

A black and white photograph of a hand resting on a dark, textured stone surface. The stone is engraved with names and dates, including '25 · 1 · 1965 CIVIL RIGHTS MONTGOMERY', '11 · MAR · 1965 JAMES REEB · DEATH', '7 · MAR · 1965 STATE TROOPERS B · EDMUND PETTUS', and '26 · FEB · 1965 JIMMIE LEE · KILLED BY ST'. The top half of the image is a solid red triangle pointing downwards.

## **2018 ANNUAL REPORT**



## **About the Southern Poverty Law Center**

The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Montgomery, Alabama, is a nonprofit civil rights organization founded in 1971 and dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society.

For more information about  
**THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER**  
[www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**MICHELLE LELAND**

Karen-Baynes Dunning



# A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO

Hate is nothing new. We've known that for centuries, and many of us have experienced it firsthand. But it is on the rise, and with you at our side, the Southern Poverty Law Center is pushing back against it whenever we encounter it on our march toward justice.

As you will read in our 2018 annual report, we're not only pushing back against it, we are doing our best to stop it in its tracks — securing victories that protect the communities we serve and ushering in hope, equality and true justice.

The fear and resentment of our nation's growing diversity is at the heart of the hate that's swelling across America. It's no coincidence that the number of hate groups we're tracking across the country rose for the fourth consecutive year in 2018, reaching 1,020 — a 30 percent increase that coincides with Trump's presidential campaign and presidency.

From verbal assaults on people of color coming from within the Oval Office to hate-filled murders at the hands of extremists in communities like El Paso, Texas, we continue to tackle hate head-on in 2019. This year, we are challenging the Trump administration's policies attacking asylum seekers and immigrants, suing to stop racist laws in states such as Florida, working to halt the bail bonds industry, shedding light on the rise of hate in schools, and protecting and affirming the right to vote through our new Voting Rights Project.

Following the legal legacy established decades ago by organization founders Morris

Dees and Joe Levin, whose victories shattered some of the nation's most well-known white supremacist groups, we landed a major blow to hate. In 2019, we secured a \$14 million judgment — the largest of its kind — against a neo-Nazi who orchestrated a harassment campaign against a Jewish woman and her family, sending a loud and clear message that this type of harassment is intolerable and those who traffic it in must pay the price.

In this annual report, you will learn about some of our major successes in 2018. We won the release of detained immigrants, reunited families and repeatedly challenged Donald Trump's draconian immigration policies in court as part of our Immigrant Justice Project — one of the largest projects of its kind in the country.

We were at the forefront of legal action to stop states from obtaining Medicaid "waivers" encouraged by the Trump administration. This cruel scheme would allow states to strip health care coverage from the poorest Americans. Our federal court victory in Kentucky kept that state from booting nearly 100,000 people off Medicaid.

We also defended voting rights across the Deep South with partner organizations that include Mississippi Center for Justice, Voice of The Experienced (VOTE) in New Orleans, the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, League of Women Voters of Florida and Alabama Appleseed.

In Mississippi, we sued the state to end a law that has denied the right to vote to one in six black adults. In Florida, we invested heavily in support of a successful ballot initiative to overturn a state law that barred 1.4 million people with felony convictions from voting. And in Alabama, we canvassed neighborhoods to alert people with past convictions that they were eligible to vote in the midterm elections.

We also sued the Trump administration to determine whether the anti-LGBTQ hate group Alliance Defending Freedom influenced the administration's decision to weaken protections for transgender people in federal prisons. The lawsuit was filed after the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Prisons failed to produce all documents and communications related to the decision.

After the deadly school shooting in Parkland, Florida, we fought against dangerous and misguided policies that threatened to reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline by pouring more law enforcement – and guns – into schools. We also sued the Trump administration for records that would shed light on plans to use federal funds to arm teachers and expose the role the gun lobby may have played in the administration's decision to allow it.

Our Teaching Tolerance project provided resources, training and grants to educators trying to address racial divides that have deepened in their classrooms during the Trump era. We provided educators with an innovative framework for teaching their students about the history – and the continuing legacy – of slavery and white supremacy.

We're proud of our accomplishments in 2018, led, in part, by former President and CEO Richard Cohen and former Legal Director Rhonda Brownstein, who worked alongside our dedicated team of more than 365 people spread across five states and Washington, D.C., to bring victories to the communities who inspire us to bring our best to our work.

When I was asked to join the SPLC Board of Directors over a year ago, I knew it was a world-class organization fighting systemic

racism and discrimination, combating hate and extremism, and helping teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy. I also knew that like many organizations, the work being done externally was likely not happening internally with the same vigor. When the SPLC was founded in 1971, it was a storefront startup in Montgomery, Alabama, with three employees seeking justice for those who had no champion. But as the organization grew, its internal practices did not fully reflect the needs of an evolving workplace. The departures this year of Morris and then Richard – who began planning his retirement in 2018 – created an opportunity for the board to bring changes and new perspectives to the organization's future.

Since my appointment as interim president and CEO in March 2019, we have spent the last several months looking inward – talking to hundreds of employees, past and present – to help chart our course as an organization together.

Our commitment and dedication to the communities we serve has never wavered and continues to drive our work as we move forward. We are as committed as ever before to combating the forces of hate and bigotry and exploring new and innovative ways to work with allied organizations as we tackle the challenges our nation is facing.

All of us are deeply grateful for you, your support, and your willingness to stand shoulder to shoulder with us on the frontlines as we continue the march.

Without your support, this work would not be possible.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Baynes-Dunning', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Baynes-Dunning  
*Interim President & CEO*

# FIGHTING HATE

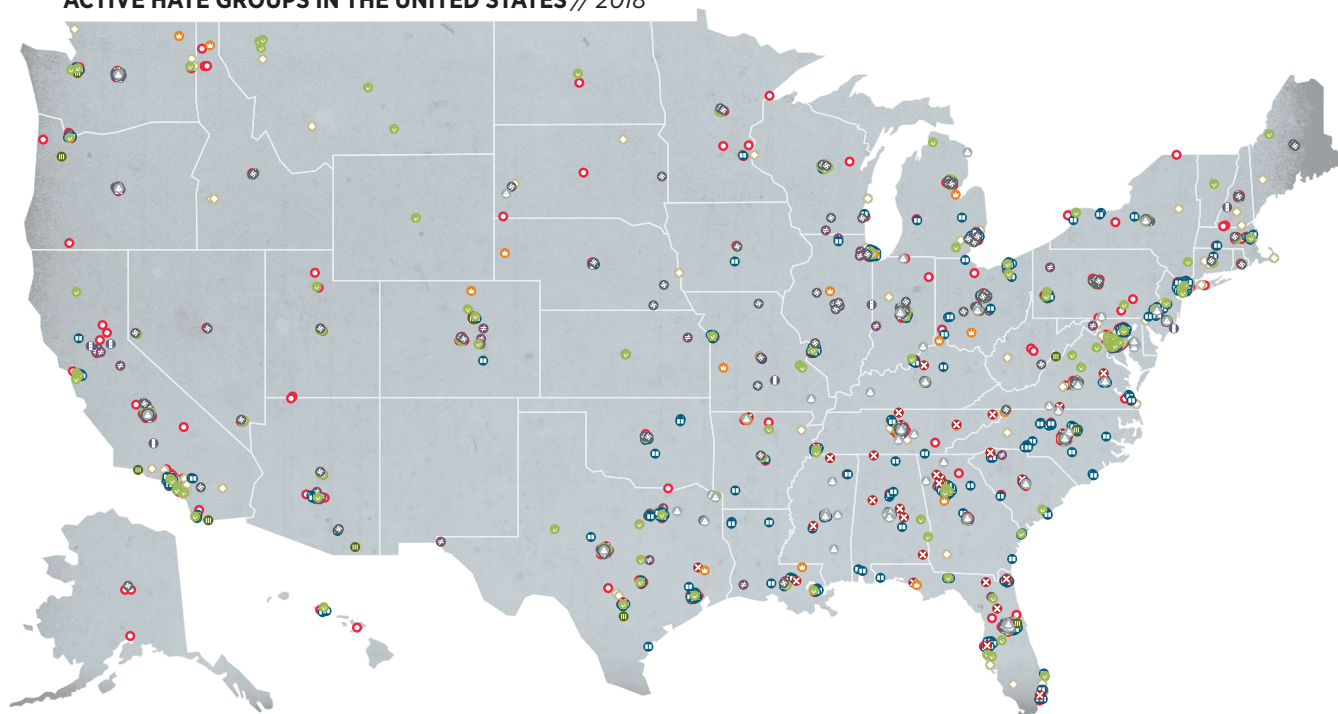
WE'RE HERE  
TO MAKE  
HISTORY NOT  
RELIVE IT

People gather for a rally against Confederate monuments in Richmond, Virginia. In 2018, the SPLC documented more than 1,700 such monuments and symbols across the American landscape.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
MICHAEL BONFIGLI



## ACTIVE HATE GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES // 2018



**1,020**

Hate groups operating in the U.S. in 2018

**50%**

The rate white nationalist groups grew in 2018

**30%**

The rate hate groups have grown over four years

**7%**

The rate hate groups have grown since 2017

**HATE BY THE NUMBERS IN 2018**

In a year when the number of hate groups operating in the United States rose to a record high and President Trump continued to fan the flames of white resentment, the SPLC responded on multiple fronts to combat the rising tide of hate.

We tracked and exposed 1,020 hate groups and saw the fourth straight year of hate group growth – a 30 percent increase roughly coinciding with Trump’s campaign and presidency. We also sued the Trump administration for records to determine if an anti-LGBT hate group influenced the administration’s decision to weaken protections for transgender people in federal prisons.

We worked with internet companies, particularly social media platforms, to stamp out hateful activity on their forums. We also investigated and reported on how the radical right exploits online platforms to spread propaganda and radicalize young people.

In court, we won a major victory when a federal judge rejected a neo-Nazi leader’s attempt to dismiss an SPLC lawsuit brought against him for orchestrating an online harassment campaign against a Jewish woman and her family in Montana.

In 2018, we also reviewed the status of Confederate monuments on public lands across the country, finding that while more than 100 publicly supported monuments and other tributes have been removed by state and local governments since 2015, more than 1,700 still dot the American landscape.

### SPLC FINDS HATE GROUPS REACH RECORD HIGH IN 2018

The number of hate groups operating across America rose to a record high – 1,020 – in 2018 as President Trump continued to fan the flames of white resentment over immigration and the country’s changing demographics, the SPLC found.

It was the fourth consecutive year of hate group growth, following three straight years of declines near the end of the Obama administration.

At the same time, racist and antisemitic violence continued to plague the country, following the same escalating pattern as hate groups. FBI statistics show that hate crimes increased by 30 percent in the three-year period ending in 2017. (The FBI has not released figures for 2018.) The increase



## SPOTLIGHT

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“The number of hate groups operating across America rose to a record high – 1,020 – in 2018.”

followed a three-year period in which hate crime incidents fell by about 12 percent.

“The numbers tell a striking story – that this president is not simply a polarizing figure but a radicalizing one,” said Heidi Beirich, director of the SPLC’s Intelligence Project. “Rather than trying to tamp down hate, as presidents of both parties have done, President Trump elevates it – with both his rhetoric and his policies. In doing so, he’s given people across America the go-ahead to act on their worst instincts.”

Trump was not alone in spreading fear about the country’s growing diversity. Fox News served as both his megaphone and a source for his incendiary claims during 2018. Aided by a chorus of supporters in right-wing media outlets and the advisers in his administration with hate group sympathies, Trump enacted a raft of policies straight out of the radical-right playbook.

But there were growing signs that many among the radical right have begun to sour on Trump, as he failed to deliver on his signature promise – to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border. Richard Spencer, the white nationalist leader who prompted Nazi salutes from his audience when he shouted “Hail Trump” after Trump’s 2016 election, put it this way after the 2018 mid-terms: “The Trump moment is over, and it’s time for us to move on.”

A white supremacist world simultaneously emboldened and disappointed by Trump has already proven deadly.

Like many white supremacists, accused synagogue murderer Robert Bowers was obsessed

### SPLC FIGHTS ONLINE HATE, URGES REFORM

The SPLC fought online hate in 2018 by working with social media companies, pushing for policy changes and exposing how extremists use social media to spread their propaganda and radicalize young people.

In October, the SPLC announced the release of *Change the Terms*, a set of policy recommendations to help social media and other internet companies reduce hateful activities on their platforms. The policies and the report, *Curbing Hate Online: What Companies Should Do Now*, shares what the SPLC and its allies learned from meeting with experts on terrorism, human rights and technology.

“Social media platforms have a tremendous impact because of their ability to amplify extreme ideas from the fringes,” said **Heidi Beirich**, director of the SPLC’s Intelligence Project, which co-founded the Change the Terms initiative. “The Southern Poverty Law Center has documented how hateful rhetoric online can turn into violence in real life, including the tragic events that we saw unfold in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. Internet companies must do more to ensure that they are doing their part to combat extremism and hate.”

As part of the campaign, the SPLC and its allies will track the progress of major tech companies – especially social media platforms – in adopting and implementing these model corporate policies. Next year, the SPLC and its allies will provide report cards to the companies.

Also in 2018, the SPLC produced several reports about the world of online hate. These reports examined how Proud Boys, an anti-Muslim hate group, uses social media; described how a racist killer was radicalized through Facebook; analyzed anti-Muslim hate on Facebook, prompting the removal of much of the material; and examined two important hate forums.

These are just the latest efforts by the SPLC, which has persistently pushed internet companies to comply with their own rules prohibiting their services from being used to foster hate or discrimination. The SPLC has also used its own public platform to expose companies that – inadvertently or not – helped fund hate groups and spread their propaganda.

These efforts have led to many extremists losing access to powerful social media platforms to spread their hate and propaganda.

Tanya Gersh and  
SPLC Deputy Legal  
Director David  
Dinielli speak to  
journalists about  
the SPLC lawsuit  
against a neo-Nazi  
website operator.

*PHOTOGRAPHY*  
*BY BURTON*  
**PRODUCTIONS**



## SPLC LAWSUIT MOVES FORWARD AFTER NEO-NAZI'S DEFENSE REJECTED

In November, a federal judge rejected a neo-Nazi leader's attempt to dismiss an SPLC lawsuit brought against him for orchestrating a campaign of terror against a Jewish woman and her family in Montana.

The decision moved forward a case that could send a powerful message to hatemongers that they can be held to account in court for using their internet platforms to terrorize people.

"This important ruling underscores what both we and our client have said from the beginning of this case – that online campaigns of hate, threats and intimidation have no place in a civil society and enjoy no protection under our Constitution," said David Dinielli, SPLC deputy legal director.

Chief Judge Dana L. Christensen of the U.S. District Court in Montana accepted a magistrate's earlier recommendation and ruled against Andrew Anglin on Nov. 14.

Anglin, one of the nation's most prominent neo-Nazi leaders, claimed in court filings that he was simply exercising his free speech rights when he incited a virtual army of online extremists to harass Tanya Gersh, a real estate agent living in Whitefish. Anglin operates a website called the Daily Stormer. The site, which takes its name from the Nazi propaganda sheet *Der Stürmer*, is the leading white supremacist web forum in the country.

After Anglin incited his followers, the Gersh family – including Tanya's 12-year-old son – received hundreds of intimidating and threatening messages, including emails, phone calls and postcards, over a period of months.

The suit, filed in 2017, accuses Anglin of invading Gersh's privacy and intentionally inflicting emotional distress. It also outlines how his campaign violated the Montana Anti-Intimidation Act.

In December 2016, Anglin published dozens of articles urging his followers to launch a "troll storm" targeting Gersh, who he accused of trying to extort money from the mother of white nationalist leader Richard Spencer. Gersh had offered to help the woman sell a building in Whitefish after residents of the town planned to protest her son's activities at the site.

Anglin and Spencer are both prominent leaders of the "alt-right" movement, and Anglin helped promote the deadly "Unite the Right" white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017.

"Tell them you are sickened by their Jew agenda," Anglin wrote under the headline "Jews Targeting Richard Spencer's Mother for Harassment and Extortion – TAKE ACTION!" The post included Gersh's contact information. It also included photographs of Gersh, her husband and son. One was altered to include a yellow Star of David with the label "Jude" – an allusion to the emblem the Nazi regime required Jews to wear during World War II.

Anglin launched his campaign with these words: "Let's Hit Em Up. Are y'all ready for an old fashioned Troll Storm? Because AYO – it's that time, fam."

One message received by Gersh included an image of her being sprayed with a green gas, along with the words: *Hickory dickory dock, the k--e ran up the clock. The clock struck three and the Internet Nazis trolls gassed the rest of them.*

There were also phone calls that consisted only of the sound of gunshots.

"Online campaigns of hate, threats and intimidation have no place in a civil society and enjoy no protection under our Constitution,"

*David Dinielli, SPLC deputy legal director*





A memorial stands outside the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, where 11 worshippers were killed by a white supremacist terrorist in November 2018.

with a fear of “white genocide” and the news of the so-called migrant caravan – “invaders,” as he and Trump called them. Disillusioned, Bowers decided to act against those he thought responsible – the Jewish people. Ten days before the midterm elections, he killed 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

“Trump has given voice to the rage and paranoia of white supremacists, and now there is a very real danger that as extremists lose the hope they saw in his presidency, some will lash

out against the people he has demonized and blamed for America’s problems,” Beirich said.

The 1,020 hate groups identified by the SPLC represent a 7 percent increase over the 954 counted in 2017.

The new total tops the previous high of 1,018 reached in 2011 during the height of a far-right backlash against President Obama, the first black president. From 2011 to 2014, the number fell by nearly 25 percent, to 784. Trump has, as former U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford said, “unearthed some demons.”

The vast majority of hate groups – including neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, racist skinheads, neo-Confederates and white nationalists – adhere to some form of white supremacist ideology. Not surprisingly, the number of white nationalist groups, those particularly electrified by Trump’s presidency, surged by almost 50 percent – from 100 groups to 148 – in 2018.

Also in reaction to Trump and the surge of white supremacy, black nationalist groups expanded their ranks, growing from 233 chapters in 2017 to 264 in 2018. These groups are typically antisemitic, anti-LGBT and anti-white. Unlike white nationalist groups, however, they have virtually no supporters or influence in mainstream politics, much less in the White House.

At year-end, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan compared Trump to Satan and wrote that Trump was “planning genocide” for black people, a remark reminiscent of the myth of “white genocide” popular within white supremacist culture.



## LAWSUIT SEEKS LINK BETWEEN TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, HATE GROUP

The SPLC sued the Trump administration in November 2018 to determine whether the anti-LGBTQ hate group Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) influenced the administration's decision to weaken protections for transgender people in federal prisons.

The lawsuit, filed with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, asked a judge to compel the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Prisons to produce all documents and communications related to the decision. The lawsuit was filed after the agencies failed to produce records following a Freedom of Information Act request by the SPLC and Lambda Legal.

"There is no penological reason that could justify the Federal Bureau of Prison's decision to roll back protections for transgender people in the federal prison system," said David Dinielli, SPLC deputy legal director. "Instead, it appears that the Bureau of Prisons may have acted at the behest of the Alliance Defending Freedom."

The ADF has defended state-sanctioned sterilization of transgender people abroad and has recommended use of the terms "cross-dressing" and "sexually confused" in place of the term transgender.

The Transgender Offender Manual, which provided staff guidance to protect transgender people in federal prison, was issued in January 2017. It followed a U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics report in 2014 that more than one in three transgender people in prison said they had experienced sexual abuse by either staff or other incarcerated people in the previous year.

Changes to the manual announced by the Trump administration weaken protections for transgender people – who are already 10 times more likely than other prisoners to be targeted for violence – and undercut compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act as well as constitutional protections.

The new manual says transgender people should be housed according to their "biological sex" and should be placed according to their gender identity "only in rare cases" and where there has been "significant progress" toward transition. It does not provide guidance on how to determine a person's "biological sex" or whether the person has made "significant progress" toward transition.

## SPLC DOCUMENTS 1,700 CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS

In 2018, the SPLC reviewed the status of Confederate monuments across the country, finding that 110 publicly supported monuments and other tributes have been removed by state and local governments since the 2015 white supremacist massacre in Charleston, South Carolina.

Despite the removals, more than 1,700 such monuments and symbols continue to dot the American landscape – often with the protection of state laws in former Confederate states.

The findings are part of an updated version of the SPLC's 2016 report *Whose Heritage?*, which catalogued 1,503 monuments, place names, state holidays and other symbols of the Confederacy in public spaces at that time.

The new report identified 1,728 Confederate symbols, an increase that reflects new information obtained after government entities, journalists and others who re-examined the symbols in their locales. It does not include thousands of markers, monuments or other tributes on or within battlefields, museums,

cemeteries and other places that are largely historical in nature.

The report also identified two distinct periods that saw a significant rise in the dedication of monuments and other symbols. The first began around 1900, when Southern states were enacting Jim Crow laws. The second began in the early 1950s and lasted through the 1960s, as the civil rights movement sparked a backlash by segregationists.

"The SPLC is providing an important resource to show the pervasiveness of Confederate monuments and markers across the country," said Mitch Landrieu, former New Orleans mayor and author of *In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History*.

Landrieu added: "The key questions I went through when deciding what to do in New Orleans [with its Confederate monuments] were: When was it put up? By whom? For what purpose? Thanks to the SPLC's research, local leaders and residents will have a better understanding of many of those questions, which will help in charting a better path forward."

### CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS & SYMBOLS BY THE NUMBERS



## 772

Confederate monuments in 23 states and the District of Columbia

## 300+

Confederate monuments in Georgia, Virginia or North Carolina

## 100

named for Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis or other Confederates

## 80

counties and cities named for Confederates

## 10

U.S. military bases named for Confederate military figures

## 9

paid holidays for state employees in five states

## RESOURCES TO FIGHT HATE

In addition to providing in-person training to law enforcement, the SPLC publishes reports that help law enforcement, the public, and government and school officials counter the hate and false propaganda spread by the radical right. Below is a sample of SPLC publications and resources.



### INTELLIGENCE REPORT

The SPLC's investigative journal features in-depth, investigative reporting about hate and extremism in the United States. In each Spring issue, it includes an annual

census and map of domestic hate groups. It is provided free to law enforcement agencies across the country.



### TERROR FROM THE RIGHT

This resource, updated continuously on the SPLC website, catalogues major terrorist plots and racist rampages that have emerged from the American radical right in the

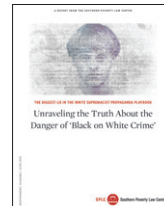
years since the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.



### LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING VIDEOS

The SPLC produces and distributes training videos, free of charge, that help law enforcement officers respond to potential threats involving

extremist movements across the country.



### UNRAVELING THE TRUTH ABOUT 'BLACK ON WHITE CRIME'

This report examines the origins and evolution of the biggest lie in the white supremacist propaganda playbook – the false belief

that black people are wantonly attacking white people in some sort of quiet race war.



### HATE CRIMES, EXPLAINED

Across America, an average of 250,000 people are victimized by hate crimes. This report examines

hate crimes and offers recommendations for the

federal government to combat them.



### HATEWATCH

This blog features analysis and exposes the activities of the American radical right, providing timely posts with the latest information about far-right extremists.



# TEACHING TOLERANCE



Teaching Tolerance's Monita Bell speaks in Boston about *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery*. The study found that educators across America lacked guidance for teaching the history of slavery and its legacy.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ILENE PERLMAN

Students take part in Teaching Tolerance's National Mix It Up at Lunch Day, which is designed to break down social barriers in school.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
TODD BIGELOW



School is the only American institution that touches young people's lives every day, and ultimately what happens there shapes our society and democracy, now and in the future.

In other words, the work that Teaching Tolerance undertakes is important. And, in the age of Trump, it is essential.

Teaching Tolerance listened to our nation's educators, and they needed help. They needed help addressing the deepened racial divides in their classrooms, help combating the increase in school-based hate incidents, and help countering threats to marginalized students and their families.

Teaching Tolerance responded in 2018.

It provided teachers with *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery*, a framework for teaching the history of slavery in what is now the United States, after discovering a sweeping lack of guidance from states and their textbooks about how to teach about slavery and the legacy of white supremacy in our country. Teaching Tolerance also provided in-person training to 2,400 educators at workshops designed to help them better integrate social justice into their

classroom instruction. And across the country, Teaching Tolerance grants helped support projects that promote affirming school climates and that teach young people to be active participants in our diverse democracy.

Teaching Tolerance's Voting and Voices project encouraged students to learn about the democratic process and become enthusiastic advocates for voting. Teaching Tolerance also partnered with Rock the Vote to launch a new version of its popular Democracy Class.

Educators also found highly effective strategies to fight prejudice and promote educational equity in *Teaching Tolerance* magazine, which reaches approximately 450,000 educators. And, as it has for almost two decades, Teaching Tolerance's National Mix It Up at Lunch Day encouraged schoolchildren to break down social barriers by sitting with someone new in the school cafeteria.

### VOTING AND VOICES

Teaching Tolerance launched its Voting and Voices project during the the 2018 election season with three goals: focusing and encouraging





educators to teach about voting; enabling student-led voter registration drives; and sharing the Voting and Voices Pledge that encourages families to vote. The project offered new professional development tools for civics education, which were developed in-house, as well as a suite of resources on the voting process. And in partnership with Rock the Vote, Teaching Tolerance debuted a new version of Democracy Class, a series of lessons about the history and power of voting rights in the United States.

One teacher wrote that Voting and Voices was “a GREAT experience” for her students, noting that children “were incredulous that they could do this even though they were not old enough to vote themselves; it was also a way for them to understand the power of the youth vote and why some vote and many do not.”

#### **SHARING BEST PRACTICES**

Teaching Tolerance was on the move in 2018, training 2,400 educators during face-to-face workshops designed to help them better integrate social justice into their classroom instruction and entire school culture.

Throughout the year, Teaching Tolerance traveled around the country offering two day-long workshops: “Social Justice Teaching 101” and “Facilitating Critical Conversations,” which not only help educators serve all their students, but also help them examine common biases that affect their ability to engage in productive classroom conversations.

At the end of each Teaching Tolerance workshop, participants leave with ideas and tools for transforming their classrooms and schools.

#### **EDUCATORS HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING**

In 2018, the Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching was presented to five educators.

The biennial award honors K-12 teachers who prioritize helping students develop positive identities, exhibit empathy, consider different perspectives, think critically about injustice and take informed action.

“These educators’ innovative approaches to anti-bias education embody the very essence of our mission at Teaching



The 2018 Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching recipients are (left to right) Mayra Almaraz, Elizabeth Kleinrock, Rebecca Coven, Charlie McGeehan and Danna Lomax.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
RUSSELL ESTES

Tolerance,” said Maureen Costello, director of Teaching Tolerance.

Recipient Mayra Almaraz encouraged her students at Chicago’s William Howard Taft High School to explore the systems of inequality and understand how discrimination exists. At the Workshop School in Philadelphia, Rebecca Coven helped students transform their passion for an issue into action. Elizabeth Kleinrock, who taught at Citizens of the World Charter School in Los Angeles, not only shed light on issues such as civil rights and racism in her classroom but encouraged those conversations outside the classroom with the students’ families.

Meanwhile, at The U School in Philadelphia, Charlie McGeehan led reading and discussion groups for white educators committed to anti-racist action. And in Ventura, California, Danna Lomax sought to help students analyze choices made by literary or historical figures – a step toward students considering their own choices. Her curriculum has been taught across the world.

The awardees joined the Teaching Tolerance staff and the project’s 23-member Teacher Advisory Board for a three-day summit that culminated with an awards ceremony. Each received \$2,500 for contributions to the teaching profession.

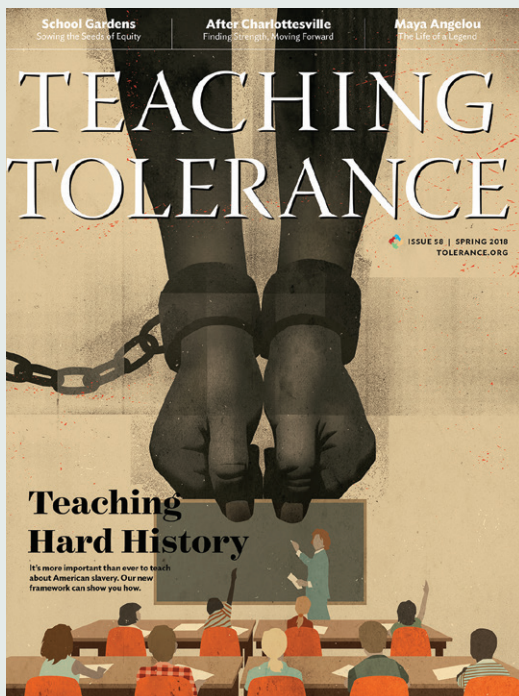
## HELPING EDUCATORS RESPOND TO ‘THE MOMENT’

When current events spilled into their classrooms in 2018, the Teaching Tolerance website, *tolerance.org*, was there to help educators by providing critical information on ways to responsibly incorporate news events into their classroom discussions.

“The Moment” is a section of the website dedicated to current events. During 2018, educators found web packages about responding to the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, teaching about sexual assault and consent, and promoting democracy and civic engagement during the midterm elections. Overall, educators found approximately 60 packages throughout the year, providing them with a timely and dependable online resource and further established *tolerance.org* as a vital online community for educators.

“There are many reasons I’d like to thank you, but today I am writing to thank you for the pieces you have shared to help teachers, schools and communities navigate the current ‘Moment,’” a high school science teacher from Rochester, New York, wrote to Teaching Tolerance. “Every time I have needed information, background, lesson plans or even just a place where I can find thoughts that help me gather mine, I have found it through Teaching Tolerance.”





Teaching Tolerance magazine, Spring 2018

## TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINE

Throughout the year, educators across the country could open the pages of *Teaching Tolerance* magazine and find insightful articles with tools and strategies to improve their practice and turn K-12 schools into strong communities where all students have the opportunity to learn.

The Spring issue provided a sneak preview of *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery* – Teaching Tolerance’s new initiative to help educators better teach about slavery and how this essential part of American history affects our present. The Summer issue examined how some schools are offering hope to young people as their families and communities struggle with the fallout of opioid addiction.

The Fall issue looked at “the school-to-deportation pipeline,” where zero-tolerance discipline can devastate the futures of students who may end up in immigrant detention centers – or even deported – for minor infractions.

*Teaching Tolerance* has been recognized frequently for journalistic excellence, garnering numerous accolades including the Golden Lamp from the Association of American Publishers and Green Eyeshade Awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.

The magazine reaches about 450,000 educators and schools in every state. It can be read at [tolerance.org/magazine/archive](https://tolerance.org/magazine/archive).

# SPOTLIGHT

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## TEACHING THE 'HARD HISTORY' OF AMERICAN SLAVERY

In 2018, Teaching Tolerance released the results of a yearlong survey that examined what American schoolchildren are learning about slavery and its continuing legacy.

The results revealed the sweeping lack of guidance from states and their textbooks about what and how to teach about this essential part of American history. This deficit was reflected in a dearth of knowledge about slavery among young people. Researchers collected information in four ways: a survey of high school seniors; a survey of teachers; a review of selected state standards; and a review of popular textbooks.

To report the results, Teaching Tolerance released *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery*, which identifies the shortcomings in how this history is taught and recommends steps to do it justice.

"If we are to move past our racial differences, schools must do a better job of teaching American slavery and all the ways it continues to impact American society, including poverty rates, mass incarceration and education," said Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello.

Alarming, only 8 percent of high school seniors surveyed could identify slavery as the central cause of the Civil War. Most didn't know an amendment to the U.S. Constitution formally ended slavery. Fewer than half (44 percent) correctly answered that slavery was legal in all colonies during the American Revolution.

"This report places an urgent call on educators, curriculum writers and policymakers to confront the harsh realities of slavery and

racial injustice," Costello said. "Learning about slavery is essential for us to bridge the racial differences that continue to divide our nation."

In response to the findings, Costello's team assembled a framework to help educators teach the hard history of slavery.

These free resources are available online and are designed to help young people understand the role slavery played in the formation of this country, the roots of racial inequity in America and its long-term effects on society. It also features over 100 student-friendly primary source texts, all with text-dependent questions, among other teaching tools. Educators can access webinars, a student quiz and a podcast series hosted by Professor Hasan Jeffries. The series brings the lessons that should have been taught in school to life through the voices of leading scholars and educators.

By the end of 2018, Teaching Tolerance had mailed copies of the report and framework to more than 100,000 educators, including superintendents, social studies curriculum coordinators and department heads, and high school U.S. history teachers. The Teaching Hard History podcast had been downloaded approximately 84,000 times.

Teachers can find lesson plans and professional development tools at [www.tolerance.org/hardhistory](http://www.tolerance.org/hardhistory).

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## STUDENTS CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES AS THEY ‘MIX IT UP’

As temperatures dropped and Halloween approached in 2018, more than 1.7 million students across America stepped out of their comfort zones to get to know someone new as part of Teaching Tolerance’s 17th National Mix It Up at Lunch Day.

The annual event, which was held on Oct. 23, reached about 5,000 schools and students in every state.

The event asks students to sit with someone new in the cafeteria. Since its inception, educators have used it to promote welcoming school environments for all students. The focus is on cafeterias because that’s where a school’s social boundaries are most obvious.

“Now more than ever in today’s politically and culturally divided environment, students need to sit and talk to each other, and see how much they really have in common,” said Jey Ehrenhalt, Teaching Tolerance’s school programs manager and Mix It Up coordinator. “When students of different backgrounds meet in person, they can see each other as individuals instead of members of a group, and this helps them break down barriers.”

Mix It Up helps students appreciate, respect and understand classmates who have different ideas and perspectives. Many schools plan similar activities outside the lunchroom; each sets its own agenda and activities and chooses its own theme.

“When students of different backgrounds interact with one another face to face, it can help to reduce stereotypes, prejudice and bullying, and counter the ‘us-versus-them’ mentality that our current national political conversation has inspired,” Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello said. “We want students to recognize that cliques, labels and physical appearances don’t tell you everything you need to know about a person. This is an important lesson that every young person should learn as early as possible.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KEIRA LEMONIS

## TEACHING TOLERANCE

### 2018 BY THE NUMBERS



## 4 million

VISITORS TO TEACHING TOLERANCE WEBSITE

## 900,000

TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINES DELIVERED

## 638,000

RESOURCES DOWNLOADED

## 600,000

VIEWS OF FILMS ON WEBSITE AND YOUTUBE

## 126,854

PRINTED RESOURCES DELIVERED TO EDUCATORS

## 105,000

DOWNLOADS OF TEACHING TOLERANCE PODCASTS

## 25,484

EDUCATORS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ONLINE (19,164) AND IN-PERSON (6,320)

## 17,970

EDUCATION FILM KITS DELIVERED

2,322	<i>Starting Small</i>
3,116	<i>Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot</i>
2,567	<i>Viva La Causa</i>
3,372	<i>Mighty Times: The Children’s March</i>
3,074	<i>Bullied: A Student, A School and a Case That Made History</i>
3,519	<i>America’s Civil Rights Movement: A Time for Justice</i>

### GRANTS PROGRAM HELPS EDUCATORS PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE

When high school teacher Abby MacPhail wanted to teach her students at the United Nations International School in New York City about housing injustice, the Teaching Tolerance Educator Grants program helped make the project possible.

The grants, which range from \$500 to \$10,000, supported projects in 2018 that include marginalized students, that promote an affirming school climate and that teach young people to be active participants in our diverse democracy. The grants fund projects at the school, classroom and district levels. MacPhail's grant helped her train students to be photojournalists documenting housing injustice in their neighborhoods.

The project kicked off by introducing her students to the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" – in particular the right to safe and decent housing written

into national and city laws. Professional journalists and photographers then provided training to help teach technical skills. Finally, students conducted fieldwork in different parts of New York City alongside housing injustice organizations, speaking with residents directly affected by the city's housing crisis.

"It's life changing," MacPhail said. "Students read about statistics, but when they meet people who've been displaced so many times, they see the personal effects of injustice. They start to locate those injustices in larger structural forces rather than personal deficits."

She points to the hands-on, real-world focus of the project as critical to its success. In the past, many of her students have viewed charity as the solution, but that standard has now shifted.

"When they tell me they're working on policy changes, following politics, following their local city council members and looking at which ways they're voting – that's what I want," MacPhail said. "I've done something right when I hear that."

The class presented their photographs and research at a city-wide education event and passed along the transcripts of their conversations with residents to the school's theater department, where the collected stories were transformed into a theatrical performance.

As a result of MacPhail's project, one student's thoughts about leaving her community changed.

"Growing up in the Bronx in public housing," MacPhail said, "the student thought her whole life, 'I can't wait until I get out of here because nobody cares about this community.'"

But the project made her realize that people do care. MacPhail recalls the student saying, "It's changed my vision of my future. And maybe I want to stay and work toward making things better."

High school teacher Abby MacPhail taught her students about housing injustice with the help of a Teaching Tolerance Educator Grant.





# ECONOMIC JUSTICE



In 2018, the SPLC sued North Carolina on behalf of Seti Johnson and others who have had their driver's licenses unlawfully revoked.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**RICK HOVIS**



In 2018, the SPLC sought justice in the courts for thousands of people across the Deep South who were being punished and exploited because of their economic status. Those living at or below the poverty line were subjected to discriminatory and abusive practices in the justice system. Many found themselves in danger of losing life-saving resources as the result of the Trump administration's attempt to shred the social safety net.

The SPLC was at the forefront of the legal fight to stop an administration scheme that would allow states to strip health care coverage initially from hundreds of thousands – and eventually millions of the poorest Americans.

In Kentucky, the SPLC won an initial court ruling that prevented state officials from taking away Medicaid coverage from nearly 100,000 people. The SPLC is also fighting the same scheme in Arkansas and other Southern states.

We continued to shut down modern-day debtors' prisons across the Deep South by combating practices that push low-income people into lock-up when they can't afford to pay court fines and fees for minor offenses like traffic tickets.

#### **SPLC SUES NORTH CAROLINA FOR UNLAWFULLY REVOKING DRIVER'S LICENSES**

In May, the SPLC filed a federal lawsuit that could reinstate driver's licenses for more than 200,000 people in North Carolina.

The lawsuit seeks to end the practice of revoking the licenses of people who are unable to pay traffic fines and court costs. The practice funnels low-income people further into poverty, in violation of their due process and equal protection rights under the 14th Amendment. More than 15 percent of North Carolina residents live in poverty. Revoking licenses for nonpayment without ensuring ability to pay disproportionately harms people of color due to longstanding racial and ethnic gaps in poverty and wealth.

**“I’d previously fallen behind on my rent and sacrificed the needs of my children just to keep my license. I cannot afford to do that again.”**

*Seti Johnson, North Carolina resident*

“No one should have to live with the burden of their license being revoked, and all the expenses that come with that, simply because they don’t have any money,” said Seti Johnson, a plaintiff in the case. “I’d previously fallen behind on my rent and sacrificed the needs of my children just to keep my license. I cannot afford to do that again. This has to stop.”

The lawsuit comes after the SPLC in late 2017 pressured Mississippi into agreeing to stop suspending licenses for failure to pay fines. The state’s decision opened the door for more than 100,000 low-income Mississippians to have their licenses returned. The SPLC also sued Alabama in 2018 for unlawfully revoking driver’s licenses.

#### **HOLDING NEW ORLEANS’ BAIL BOND INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE**

In New Orleans, the SPLC pursued its 2017 lawsuit against a bail bond company, its surety company, and an ankle-monitoring company. The lawsuit alleges that the companies charged illegal fees and that the bail bond company and ankle-monitoring company used armed bounty hunters to kidnap clients and extort money from their friends and family.

In March 2018, *The New York Times* published a lengthy feature story that examined

# SPOTLIGHT

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## SPLC FIGHTS TRUMP SCHEME TO KICK THOUSANDS OFF MEDICAID ROLLS

As the Trump administration attempted to unravel Medicaid programs across the country, the SPLC fought back across multiple states in 2018 to ensure low-income people are not stripped of their health care coverage.

After the administration approved a Medicaid “waiver” allowing Kentucky to kick nearly 100,000 low-income people off Medicaid, the SPLC and its allies filed suit – the first federal lawsuit to challenge the waiver scheme. The SPLC won an initial victory when a judge blocked the plan in June, stating that the government acted in an “arbitrary and capricious” manner in approving the plan, which would raise premiums and place new work and paperwork requirements on recipients.

After the administration approved Kentucky’s plan a second time with little change, the SPLC filed an amended complaint in early 2019 that sought to have it too declared illegal.

The Trump administration has encouraged states to request federal waivers as part of its ongoing attack on President Obama’s Affordable Care Act, including its Medicaid requirements. The SPLC is monitoring states seeking waivers and taking action to protect vulnerable residents.

In August 2018, the SPLC sued the Trump administration for approving a Medicaid work requirement in Arkansas that threatens the coverage of people like Cesar Ardon, who almost lost his benefits due to his unpredictable work hours as a self-employed handyman.

Ardon was a welder for 15 years before a surgery to remove a baseball-sized tumor in his ribs. He depends on Medicaid for treatment related to the tumor and other health problems, such as high cholesterol.

“I worry about getting sick and being unable to work and access health care if I lost my Medicaid coverage,” said Ardon. “I hope this lawsuit will help others like me. No one should have to lose their Medicaid coverage just because they are having trouble finding enough work.”

In early 2018, Ardon was notified that he would lose his Medicaid benefits unless he could show that he works at least 20 hours a week. He then got a notice telling him he hadn’t complied for the month of June, and if he missed another two months his coverage would end for the rest of the year. Ardon met the work requirement in July, but with spotty internet access, he was unable to access the

state's online Medicaid portal – the only place where work hours are accepted. When he eventually accessed the portal, he found it difficult to navigate.

“Arkansas’ Medicaid waiver plan has got the situation completely backwards,” said Sam Brooke, SPLC deputy legal director. “Cutting the health benefits of people who cannot afford medical insurance or don’t have access to the internet or a computer will not make them healthier. Medicaid is not a work or computer literacy program; it is a program to help people who cannot afford health insurance get the medical coverage they need to stay healthy.”

The SPLC is also urging the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reject Alabama’s application for a waiver that would allow it to impose work requirements on adult caregivers of dependent children – a plan that would strip coverage from thousands.

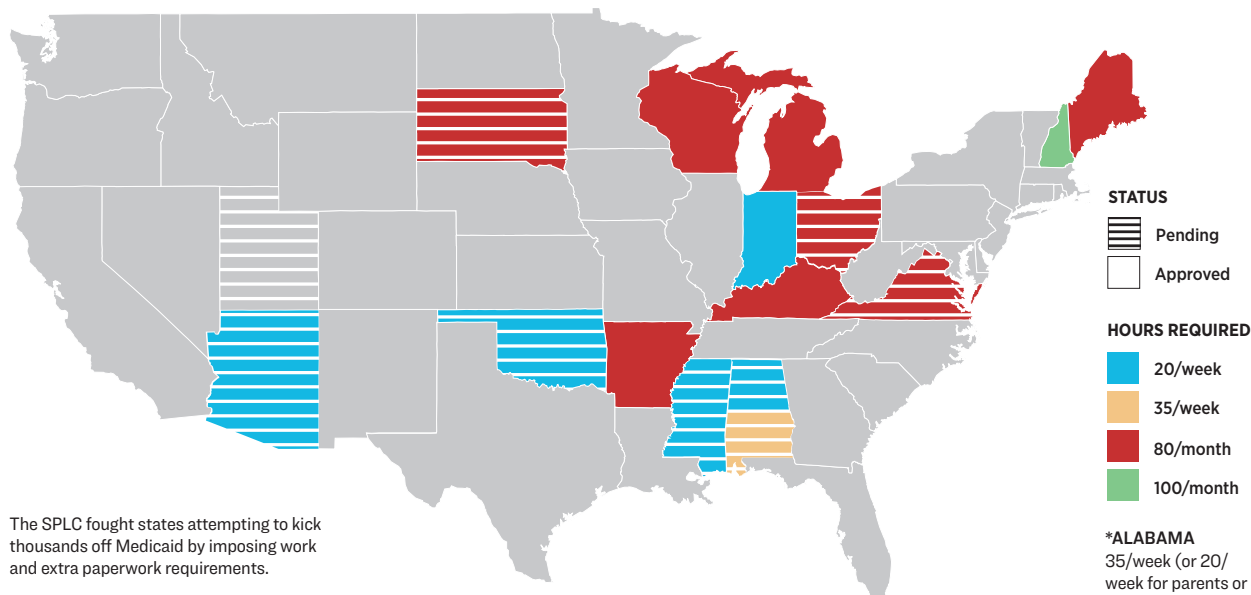
“It creates a ‘Catch-22’ scenario in which these individuals would end up earning too much money to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to pay for private insurance,” Brooke said. “This plan will ultimately force families to rely on emergency rooms – subsidized by taxpayers – for routine health services. It is wasteful and puts lives at risk.”

“This plan will ultimately force families to rely on emergency rooms – subsidized by taxpayers – by routine health services. It is wasteful and puts lives at risk.”

*Sam Brooke, SPLC deputy legal director*



## APPROVED AND PENDING MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS (AS OF JAN. 3, 2019)



**SOURCE**  
KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

the SPLC case and the bail bond industry, highlighting how the “use of bail bonds has come under attack in recent years because it keeps the poorest, rather than the most dangerous, defendants behind bars.” The article also noted that despite states reforming the practice, “the bond industry has worked to undermine reforms and regulations.”

#### EXPOSING CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE ABUSES IN ALABAMA

The SPLC and the Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice released *Forfeiting Your Rights*, an investigative report that examined the use of civil asset forfeiture in Alabama. The investigative report paints a disturbing picture of a legal process that initially was intended to strip illicit profits from drug kingpins but has evolved into a revenue-generating scheme for law enforcement – one that is now being widely used against people accused of low-level crimes, particularly marijuana offenses, or no crime at all.

The report found that courts in 14 Alabama counties awarded \$2.2 million to law

enforcement agencies through civil asset forfeiture actions filed in 2015 – and in a quarter of the 1,100 cases, law enforcement sought to keep property seized from people who were never even charged with a crime. Under state law, these agencies get to keep any assets that are forfeited, with little accountability.

The SPLC is urging Alabama lawmakers to reform the system and to bring transparency and accountability to the process. We believe that civil asset forfeiture should be eliminated and that any forfeiture process should be part of criminal proceedings that end with a conviction.



Using civil asset forfeiture, prosecutors in Dothan, Ala., seized \$25,000 from Jamey Vibbert – even though he was not guilty of any crime. The SPLC helped expose this practice in the report *Forfeiting Your Rights*.

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
MICHELLE  
LELAND**

## **SPLC LAWSUIT SETTLEMENT ENDS DEBTORS' PRISON IN CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI**

In April, the SPLC settled a class action lawsuit in Corinth, Mississippi, ending a modern-day debtors' prison in a city that incarcerated people unable to pay court fines or money bail.

The federal lawsuit, filed by the SPLC and the MacArthur Justice Center, describes how the city's court system routinely violated the constitutional rights of people facing misdemeanor or municipal charges by holding them in jail until they paid bail money or their fine, without taking into account their ability to pay, as required by law.

Brian Howell, 28, a plaintiff in the case, was left unemployed after a car accident left him with one leg. He amassed \$1,000 in court fines due to three traffic violations in the city. He explained to the judge he was unable to pay the fines until he started receiving Social Security disability payments, but the judge sent him to jail anyway.

Howell's time in jail was to be credited toward his debt at a rate of \$25 per day. But he was released after

nine days when the SPLC filed suit in December 2017.

"I have kids and a family that depend on me," he said. "If I had been forced to sit in jail for those 50 days, I would have missed important days in their lives, including Christmas and birthdays. I'm relieved that no one in the city of Corinth will have to face that reality only because they don't have the financial means to pay for their freedom."

Under the settlement, the city will ensure that defendants arrested without a warrant are allowed to see a judge within 48 hours. The city is also barred from imposing costs without first evaluating the financial condition of anyone arrested. People unable to pay immediately will have the option to pay in installments at a maximum of \$25 per month, or perform community service.

The settlement will eliminate a two-tiered system of justice that previously punished people simply because they were poor.

## **JUDGE RULES ALABAMA COUNTY UNCONSTITUTIONALLY LOCKS UP POOR PEOPLE**

The SPLC won a significant victory in Cullman County, Alabama, when a federal judge ruled that the county's practice of jailing people simply because they cannot afford bail is unconstitutional.

The judge issued a temporary injunction in September that bars the county from continuing to jail indigent people who can't afford to pay bail after being arrested. The injunction will remain in effect until the class action challenging the practice is resolved.

The SPLC and its allies filed the suit on behalf of Bradley Hester, who was arrested in July 2017 on a misdemeanor charge of possessing drug paraphernalia. Though defendants who can pay are generally released by the county within two hours, Hester remained in jail because he had no way to pay his \$1,000 bail. The bail amount was predetermined by a schedule used by the sheriff's office, and no consideration was given to his indigency.

The judge agreed with the SPLC that the county's practice violates the equal protection clause of

the 14th Amendment because it creates a dual standard based on wealth. It would also allow those with a high risk of flight to purchase their freedom and face no additional conditions, while those who pose no risk are locked up simply because of their poverty, the judge wrote.

The case is part of the SPLC's legal campaign to challenge longstanding money bail practices that fill local jails but do nothing to protect public safety or are needed to ensure that defendants show up for their court hearings.

"Jails are not meant to warehouse people who have not been convicted of a crime, particularly where, as here, the rich are able to buy their freedom and impoverished people are left to languish in jail," said Sam Brooke, SPLC deputy legal director. "This form of wealth-based discrimination that keeps people in jail just because they cannot afford their freedom is unconstitutional."



# IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



In 2018, the SPLC won a stay of removal for Manuel Duran, an investigative journalist who was detained after reporting on collusion between U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and local law enforcement in Memphis, Tennessee.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
BILLY BROWN



After the SPLC and its allies filed a federal lawsuit, a judge blocked a North Carolina law that prevented farmworkers from organizing. The majority of the state's farmworkers are Latinx.

PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY JEREMY  
M. LANGE



President Trump continued to turn his anti-immigrant rhetoric into action in 2018. His administration separated children from parents, blocked asylum seekers, and sent the military to the border. In response, the SPLC worked to win the release of detained immigrants, reunite families, challenge administration policies and fight private prison companies that are exploiting Trump's anti-immigrant crusade for profit.

Many of the SPLC's victories in 2018 are the result of the Southeast Immigrant Freedom Initiative (SIFI) – a bold project that uses SPLC lawyers and *pro bono* volunteers to represent immigrants facing deportation proceedings in the Southeast. The legal

representation provided by this initiative can literally mean the difference between life and death for immigrants facing deportation to countries where they're subject to violence and other types of persecution.

We also went to court to dismantle administration policies that have resulted in the widespread violation of immigrant rights, such as the administration's asylum ban and its policy of turning back asylum-seekers at the Southern border. As Trump told Americans that immigrants are "animals" and "criminals" who "infest our country," the SPLC remained steadfast in its mission to protect the most targeted people in society by standing up to the president and his deportation machine.

#### DEFENDING A FAMILY'S RIGHTS

In Hancock County, Mississippi, the SPLC filed suit after the Martinez family was detained by sheriff's deputies solely because they looked Latinx. There was no indication that the family had committed a crime. All occupants of the Martinez's van – including an 83-year-old family member – were in the U.S. legally.

For two hours, the family was detained on the side of Interstate 10. Marcos Martinez was threatened with losing his lawful permanent residency if he didn't admit to possessing drugs. His wife, Stephanie, was driven to tears when officers threatened to separate her from her three children. They were held in the sheriff's office for two more hours before she called 911 and demanded their release.

"It took me a long time to get my green card, and the officer was threatening to take that away for no reason," Marcos said. "I believe he was harassing me just because of the way I look. It made me so sad and frustrated."

Hancock County did not have an agreement with the federal government to allow its officers to enforce immigration law. The county and its

deputies violated the family's rights to equal protection under the law and to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, according to the lawsuit filed in November. The family's rights under Mississippi state law – freedom from false arrest and false imprisonment – were also violated. The deputies' actions caused the family significant emotional distress and undermined their trust in law enforcement officers.

#### **PROTECTING FARMWORKERS**

In September, a lawsuit by the SPLC and its allies resulted in a federal judge temporarily blocking a North Carolina law that prevented farmworkers from organizing and making collective bargaining agreements with employers, as the legal challenge against the law proceeds.

The lawsuit describes how the North Carolina Farm Act of 2017 violated farmworkers' right to equal protection in a state where 90 percent of agricultural workers are Latinx.

The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that the government cannot impose special burdens on expressive associations such as unions.

"This is a victory for North Carolina's farmworkers and their right to organize and bargain for fair working conditions as guaranteed in the Constitution," said Kristi Graunke, SPLC senior supervising attorney.

#### **DEMANDING EQUAL EDUCATION**

Coming from Guatemala, 16-year-old "Victor" was eager to attend South Dade Senior High School in Homestead, Florida. However, the school's administration claimed that because of his age and the fact that Victor had only completed the equivalent of middle school, he would not be admitted.

Instead, the school suggested he enter adult education, where he would be "better off." If placed into adult education, though,

"It took me a long time to get my green card, and the officer was threatening to take that away for no reason. I believe he was harassing me just because of the way I look. It made me so sad and frustrated."

*Marcos Martinez, SPLC client*

he couldn't earn credits toward a high school diploma. At best, Victor, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, could obtain a General Educational Development certificate.

In May, the SPLC demanded that the school system enroll Victor in a regular public high school where he would could participate in the full spectrum of educational opportunities.

"Miami-Dade Schools must enroll all students who come through their doors into a regular school program, regardless of their immigration status or English-language proficiency, as state or federal law requires," Michelle Lapointe, SPLC senior supervising attorney, said in a letter to the district superintendent.

Victor was allowed to enroll, and the SPLC met with the superintendent to discuss the district's responsibility to ensure equal education to all students, including immigrant children such as Victor.

# SPOTLIGHT

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## CHALLENGING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S WAR ON IMMIGRANTS

As the Trump administration waged a war on asylum seekers in 2018, the SPLC fought back in the courts.

In November, the SPLC and its allies filed a federal lawsuit challenging the administration's attempt to ban asylum for migrants who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border between ports of entry. The lawsuit describes how the policy violates both the Immigration and Nationality Act and the Administrative Procedure Act.

After the lawsuit was filed, a federal judge temporarily blocked the ban. And both the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court denied the government's request to stay the court's order. A federal judge has since granted a preliminary injunction, blocking the policy and dealing a serious blow to the administration.

"This is a critical step in fighting back against President Trump's war on asylum seekers," said Melissa Crow, SPLC senior supervising attorney.

The SPLC also joined a class action lawsuit in October as co-counsel to stop U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officials from using metering and other unlawful practices – including lies, threats, coercion and verbal and physical abuse – to deny migrants access to the asylum process at ports of entry along the southern border.

"The Turnback Policy has escalated under the Trump administration and has been buttressed by a wide range of unlawful tactics that CBP uses to

deny asylum seekers access to the protection they deserve," Crow said.

The lawsuit, filed in July 2017, describes how CBP officials would misinform asylum seekers, even going as far as to say, "Donald Trump just signed new laws saying there is no asylum for anyone."

### ENSURING A VOICE FOR THE VULNERABLE

In April, the SPLC sued the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for unconstitutionally blocking detained immigrants' access to lawyers. The suit is the first of its kind to highlight decades-long, widespread DHS violations of detained immigrants' rightful access to counsel in civil immigration prisons in multiple facilities in the Southeast.

"With this lawsuit, we are demanding that DHS be held accountable for the choices it makes," said Lisa Graybill, SPLC deputy legal director.

Because they are facing charges that are civil in nature, detained immigrants are not afforded an attorney at government expense. Yet, the United States detains hundreds of thousands of noncitizens each year, where they are locked up in remote immigrant prisons in the Deep South – often far from lawyers.

A large portion of detained immigrants are eligible for release on bond or on their own recognizance, but without access to counsel, success is far less likely. Research shows that detained immigrants with legal counsel are more than 10 times as likely to



succeed in their cases. When they have no access to representation, they often face an uncertain future – one in which they could be deported to a country where death is certain.

### **STOPPING FORCED LABOR**

In April, the SPLC filed a class action lawsuit against CoreCivic Inc, for forcing immigrants detained at Stewart Detention Center to cook, clean and maintain the privately owned prison for as little as \$1 a day in a scheme to maximize profits. In an important initial ruling, a federal court held that CoreCivic can be held liable for violating anti-trafficking laws and reaping unjust economic gains by doing so.

“CoreCivic is placing profits above people by forcing detained immigrants to perform manual labor for next to nothing, saving millions of dollars that would otherwise provide jobs and stimulate the local economy,” said Meredith Stewart, SPLC senior supervising attorney. “CoreCivic is padding its pockets by violating anti-trafficking laws.”

Immigrants who refuse to work at the Lumpkin, Georgia, facility are threatened with solitary confinement and the loss of access to basic necessities, according to the lawsuit.

“When I arrived at Stewart I was faced with an impossible choice – either work for a few cents an hour or live without basic things like soap, shampoo, deodorant and food,” said Wilhen Hill Barrientos, a plaintiff in the lawsuit.

Barrientos sometimes worked seven days a week in the kitchen, cooking meals for up to 2,000 people a day for approximately 50 cents per hour. He was sent to medical segregation for two months after he filed a grievance for being forced to work while he was ill.

### **EXPOSING THE DEPORTATION MACHINE**

In October, the SPLC released *No End in Sight*, a report that reveals harrowing conditions of confinement and disparities in immigration courts that cause many immigrants to give up their fight to stay in the United States – even when they have a strong case to remain.

The report illustrates how, for many detained immigrants facing court, the chance of being released is pitifully slim due to judges denying asylum at extremely high rates.

“In jail, you get your sentence and you know when you are free, but detention is endless,” said one man who was detained for more than 800 days.

According to data from FY 2018, 93.8 percent of the people held at Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia – one of the nation’s largest immigrant prisons – were deported or left the United States voluntarily. At LaSalle Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center in Jena, Louisiana, the rate was 93.5 percent. These numbers far exceed the national average of 67.5 percent, demonstrating how immigrants in the Deep South face a system where the cards are stacked against them.

In April, the SPLC provided immigrant families in Georgia, a state with multiple detention facilities, a guide for dealing with the detention or possible deportation of family members – *Immigrant Family Preparedness: A Guide for Georgia Families*. The publication explains how parents can plan for the care of their children in the event that they are detained or deported.

## **I SPLC INITIATIVE PROVIDES LIFELINE FOR DETAINED IMMIGRANTS**

In 2018, the SPLC fought back against the Trump administration's deportation machine, which has filled immigrant prisons across the Deep South with thousands of people and subjected them to the same abuses prevalent in the country's criminal justice system — inhumane conditions, low-quality nutrition and medical treatment, and rampant abuse — without the constitutional right to legal counsel. It's a situation that forces the vast majority of detainees to represent themselves in proceedings.

The SPLC's Southeast Immigrant Freedom Initiative (SIFI) is an ambitious initiative to provide legal representation, at no cost, to immigrants locked away in these prisons — representation that makes a successful case 10 times more likely for an immigrant. SIFI has provided a lifeline for many people in danger of being separated from their families and thrown out of the country they love. Some are facing violence if deported.

Here are a few of their stories:

### **MOTHER OF SIX FREED FROM DETENTION**

Morena Vasquez called Rome, Georgia, her home for 23 years after escaping the deadly violence of El Salvador.

The mother of six worked two jobs to support her family and enjoyed a peaceful life in the U.S.

It all changed in a split second.

In February 2017, she was asked to deliver a set of keys to a co-worker. Having never been able to obtain a driver's license under Georgia law, she was hesitant to drive but felt that the errand was her responsibility.

Almost immediately, Morena saw flashing blue lights in her rearview mirror. She was arrested and later sent to Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia — an immigrant prison far from her children.

She would remain there for a year as she was repeatedly denied bond. Even after a judge decided Morena had the right to permanently stay in the U.S., Immigration and Customs Enforcement fought the decision.

As the situation became almost too much to bear, SIFI took her case. In February 2018, she was finally granted bond and released.

"Morena is like thousands of other women who bring their children to the U.S. in order to protect them

from violence and death in their home countries, and who become productive members of society after they arrive," said SIFI attorney Elizabeth Matherne.

Morena is now thriving after being reunited with her children. In November 2018, she attended an SPLC staff meeting, telling the gathered employees, "God sent me the angel I prayed for."

She also offered some advice: "No paren y siguen luchando."

Translation: "Don't stop and keep fighting."

### **FATHER AND SON REUNITED**

José fled Honduras in May 2018 after his life was threatened by the same drug traffickers who killed his uncle.

With his 3-year-old son Josecito, he arrived in the U.S. to seek asylum in the way the government says is proper.

While father and son were detained in Hidalgo, Texas, an officer came to take Josecito to the bathroom. José believed the boy would be right back.

He wouldn't see him again for nearly two months.

Josecito was taken to a shelter for immigrant children in Glendale, Arizona. José was moved to Stewart Detention Center in Georgia — more than 1,800 miles from his son.

José was among more than 30 men represented by the SPLC who were seeking release from detention and desperately trying to get their children back. SPLC attorney Peter Isbister took his case.

"[José] couldn't eat. He could barely sleep, and when he did he was wracked with dreams of yearning to be with his son," Isbister said. "All he wanted to do was hold his son."

After corresponding with Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) officials, Isbister grew increasingly frustrated. The Trump administration faced a July 10 court deadline to reunite children under 5 with their parents. José was among the 46 fathers and mothers listed for reunification. Details, however, remained sketchy.

Isbister worked to ensure the reunion happened.

On July 10, José was released from an Arizona detention center and reunited with Josecito.

"I couldn't believe it," Isbister said. "I could see the clear, beaming delight on my client's face as he thanked God again and again."



The SPLC secured Morena Vasquez's release from immigrant detention, reuniting her with her six children after a year in federal custody.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ROBIN HENSON

## STAY OF DEPORTATION GRANTED FOR JOURNALIST

Manuel Duran was a respected journalist in Memphis, Tennessee, where he lived for 10 years and founded a Spanish-language publication.

In 2018, however, he became a news story.

In April, he was covering a Memphis event commemorating Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. It included a protest of local law enforcement's practice of working with ICE to detain suspected immigrants.

Manuel, who wore his yellow press badge and didn't engage in protest, was singled out for his reporting that exposed ties between local police and ICE in detaining immigrants. He was arrested, falsely accused of disorderly conduct and obstructing traffic, and sent to an immigrant prison in Louisiana.

The SPLC took his case.

"Manuel's case is part of a disturbing pattern where ICE retaliates against those who report on and speak out about its policies and practices," said Michelle Lapointe, an SPLC senior supervising attorney.

The situation looked bleak.

For seven months, Manuel appealed his case. He faced deportation to El Salvador – the country he fled out of fear of persecution – at any time. In November, an appellate court granted a stay of removal while the case proceeded.

"I could see the clear, beaming delight on my client's face as he thanked God again and again."

*Peter Isbister, SPLC staff attorney*





Journalist Manuel Duran was arrested while covering a protest of local law enforcement's cooperation with immigration authorities.

PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY **ANDREA  
MORALES**

“As a journalist who has dedicated his career to reporting on government misconduct, Mr. Duran faces serious danger if he is deported to El Salvador,” said Kristi Graunke, SPLC senior supervising attorney. “We will continue to fight for his freedom and to ensure he receives a fair hearing on his asylum claims.”

### HOPE AND DESPAIR AT THE BORDER

Near the end of 2018, SPLC Deputy Legal Director Mary Bauer made two visits to Tijuana, Mexico, as thousands of Central American migrants fled the poverty and violence of their home countries to seek asylum in the U.S.

Bauer’s visits were in conjunction with two SPLC lawsuits against the Trump administration – one over the asylum ban and the other challenging the policy of turning back asylum seekers.

What she found at the border was in stark contrast to the president’s fearmongering warnings of a lawless caravan of migrants threatening the United States. Bauer met with migrants living in squalid conditions as they waited weeks – even months – to request entry into the U.S.

“It is clear to anyone paying attention that the situation here at the border is a humanitarian crisis,” Bauer said. “What should also be clear is that it is a crisis entirely of this administration’s making.”

She reported that many individuals she met felt extremely unsafe in Tijuana, and that many were unaccompanied minors or LGBT people subjected to severe harassment and danger not only at the border but during their journey.

“It is impossible to stand in Tijuana and not conclude that our nation is failing in its moral and legal obligations,” Bauer said.

### ASYLUM SEEKER RELEASED AFTER MONTHS IN DETENTION

When Nicaraguans upset by the country’s changes to its social services program began to protest, the paramilitary asked Mario José Perez-Suazo to help squelch the demonstration by attacking civilian protesters.

He refused.

For his refusal, Mario was brutally beaten, labeled a terrorist and denounced by the government. He fled to the U.S. for safety in May 2018. During the 10-day journey, he carried with him a photo of his marred face from the assault, as well as an official document that verified his life would be in danger were he to remain in Nicaragua.

At the border, a Customs and Border Protection officer coerced him into destroying the documents. Mario was then locked up more than 1,100 miles away at Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, for over four months.

At Stewart, he was confined to a tiny room packed with more than 100 men and allowed outside for only 10 minutes a day. And for 15 days straight, he found worms in his food. After the stomach-turning discoveries, he refused to eat.

“In my mind, I thought I might never leave,” Mario said. “Every day, I was frustrated. I hadn’t done anything to deserve to be there. I was sick. I was sad. I was angry.”

But in September, SIFI secured Mario’s release on bond. He is now in New York City, where he is fighting for asylum, with his sister and brothers.

“I don’t have the words to describe how grateful I was, how grateful I am, to the SIFI team,” he said.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM



Hundreds of people rally for criminal justice reform in Baton Rouge. The Southern Poverty Law Center has worked to bring reform to Louisiana, a state that has been known as the world's prison capital due to its high incarceration rate.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
EDMUND D. FOUNTAIN



### SPLC FIGHTS TO ENSURE ALABAMA PRISON REFORM

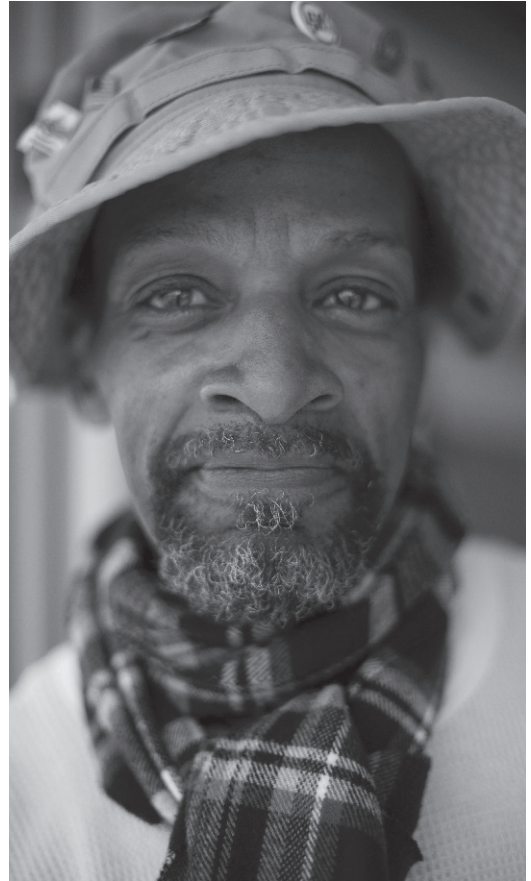
After an SPLC lawsuit resulted in a federal judge declaring in 2017 that the mental health care in Alabama prisons is “horrendously inadequate,” SPLC attorneys were back in court in 2018 to ensure the state implements needed reforms.

The Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) must implement changes, which include tripling its correctional staff over four years and hiring substantially more mental health staffers. The SPLC went back to court and took steps to have the state held in contempt – proceedings that were put on hold pending mediation and ultimately resolved through a negotiated settlement.

The litigation has helped change the conversation about criminal justice among Alabama legislators, resulting in ADOC receiving a total of \$80 million in additional funding for 2018 and 2019 to address failures the judge described as contributing to a “skyrocketing suicide rate” among prisoners.

During the two-month trial in 2016 and 2017, one incarcerated witness told the court he received only minimal attention from mental health professionals, and only while he was on suicide watch. Less than a month after his testimony, he died by suicide, alone and unmonitored, in a prison cell.

Mental health care is just one part of a multifaceted SPLC lawsuit describing unconstitutional health care in Alabama’s prisons. In 2016, the plaintiffs settled the first phase of the lawsuit regarding violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In that settlement, ADOC committed to provide services and fair treatment to incarcerated people with disabilities.



Wesley Shelton spent 15 months in Alabama’s Montgomery County Jail after being arrested with \$10 worth of marijuana. The SPLC has worked to reform the state’s draconian marijuana laws.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **VALERIE DOWNES**

Throughout the Deep South in 2018, the SPLC worked in the courts and halls of government to help end the era of mass incarceration and reform the criminal justice system to ensure the fair treatment, dignity and humanity of all who interact with it.

The SPLC challenged unconstitutional conditions in prisons in three states: Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. In Mississippi, a lawsuit filed in 2013 finally went to trial, where the SPLC outlined the horrors of the East Mississippi Correctional Facility, a for-profit prison where prisoners resorted to setting their cells on fire to receive medical attention.



In Alabama, the SPLC was back in court after its 2017 court victory to ensure the state reforms the prison system's mental health care system, which a federal judge described as "horrendously inadequate." In the wake of the litigation, Alabama legislators provided \$80 million in additional funding in 2018 and 2019 to address failures in a system known for what the judge called a "skyrocketing suicide rate" among prisoners.

In Louisiana, SPLC attorneys presented evidence of inadequate medical care at the Louisiana State Penitentiary – failures that have contributed to the state having the highest rate of prisoner deaths per capita in the country. The SPLC scored another victory in 2018 when its lawsuit challenging the state's broken public defender system was certified as a class action – a decision that will apply rulings in the case to about 50,000 people in Louisiana facing noncapital criminal charges punishable by imprisonment.

The SPLC also raised public awareness on a range of issues by publishing reports on topics that included stopping Alabama's war on marijuana, racial profiling in Louisiana and protecting the rights of juveniles in Florida's adult prisons.

#### **SPLC REPORTS RAISE AWARENESS, ENCOURAGE REFORM**

Throughout the year, the SPLC published reports to educate the public and policymakers and to encourage reform on a range of issues. Below is a summary of publications in 2018.

##### **STOPPING ALABAMA'S WAR ON MARIJUANA**

In October, the SPLC and Alabama Appleseed released *Alabama's War on Marijuana: Assessing the Fiscal and Human Toll of Criminalization* – a study examining the fiscal, public safety and human toll of marijuana prohibition in the state.

The study found that black people are four times as likely as white people to be arrested for marijuana possession in Alabama – despite studies showing people of both races use it at roughly the same rates.

In addition to racial disparities, it found that the state and its municipalities spend \$22 million a year to enforce marijuana prohibition and that enforcement has created a crippling backlog at the state agency that analyzes forensic evidence in all criminal cases, including violent crimes. The money spent criminalizing marijuana is enough to fund 191 new preschool classrooms, 571 more K-12 teachers or 628 more state corrections officers.

#### **PROTECTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN FLORIDA JAILS**

In February, the SPLC released *Destined to Fail: How Florida Jails Deprive Children of Schooling*. The study found that educational services provided to children who are prosecuted as adults in Florida and locked up in adult jails are "seriously deficient" and, in some cases, "virtually nonexistent."

It details how many jails and school districts across Florida – which prosecutes more children as adults than any other state – fail to meet state and federal obligations by providing little to no education when children are locked up in adult facilities.

The report urges the state to stop prosecuting children as adults. Short of ending that practice, it encourages several reforms, including limiting the number of children prosecuted as adults, ensuring that children are afforded an education while in jail, and better coordination between jails and schools.

The SPLC also worked to keep children out of Florida's justice system by advocating for juvenile citation programs, which were expanded – along with adult citation programs

# SPOTLIGHT

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## SPLC DETAILS HORRORS AT MISSISSIPPI PRISON DURING FEDERAL TRIAL

At a five-week federal trial, the SPLC and its co-counsel showed how more than 1,000 incarcerated people with mental illness have endured brutal, unconstitutional conditions at the East Mississippi Correctional Facility, a for-profit prison where incarcerated people resorted to setting their cells on fire to receive medical attention.

About eight in 10 incarcerated people at the prison in Meridian have mental illness. But the state does little to ensure they get the treatment they need. The bench trial concluded in April 2018, but the judge has yet to rule. In August, he stayed the case to allow experts time to tour the facility and update the court on current conditions.

“The Mississippi Department of Corrections allows this prison to fail at even the most fundamental tasks – keeping prisoners safe and secure, treating mental illnesses, and providing basic medical treatment and a sanitary environment,” said Jody Owens, the SPLC’s managing attorney for Mississippi.

“The result is a place so dangerous and so violent that it shocks corrections experts, yet the department keeps handing taxpayer money to private companies to run the prison and its services, rewarding them year after year for doing a horrific job.”

At trial, East Mississippi Correctional Facility Warden Frank Shaw took to the witness stand and could not promise that prison staff could even keep people locked in cells. A *New York Times* reporter covering the trial wrote in a front-page article: “So many shackled men have recounted instances of extraordinary violence and neglect in the prison that the judge has complained of exhaustion.”

The article included the testimony of an incarcerated person who recounted an attack. The man described how he was shackled at the wrists, ankles and waist as he was being escorted by guards, when was charged by another man wielding a knife and a piece of pipe. The two guards ran away. The man estimated he was attacked for about three minutes before the attacker was pulled off by other guards.

“They laughed and told him not to do it again,” said the man, who had been attacked by the same assailant a month earlier.

He said prison infirmary staff only poured distilled water over his wounds.

“I was in excruciating pain,” he said.

Three days later – after bleeding on his cell floor – he was taken to the hospital, where he was treated for a broken leg and stab wounds. When he returned from the hospital, he was placed in a cell next to his attacker’s cell, the *Times* reported.

Also at the trial, Mississippi Department of Corrections Chief Medical Officer Gloria Perry admitted that she has never visited the facility. Incarcerated people testified about being sexually assaulted and having to set fires to get medical attention due to the prison’s lack of staff. The department’s own testimony and documents showed gangs running many aspects of the prison.

The lawsuit was filed in 2013 with the American Civil Liberties Union and the Law Office of Elizabeth Alexander. Covington & Burling LLP joined the lawsuit in 2014. It describes the prison’s conditions as “extreme human rights violations” and “the outer bounds of what most humans can psychologically tolerate.”

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The SPLC went to trial in 2018 to protect mentally ill incarcerated people subjected to horrific conditions at the East Mississippi Correctional Facility in Meridian.



### LOUISIANA TAKEN TO COURT FOR INADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE AT NOTORIOUS PRISON

In October 2018, the SPLC went to trial over the lack of medical care at the Louisiana State Penitentiary – a lack of care so far below constitutional and statutory requirements, it has contributed to Louisiana having the highest rate of prison deaths per capita in the country.

The judge has yet to rule in the case. People incarcerated at the prison (known as “Angola” for the plantation that once occupied the site) have reported horrific stories. They include a man who was denied medical attention four times during a stroke, leaving him blind and paralyzed; a man who was denied access to a specialist for four years while his throat cancer advanced; and a blind man who was denied a cane for 16 years.

Since the case was filed in 2015, several of the named plaintiffs in the lawsuit have died, due in significant part to the defendants’ negligence.

### LAWSUIT OVER LOUISIANA’S BROKEN PUBLIC DEFENDER SYSTEM NOW CLASS ACTION

A federal judge granted class action certification in August to the SPLC’s suit against Louisiana for failing to provide indigent people with adequate counsel in criminal cases – their constitutional right.

The certification means rulings in the 2017 lawsuit will apply to about 50,000 indigent people in the state facing noncapital criminal charges punishable by imprisonment.

The decision represents a significant step forward in the battle against mass incarceration in Louisiana. It is also an unequivocal statement by the state judiciary that it will not turn a blind eye to the inadequacies of a funding scheme that relies primarily on fines and fees generated through traffic tickets and sentences that are imposed on poor people.

– after the SPLC’s advocacy. What’s more, the SPLC worked with the Caruthers Institute on a report about how these important programs should operate.

### FIGHTING RACIAL PROFILING IN LOUISIANA

In September, the SPLC released *Racial Profiling in Louisiana: Unconstitutional and Counterproductive*. The report found that law enforcement agencies across the state have failed to create policies and procedures to prevent or stop racial profiling.

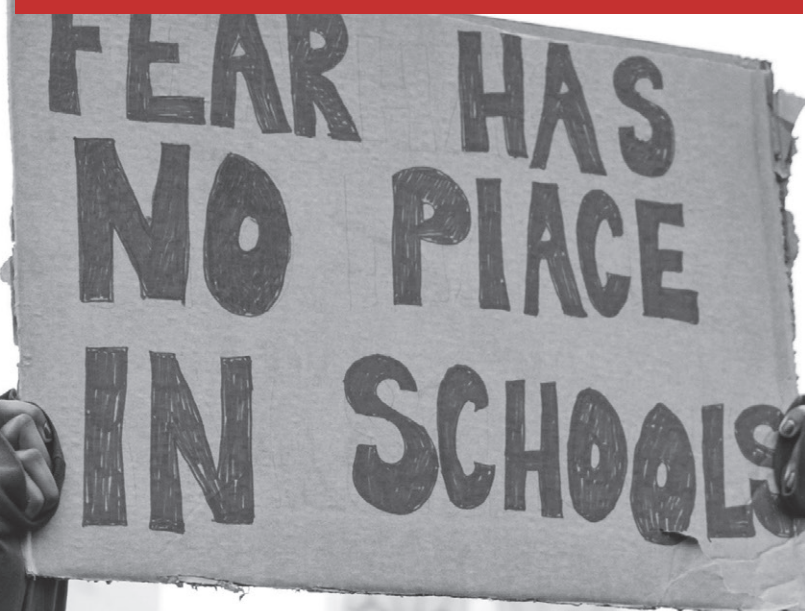
Racial profiling contributes to Louisiana’s high incarceration rate – one of the highest in the world – and to its disproportionate imprisonment of people of color.

However, more than one-third of the state’s law enforcement agencies lack any policy on racial profiling at all, and existing policies at the other law enforcement agencies generally fail to give officers and deputies the tools they need to understand what racial profiling is or what specific conduct is legally prohibited.

The SPLC’s report includes recommendations to help agencies maintain adequate policies, provide appropriate training and record sufficient data to prevent racial profiling. The SPLC will take the report’s findings to the state Legislature in 2019, pushing for a bill requiring officers to collect demographic information on police encounters.

The adverse effects of racial profiling are widely known and contribute to Louisiana’s high incarceration rate - one of the highest in the world.

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



ZACH GIBSON/STRINGER/GETTY IMAGES

Demonstrators hold signs in support of gun control reform near the White House in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 19, 2018, days after the Parkland, Florida, school shooting. The SPLC has worked to ensure that new school safety policies enacted throughout the South do not put more guns into classrooms, transform schools into surveillance states, or push children into the school-to-prison pipeline.





The SPLC sued to obtain documents that might show whether the gun lobby influenced U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' decision to allow the use of federal education funds to arm teachers.

The SPLC has been defending the rights of vulnerable children since it was founded in 1971. This work, however, took on a new focus after the February 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

In the wake of the attack that claimed the lives of 17 students and staff, the SPLC pushed back against efforts by state legislatures and education agencies across the country to use that tragedy to put more guns and law enforcement officers into public schools, and turn public schools into surveillance states where students' and educators' social media use is monitored, their movements are recorded on ubiquitous surveillance cameras, and their personal data is compiled into massive – and insecure – databases.

The SPLC also sued the Trump administration to obtain records detailing its plan to allow the use of federal education funds to arm teachers. The suit aimed to uncover documents that could show whether the gun lobby played a role in the U.S. Department of Education's decision.

## **SPLC FIGHTS POLICIES THAT ENDANGER RIGHTS OF CHILDREN**

After the tragic Parkland shooting, legislatures across the South responded with misguided policies that would actually make students,

educators, and schools less safe, not more. This included rushing to put guns in the hands of teachers and other school staff. They also sought new policies that threaten to push more vulnerable students into a school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately criminalizes children of color and those with disabilities.

Such policies only heighten the danger to children. In response, the SPLC fought back on numerous fronts.

In Florida, the SPLC sued a school district for arming inadequately trained “school safety assistants” with guns. The first-of-its-kind lawsuit argues that the Legislature does not allow local school districts to arm civilians. A victory in the case could stop such actions by local school boards across the state.

In Louisiana, the SPLC helped to kill legislation that would have required the arrest of children for minor incidents of bullying and would have eliminated any liability for educators who use force on children to stop minor bullying. The SPLC also was a key part of the effort to stop several bills that would have armed teachers and otherwise increased the number of weapons permissible on public elementary and secondary school campuses.

In Alabama and Mississippi, the SPLC helped stop over a half dozen bills that would have either armed teachers or added a significant and unsafe law enforcement presence in public schools, including a proposal to allow retired officers to “volunteer” as police.

The SPLC also fought successfully to blunt the potentially harmful impact of an Alabama bill that created a new and vague crime of “terrorist threat to a public school.” The SPLC's efforts helped to significantly limit its scope and use in criminalizing children of color.

## **STANDING UP FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The SPLC successfully removed an amendment from the November ballot in Florida that would have stripped locally elected school boards' authority to authorize and regulate new public schools, including charter schools. The proponents of this measure tried to hide



their intent from voters behind confusing language on the ballot.

The Florida judge's order to remove the amendment followed a lawsuit the SPLC filed in July on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Florida, arguing that the amendment – known as Revision 8 – could not be legally placed on the general election ballot because it failed to inform voters of its chief purpose, deliberately concealing its true effect.

Revision 8 combined the deregulation measure with two other proposals that were nearly certain to gain broad support.

Patricia Brigham, League of Women Voters Florida president, described Revision 8 as “a calculated deception aimed at shifting control over our schools from our locally elected school boards to state politicians.”

“Voters should not have to read between the lines to figure out what changes they are being asked to make to their constitution, and, fortunately, we have a process that protects their right to make informed decisions at the ballot box,” Brigham said.

“Allowing funds intended to make schools healthy and safe for all children to be used to arm teachers places the interests of the corporate gun lobby above making schools truly welcoming and inclusive environments.”

*Zoe Savitsky, SPLC deputy legal director*

## SPOTLIGHT

### SPLC SUES TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FOR RECORDS INVOLVING PLAN TO ARM TEACHERS

In the wake of the deadly Parkland, Florida, school shooting, the Trump administration began withholding records detailing how it unlawfully permitted the use of federal education funds to arm teachers with guns in classrooms across America.

The SPLC and its allies sued the Trump administration in October 2018 to obtain records that show which school districts are seeking to arm teachers and what role the gun lobby played in the U.S. Department of Education's decision to allow it. The gun lobby has long sought to put guns in the hands of teachers.

“Allowing funds intended to make schools healthy and safe for all children to be used to arm teachers places the interests of the corporate gun lobby above making schools truly welcoming and inclusive environments,” said Zoe Savitsky, SPLC deputy legal director. “Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has once again shown her blatant disregard for her role in protecting all of the nation's schoolchildren.”

The lawsuit followed reports that the administration would not stop school districts from using federal funds to arm teachers. The Department of Education cited requests from states as the reason to arm teachers but refused to divulge the states or school districts that made the request.

In an attempt to deflect blame after a bipartisan backlash, DeVos hid behind Congress, incorrectly claiming that school districts have the flexibility to use federal Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants to arm teachers. The SPLC lawsuit notes, however, that such use is unlawful.

The suit came after the administration failed to fulfill two requests for documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The first request was filed on Aug. 27, 2018, and sought records discussing or revealing the gun lobby's role. The second, filed on Sept. 11, 2018, sought details about the school districts that wanted to use federal funds to arm teachers.

The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. It was filed with Democracy Forward, a nonprofit legal organization that scrutinizes executive branch activity; the American Federation of Teachers; and the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

## SPLC SUES FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR ARMING 'SCHOOL SAFETY ASSISTANTS'

M.D. is a fourth-grader who likes to play baseball and whose favorite subject is science.

He also suffers from hearing loss. Before he was diagnosed and began using a hearing aid, his teachers sometimes thought he wasn't listening. Even now, the batteries in his hearing aid sometimes die and he is unable to immediately respond to teachers' instructions.

His father, T.D., is concerned about the new "School Safety Assistants" (SSA) Program in the public schools of Duval County, Florida. It uses armed safety assistants – who are not trained as law enforcement officers – to patrol public schools.

He worries that if one of these safety assistants gives his son a command and the hearing aid is not working, his son's lack of response might be interpreted as dangerous or threatening and put him in harm's way. He especially worries that because M.D. is black, an SSA might view him – as research suggests they might – as older and more threatening, potentially increasing the risk to his safety.

In November, T.D. joined a group of Jacksonville elementary school students and their parents as plaintiffs in an SPLC lawsuit against the Duval County Public Schools and its school board. (The SPLC is using only the initials of the father and son to protect their identities.)

The lawsuit points out that Florida law makes it illegal for people to carry firearms on school property unless they are law enforcement officers. It argues that the hiring of minimally trained SSAs, who are not law enforcement officers and are not adequately trained to carry guns around young children, especially students of color and students with disabilities, will pose a threat – potentially a deadly threat – to students. Jacksonville is the seat of Duval County and comprises the majority of the county's population.

The lawsuit is the first of its kind. A victory in the case could stop similar actions by local school boards across the state.

"With its 'School Safety Assistants' program, the Duval County Public Schools has implemented a misguided and illegal policy in the name of school safety," said Zoe Savitsky,

SPLC deputy legal director. "This reckless and unlawful program threatens our most vulnerable children, turning schools from safe, welcoming and inclusive environments into sites of potential danger and trauma."

Following the deaths of 17 students during the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, the Florida Legislature passed SB 7026, a law that, among other things, required every school to employ a "safe-school officer," either a sworn police officer or someone participating in a "school safety assistants" program. The Duval school district responded to the requirement by hiring SSAs.

The lawsuit notes that SB 7026 does not require SSAs to be armed with guns. The law also does not change another state law that bans people who are not trained law enforcement officers from carrying guns in schools.

"Arming non-law enforcement employees with limited training is not just bad policy that's against state law – it puts lives in danger," Savitsky said. "Children's lives are in danger, educators' lives are in danger, and trained law enforcement officers' lives are in danger. The last thing a first responder needs in a school crisis is the added uncertainty of whether the person armed with a gun is a minimally trained new employee or an active shooter."

**"Arming non-law enforcement employees with limited training is not just bad policy that's against state law - it puts lives in danger."**

*Zoe Savitsky, SPLC deputy legal director*

**144**

hours of training  
for school safety  
assistants

**770**

hours of training  
(minimum) for  
police officers

**POLICE  
TRAINING  
VS. SCHOOL  
SAFETY  
ASSISTANT  
TRAINING  
IN DUVAL  
COUNTY, FLA.**

*Source: T.D.,  
et al. v. Duval  
County Public  
Schools, et al.*

# VOTING RIGHTS



Twenty years ago, Dennis Hopkins was convicted of grand larceny. Despite becoming a productive member of his community, Mississippi law bans him from the ballot box. The SPLC filed suit to restore the voting rights of more than 200,000 people in the state.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ROY ADKINS



### RECLAIMING THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN ALABAMA

In 2018, the SPLC partnered with the Campaign Legal Center to create the Alabama Voting Rights Project, helping 2,000 people with past convictions register to vote.

The project stems from passage of the Definition of Moral Turpitude Act in 2017. The new law specifies the convictions that disqualify people from voting. Previously, this decision was left to county officials, a holdover from the Jim Crow era that disenfranchised 280,000 Alabamians – nearly 8 percent of the state’s voters – and disproportionately affected black Alabamians.

After the 2017 law passed, many people with past convictions had no idea they might be eligible to vote, because the state did not bother to tell them. Organizers with the Alabama Voting Rights Project and its allies worked to educate and register these potential voters.

“We try to follow them through the process, not only by helping them register to vote and find their polling places, but by encouraging them to get out on Election Day,” said John Paul Taylor, an Alabama Voting Rights fellow in Birmingham.

Rachel Whiteley, a re-enfranchised citizen who works for a re-entry program called the Neighbor Center in Mobile, said the voting rights restoration movement is a blessing. “Getting my voting rights back has made me feel like more of a whole person, a whole human being,” she said. “I feel more like a productive member of society.”

### SPLC ON CAMPUS REGISTERS YOUNG VOTERS

The SPLC on Campus program launched a nationwide voter registration campaign in 2018.

The “First We Register Then We Vote” campaign encouraged young people to vote by sending out voter registration kits to more than 2,000 college campuses. The campaign was designed to not only register young voters on campuses, but also to foster a culture of voting on college campuses, putting young people on a path of lifelong voting.

“Young adults are notoriously bad at showing up to vote on Election Day, and these numbers are even lower for mid-term elections,” said Kate Chance, SPLC outreach manager. “These efforts helped register tens of thousands of voters across the nation, shaping both local and state elections, and encouraging students to participate in our democracy.”

One of the primary barriers to college student voting is a lack of knowledge about registration. SPLC on Campus provided state-specific information, such as residency requirements for voting, registration deadlines and whether online registration was an option. The campaign also provided a step-by-step guide to hosting a registration drive.

The SPLC defended voting rights across the Deep South in 2018 as it worked to dismantle laws rooted in the Jim Crow era that continue to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of people.

In Mississippi, the SPLC sued the state to end a law that has denied the right to vote to one in six black adults, helping to provide a voice to those who have had no say in the political leadership of their community.

In Florida, the SPLC invested heavily in support of an amendment to overturn a Florida law that barred 1.4 million people from voting.

And in Alabama, the SPLC canvassed neighborhoods to alert people with past convictions that they are now eligible to vote.

These are just a few of the SPLC’s successes in 2018, but it is also looking to the future by expanding its voting rights work in 2019. The SPLC has formed a team of legal experts, organizers and data analysts to challenge discriminatory voting laws and practices and to fight for policies that expand access to the ballot box.

### HELPING RESTORE THE VOTE TO 1.5 MILLION FLORIDIANS

Ahead of the November election, the SPLC dedicated resources to help garner support for Florida’s Voting Restoration Amendment, which was approved by voters, paving the way for restoring voting rights to 1.5 million people with felony convictions.

In Florida, men and women convicted of a felony were barred from the polls for life, even after fulfilling their sentence. Their plight was another example of how efforts primarily aimed at stripping African Americans of their right to vote are still at work, particularly in the Deep South. When such felony disenfranchisement laws were enacted during the Jim Crow era, white lawmen frequently targeted black citizens for arrest on minor or trumped-up charges.

The amendment, which passed with approximately 65 percent of the vote – topping the 60 percent needed – was a landmark victory. It will restore voting rights to Floridians with felony convictions upon completion of their sentences. The SPLC planned to work in 2019 to help these newly enfranchised people register to vote.



Herman Parker is among the one in six African Americans in Mississippi who can't vote because of a Jim Crow-era law that deliberately sought to disenfranchise the state's black population.

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ROY ADKINS**

# SPOTLIGHT

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## SPLC SUES TO RESTORE VOTING RIGHTS FOR MISSISSIPPIANS

More than a century ago, Mississippi adopted a state constitution that was specifically intended to prevent freed slaves and their descendants from gaining political influence, in part by blocking their access to the ballot box.

It was one of many political acts that ushered in Jim Crow, the legalized system of white supremacy that reigned for more than 70 years in the Deep South after Reconstruction.

Today, a provision of Mississippi's 1890 constitution – a lifetime voting ban for anyone convicted of certain felonies – is still having its intended effect: One in six black adults in the state can't cast a ballot.

In March 2018, the SPLC filed a class action lawsuit that seeks to overturn the ban and restore the voting rights of more than 200,000 people.

"The lifetime voting ban is an extension of slavery and white supremacy," said Jody Owens, managing attorney for the SPLC in Mississippi. "Our clients are citizens who made a mistake long ago, and now live and work alongside us, pay taxes, worship with us, fight in our wars, send their children to school with ours, and are equal members of our society in every way save one: They have no say in our representation in Mississippi and in Washington."

The SPLC suit explains that the law violates the 14th Amendment because it arbitrarily grants or deprives citizens of the right to vote and was intended to discriminate on the basis of race. It also violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment and the First Amendment right to political expression and association.

Herman Parker, who lost his right to vote when he was convicted of grand larceny in 1993, has been silenced at the ballot box by this law.

"I'm a husband and father of two beautiful children, and I'm proud to have worked for the city of Vicksburg's housing authority for over a decade," said Parker, a plaintiff in the case. "I'm not that 19-year-old boy anymore – I'm a man and deserve a voice in government because of who I am today."

Under the Mississippi law, the state Legislature can restore an individual's right, but that rarely happens. More than 14 years after completing his sentence, Parker persuaded a state representative to sponsor a bill to restore his voting rights. The state House of Representatives voted in favor of it, but it failed in the Senate.

Dennis Hopkins, another plaintiff, would also like his voting rights restored.

In the 20 years since he was convicted of grand larceny, Hopkins has become an active member of his Mississippi community. He owns a towing business. He coaches T-ball, baseball and softball teams, and founded a championship-winning pee-wee football team. He and his wife of 13 years – an elementary teacher and school bus driver – have been foster and adoptive parents, and they are raising eight children.

"In school, they teach our kids that everybody's vote counts, but no matter how I've lived for the past 20 years, I don't count, not my values or my experience," Hopkins said. "I have paid Mississippi what I owe it in full, but I still can't cast my vote for my children's future."





# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Almost 50 years ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center began as a small storefront in Montgomery, Alabama, with three employees and a typewriter. In the ensuing years, the SPLC has toppled institutional racism and stamped out remnants of Jim Crow segregation; destroyed some of the nation's most violent white supremacist groups; and protected the civil rights of the exploited, the marginalized and the forgotten.

Today, the SPLC remains on the cutting edge of social justice with more than 360 staffers working in offices in five Southern states and the District of Columbia. One thing, however, has remained constant: The SPLC's work would not be possible without the support of people who understand that the fight for equality is not over.

We do not accept government funds, nor do we accept compensation from the people we help. In short, the SPLC is powered by individuals committed to justice – more than 400,000 supporters in all 50 states.

#### **SPLC CHARITABLE STATUS & MANAGEMENT**

The Southern Poverty Law Center was incorporated in 1971 and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The SPLC tax identification number is 63-0598743. All contributions, grants and bequests to the Southern Poverty Law Center are tax deductible.

The SPLC's work is supported primarily through donor contributions. No government funds are received or used for its efforts.

During its last fiscal year, the SPLC and Action Fund spent approximately 71.7 percent of their total expenses on program services. At the end of the fiscal year, the SPLC's endowment – composed of board-designated funds to support future work – stood at \$471 million. The SPLC is proud of the stewardship of its resources.

### **Board of Directors**

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Viet Dang

#### **Security Director**

Huey Thornton



## OPERATING AND ACTION FUNDS

### ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 9,325,818
Contributions receivable	8,234,650
Other receivables	2,813,021
Inventory	442,299
Prepaid expenses	2,067,884
Investments of gift annuity program	10,038,544
Other investments	458,548
Land, buildings and equipment, at cost less accumulated depreciation	14,148,098
<b>Total operating fund assets</b>	<b>\$47,528,862</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 3,307,941
Gift annuity liability	7,453,231
Long-term debt	15,000,000
<b>Total operating fund liabilities</b>	<b>25,761,172</b>
Unrestricted net assets - operating fund	16,314,994
Temporarily restricted net assets - operating fund	5,452,696
<b>Total net assets - operating fund</b>	<b>21,767,690</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUND LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$47,528,862</b>

*A copy of the SPLC's audited financial statement is available upon request and at [splcenter.org](http://splcenter.org).*

## ENDOWMENT FUND

Shortly after the SPLC was founded, the board of directors decided to begin setting aside a portion of the organization's donations to build an endowment that would help sustain its programs, fund new projects and lawsuits as the need arises, and protect it from economic downturns. The endowment ensures that the SPLC has the financial strength to address, over the long haul, the entrenched problems our country faces.

### ASSETS

Cash funds	\$ 47,998,409
Fixed income	
U.S. bond funds	10,203,645
U.S. Treasury inflation protected securities	632,710
Public equities	
U.S. equity funds	91,987,663
Non-U.S. equity funds	121,229,383
Private equity funds	59,963,612
Real asset funds	23,640,338
Marketable alternative funds	
Absolute return funds	25,483,276
Arbitrage funds	10,716,329
Long-short funds	18,982,109
Multi-strategy funds	60,209,132
<b>TOTAL ENDOWMENT FUND ASSETS</b>	<b><u><u>\$471,046,606</u></u></b>

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES****CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS FROM OPERATING AND ACTION FUNDS**

## Operating support and revenue

## Public support

Contributions \$ 103,121,371

Grants 4,231,901

**Total public support** 107,353,272

## Revenue

Investment income (excluding endowment) 302,926

Other 394,498

**Total revenue** 697,424**Total operating and action funds support revenue** 108,050,696Net assets released from temporary restriction 2,642,497**Total public support, revenue, and net assets released from restriction** 110,693,193

## Operating and action funds expenses

## Program services

Legal services 27,197,649

Public education 26,834,335

**Total program services** 54,031,984

## Supporting services

Management and general 9,859,674

Development 10,710,617

**Total supporting services** 20,570,291**Total operating fund expenses** 74,602,275

## Changes in unrestricted net assets from operating and action funds

36,090,918**CHANGES IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS FROM OPERATING AND ACTION FUNDS**

## Operating and action funds support and revenue

Contributions and grants 4,472,876

Net assets released from temporary restrictions (2,642,497)

Changes in temporarily restricted net assets 1,830,379

from operating and action funds

**CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATING AND ACTION FUNDS** 37,921,297**TRANSFER TO ENDOWMENT** (33,264,235)**NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR** 17,110,638**NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR** \$21,767,690





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was written by Brad Bennett, Kathryn Casteel, Christine Harrison, Jamie Kizzire, Seth Levi, Will Tucker and Liz Vinson. It was edited by Jamie Kizzire and Booth Gunter, and designed by Cierra Brinson.

## SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR** Russell Estes

**SENIOR CREATIVE LEADS** Michelle Leland, Scott Phillips, Kristina Turner

**DESIGNERS** Shannon Anderson, Hillary Andrews, Cierra Brinson, Sunny Paulk, Alex Trott, Claudia Whitaker

**CREATIVE ASSOCIATE** Angela Greer





## MISSION STATEMENT

The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality.