argues that Jackson-Reed's administration treated the Arab Student Union unequally with other student groups.

"The fact that the plight of the Palestinian people is considered controversial means it needs more discussion, not less," said a member of the Arab Student Union, whose name has been withheld from court papers to shield them from retaliation by people outside the school community.

In response to the lawsuit, the school administration and club reached an interim agreement that allowed the students to show a film and distribute literature before the end of the school year. The school administration also agreed to make clear to all administrators and teachers that the standards for student organizations to post materials, show films, and plan events and activities apply equally to all groups.

While this interim agreement marks a victory for students' rights, our lawsuit to protect the rights of D.C. public school students continues.

"I applaud the students' courage in taking a stand for their First Amendment rights," said a Jackson-Reed faculty member, whose name is also being withheld. "The Arab Student Union should not be treated as a second-class club in our school community."

Learn more about the case, *Arab Student Union of Jackson-Reed High School v. District of Columbia et. al.*

www.acludc.org/asu-v-dc



NEED LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR A CIVIL RIGHTS OR CIVIL LIBERTIES VIOLATION?



If your civil liberties or civil rights were violated, the best way to request help from the ACLU-D.C. is online at www.acludc.org/help. You may also leave a voicemail at 202-601-4269, although response times are slower for voicemails.

Unfortunately, our office has limited resources, so we cannot take every case we are contacted about, even if a grave injustice has occurred. We take cases that we think will help clarify the law, so that civil liberties are better protected across the board. For examples of cases we do not take, please visit www.acludc.org/help.

If we cannot help you, we will do our best to suggest a different organization or law firm that might be able to assist. *(Note that we cannot guarantee that they will be able to take your case.)*

If you have a case not involving civil liberties or civil rights, please see our resource guide for help with other legal problems in the D.C. area: www.acludc.org/resource-guide.

Also, visit our website to learn more about your constitutional rights! Check out ACLU-D.C.'s easy-to-use resources: www.acludc.org/kyr.



SCAN TO SEEK LEGAL HELP



SCAN FOR RESOURCES

THREE WAYS THE FIRST AMENDMENT PROTECTS YOUR SPEECH



The First Amendment protects our fundamental rights to express ourselves, to gather with other people, and to protest our government, among other rights. Here are three things to know about your First Amendment rights.

1 The government cannot restrict your speech simply because they don't like what you have to say.

The First Amendment prohibits government agencies from censoring, discriminating against, or applying rules inconsistently to private speech based on its viewpoint. This principle is called "viewpoint neutrality," and it means that local and federal government agencies can't allow expression on a given subject from Viewpoint A — but not from Viewpoint B. For example, the government can't approve a permit for an anti-abortion rally while blocking a permit for a pro-abortion rally.

2 Most government employees can express their personal political views on their own time.

Local and federal government employees have First Amendment rights. In general, a federal employee's speech is protected if that person is speaking as a private person (not a spokesperson for their job), if it is about a matter of public concern, and if their speech does not interfere with their job. Government employees can donate to partisan groups, attend rallies, and express political opinions when off-duty. However, the Hatch Act imposes additional restrictions on certain federal and D.C. government employees, so visit acludc.org/kyr for more details.

3 Your free speech rights are strongest in places like public streets, sidewalks, and parks.

The government can impose the fewest restrictions on your speech if you express your views in what is called a "traditional public forum." These are public places like streets, sidewalks, and parks, where people have commonly gathered to discuss and express their views. The Supreme Court has reasoned that streets and sidewalks play an important role in expressing and hearing new ideas in a democracy.

Learn more about your First Amendment rights in D.C. by visiting acludc.org/kyr. It's up to all of us to protect this foundational right of our democracy — the right to express ourselves, challenge unjust government actions, and build a better way forward.



BILL OF RIGHTS CELEBRATION BRINGS JOY, JUSTICE, AND COMMEMORATION

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2024 Bill of Rights Celebration this summer! We were delighted to celebrate our community with energizing performances by drag queen Tara Hoot and Eastern High School's marching band.



We were deeply honored to award outstanding people who defend our civil rights and liberties in D.C. including: the family of activist and filmmaker Ryan "Soup" Morgan, who tragically lost his life last year; student groups and clubs who have supported the ACLU's legal and organizing work; a group of whistleblowers who have been vital in cases we have brought against the Metropolitan Police Department; and Mary Beth Tinker for her lifetime of service speaking up about students' rights and First Amendment rights.

Thank you also to our amazing event sponsors: Steptoe & Johnson LLP; Dentons; Ali & Lockwood LLP; Linder Global Events; League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia; Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; Williams & Connolly LLP; Latham & Watkins LLP; Isa Mirza & Darya Razavi; Devi M. Rao; Dr. Phillipa Strum

BE SURE TO JOIN US AT OUR NEXT BILL OF RIGHTS CELEBRATION ON MAY 13, 2025, AT WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY.

We will celebrate our work and community, and we will honor civil rights advocates, including outgoing ACLU National Legal Director David Cole. Tickets are \$51, symbolizing our ongoing fight for D.C. Statehood, and include access to the awards ceremony, happy hour, and dessert hour.

GET YOUR TICKETS

www.acludc.org/bor2025



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2024

The ACLU of the District of Columbia fights to protect the civil liberties and civil rights of all people who live in, work in, and visit Washington, D.C.

Thanks to your generous and consistent support, this year we won major victories protecting our First Amendment rights, challenging abuse of power, and building a D.C. where all people can live free from discrimination and oppression.

Together, we are building a more just and free D.C.

To see highlights of our work, this year which your generous support made possible, visit: www.acludcannualreport.com



“THE LOOMING THREATS ARE REAL,
BUT SO IS OUR POWER AND RESILIENCE.
TOGETHER, WE CAN MEET THIS MOMENT.
AND WE CAN BUILD A MORE JUST AND
FREE D.C.”



As 2024 comes to a close, I am reflecting on all that we’ve accomplished together. From protecting our First Amendment rights, to challenging discrimination, and fighting police abuse of power, it’s been a busy year full of meaningful progress.

I am also bracing myself for what is to come when President-elect Donald Trump and anti-D.C. members of Congress take office. I will not mince words: a second Trump Administration and an anti-D.C. Congress are a grave threat to our rights and self-governance in the District.

The rights and freedoms of District residents were on the ballot locally and around the country. Without D.C. Statehood, the federal government has the legal authority to intervene in our lives. Year after year, we have faced the prospect of federal lawmakers, who D.C. residents never elected, banning abortion in D.C., dictating how we spend our tax dollars, stopping us from addressing public safety, and so much more. Trump and his anti-D.C. allies have threatened to “take over” D.C. by creating a federal “control board” or by repealing Home Rule. We will now be on the defensive, protecting the basic rights and freedoms that are rightfully ours.

The looming threats are real, but so is our power and resilience. This election crystallized the fact that we must fortify and accelerate our fight for D.C. Statehood so that D.C. can be part of a national firewall for freedom. We must continue defending our current, if limited, self-governance by defending Home Rule. We must also advance D.C. Statehood to correct the historical wrong that has denied D.C. residents, the majority of whom are Black and brown, the right to govern ourselves and to have a say in the direction our country takes.

Making D.C. Statehood a reality, and defending our self-governance requires each one of us to talk with our pro-democracy friends, families, and allies around the country about why D.C. statehood and Home Rule matter – and what everyone can do to help. As many of us travel across state lines this holiday season or welcome guests to D.C., I hope you will join me in having those conversations. Not sure what to say or where to start? We’re here to help; simply visit acludc.com/statehoodguide.

During the first Trump Administration, particularly when times were dark, many of you asked me how I kept doing the work of the ACLU. I shared stories about the clients we serve, the brilliant staff I get to work with, and the deep belief in the promise of a just and free D.C., and country.

To paraphrase Duke Women’s Basketball coach Kara Lawson, this work doesn’t get easier, we just “handle hard better.” At the ACLU, we’re once again prepared to handle these hard times even better by using all the lessons we learned during the first Trump Administration and all the tools at our disposal. We will continue ensuring our nation lives up to the promise of the Constitution. We invite you to join us in this work by becoming a member or renewing your membership at acludc.com/member.

Together, we can meet this moment. We can defend our values. We can assert our power. And we can build a more just and free D.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Hopkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M".

Monica Hopkins
Executive Director

HOW TO SUPPORT ACLU-D.C.

We accept contributions the following ways:



Through your donor-advised fund (DAF).

Choose “American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of the District of Columbia” and EIN 52-6070446 with your DAF provider.



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Please contact development@acludc.org for our account and DTC number.



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Visit www.aclu.org/legacy to see how gifts through your will, retirement plan, life insurance, or trust can both provide for your loved ones and ensure our ability to fight for civil liberties in the future.



Through the mail. *Please note that our office address has changed, though our mail forwarding address remains the same:*

Monica Hopkins
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Via mobile device.

Access our donation page here via QR code or at www.acludc.org/give



Don't forget! Gifts to the ACLU-D.C. Foundation may be eligible for matching funds from your workplace. Please inquire with your employer.