

**SP
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Annual Report

2024

The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

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Message from Margaret Huang, Former President & CEO

With so much on the line for our communities and a historic election on the horizon in 2024, it was critical that our efforts to advance racial justice in the Deep South were strategic, innovative and impactful.

We had to be clear-eyed about the forces we were up against and remember that movement work is always a process of progression and retrenchment. Unfortunately, we were — and continue to be — in a time of retrenchment. But we remained committed to protecting our hard-won rights while pushing our ideals forward.

We kicked off the year by fighting at the state and federal levels to secure social safety nets and make sure that people have the resources they need to take care of themselves and their families. An organization-wide effort, for example, led to Louisiana and Alabama appropriating millions of dollars to fund school meals for children during the summer. We also helped community members as they organized to hold their officials accountable — like in Gulfport, Mississippi, where residents influenced the city's proposal for community development funds, ensuring the budget equitably supported the most under-resourced areas for the first time in decades.

In 2024, we saw hate and antigovernment extremist groups continue to lay the groundwork to infiltrate politics and governance and enact their dangerous ideology into law. Pulling from the playbook of these groups, some lawmakers not only pushed their extremist agenda in legislation, but also spread disinformation, peddled conspiracy theories and preyed on

people's fears and uncertainty. These tactics were particularly evident in the 2024 elections.

With the election top of mind, we deepened our commitment to civic engagement and mobilization in our key states. In November 2023, Mississippi nearly elected a progressive governor. The race was the closest it has come to that outcome in more than two decades, decided by a slim 26,619 votes. That number can be accounted for in the state's anti-democracy efforts, like the removal of thousands of voters from the rolls. That number is also evidence of the new emerging majority in the South — evidence that change is within our grasp.

It's the possibility for change that motivated the launch of our bilingual voter engagement campaign, The South's Got Now | Decidimos. Through the campaign, we educate and energize young people of color in the Deep South as they build power as changemakers in our democracy.

As we set out to plan the campaign, we knew it would only be effective if young people of color defined the goals themselves, especially young people in Alabama, Florida,

Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. These states have for too long been dismissed as not worthy of attention or investment. But as history has made clear, this region is so often the birthplace — and the bellwether — of progress. And young Black and Latinx people have always been at the forefront, making history.

Alongside our voter engagement efforts, we continued to protect and preserve democracy. In this hostile environment for voting rights, we successfully led on litigation to block a voter suppression law in Alabama, push back on voter purges, and ensure absentee voters in Georgia had time to complete their ballots after receiving them late.

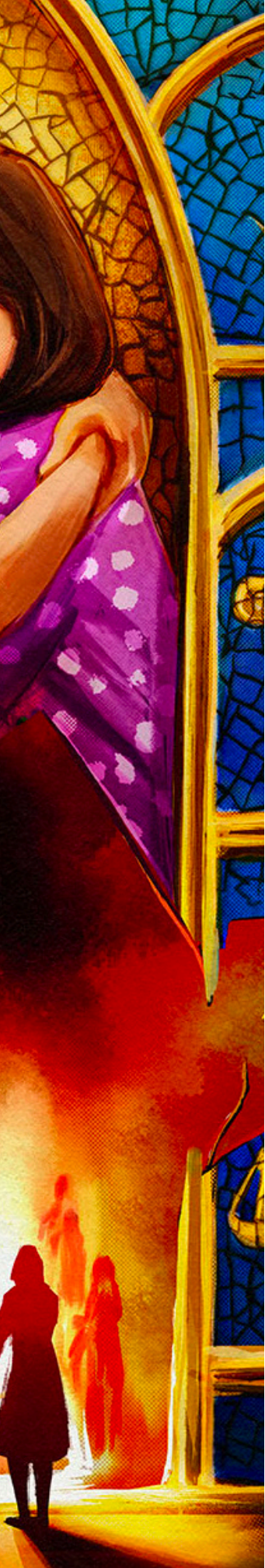
While voter engagement was a leading priority in 2024, our Legal Team also filed lawsuits to protect the rights of children with disabilities, ensure reproductive justice for pregnant people in the South and fight the criminalization of people because of their income level, among other crucial issues. We are also proud of how we chipped away at systemic injustice and aligned with our impact areas: dismantling white supremacy, strengthening democracy, eradicating poverty and ending unjust imprisonment.

I hope you spend some time reading through this report and learning about how the SPLC is meeting this historic moment — whether in the courts, alongside our partners or in our communities. We're grateful for your ongoing support and commitment to building a multiracial, inclusive democracy in the South and beyond.



Margaret Huang
Former President
& CEO, SPLC





In its annual *Year in Hate and Extremism* report, the SPLC's Intelligence Project explained some of the root causes for the growth of hate and anti-government groups.

Combating Hate

The SPLC works to expose the influence of hate and extremist groups and dismantle white supremacy. We investigate extremists and hold their leaders accountable for their attempts to sow division and destroy our nation. We promote antiracist, anti-bias education and action that prevents radicalization and moves us closer to our vision of safe, resilient communities celebrating diversity and inclusion.

A federal judge blocked the Florida Department of Education from enforcing a ban on the use of chosen pronouns and title against a transgender educator in the SPLC lawsuit *Wood v. Florida Department of Education*.

The SPLC's Intelligence Project released *Anti-Abortion Extremism: Inside the Movement Dismantling Our Reproductive Rights*, a report on the anti-abortion extremist movement's history, trends, key figures and strategies.

In its annual *Year in Hate and Extremism* report, the SPLC's Intelligence Project explained some of the root causes of hate and anti-government groups. The latest report, covering activity in 2024, documented 1,371 hate and antigovernment extremist groups across the United States.

In partnership with Interfaith Alliance, the SPLC hosted a summit bringing together Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith leaders and faith-based organizations to strategize against the rise of white Christian supremacy.

The Intelligence Project continued its collaboration with American University's Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL), publishing *Not Just a Joke: Understanding & Preventing Gender- & Sexuality-Based Bigotry*. It provides guidance on how to support and care for people harmed by those who hold or are influenced by bigoted beliefs.





Even as bomb threats were being called into several polling places in majority Black and Brown neighborhoods, Georgia voters continued to cast their ballots and exercise their right to vote.

Democracy

The SPLC has been committed to expanding access to the ballot and pursuing fair representation for over five decades. The SPLC works across the Deep South with community partners and organizers to engage and mobilize voters, restore voting rights to returning citizens, pursue electoral policy reforms and bring litigation to challenge unconstitutional and discriminatory voting practices.

The SPLC launches The South's Got Now | Decidimos, a bilingual engagement campaign to energize young Black and Brown voters in the Deep South.

State 2024 legislative sessions in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi ended with all anti-LGBTQ+ bills blocked from passage thanks to the SPLC Action Fund and community advocates.

The SPLC and partners filed *Alabama State Conference of the NAACP v. Marshall*, a successful lawsuit blocking Alabama's SB 1, which criminalized most forms of absentee voting assistance for disabled and low-literacy voters. In September, a judge blocked enforcement of the bill.

After an investigative report from the SPLC, the first Black mayor of Newbern, Alabama, reached a settlement to retake the mayorship after being shut out by the former, unelected mayor and city council.

The SPLC and partners filed a lawsuit, *Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice v. Allen*, in response to the Alabama secretary of state's plans to unlawfully purge voter rolls less than 90 days before the general election. A judge blocked the secretary's move in October.

The SPLC filed a successful emergency lawsuit, *Ayota v. Fall*, to ensure absentee voters in Cobb County, Georgia, had enough time to complete mail ballots after receiving them late.

The SPLC launched an investigation into racist text messages sent to young Black people in Alabama, Georgia and other states after Election Day.





José Young, a resident of Chickasaw, Alabama, was cited criminally for having a past due balance on his trash collection and water bills. SPLC attorneys are fighting the practice of criminally charging residents over accumulated debt in several Alabama counties.

Poverty Eradication

The SPLC is working to expand access to opportunity and eliminate racial economic inequality to reduce poverty. In addition to work in the courts representing the rights of those experiencing poverty, lobbying efforts on both the local and national level seek to level the playing field for those in need.

An appellate court judge reversed a decision to dismiss the SPLC and partner lawsuit *McEwen v. Lee*, allowing Tennessee families to continue challenging a private school voucher program funneling resources away from public schools.

An SPLC Action Fund effort led to legislatures in four of the five states in the SPLC's footprint changing course, voting to include matching funding for the federal summer EBT school meals program. Mississippi did not approve funding, the administration in Florida subsequently did not submit a request and Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp vetoed his state's legislation. But Louisiana appropriated \$4 million and Alabama added \$10 million to fully fund the program in 2025.

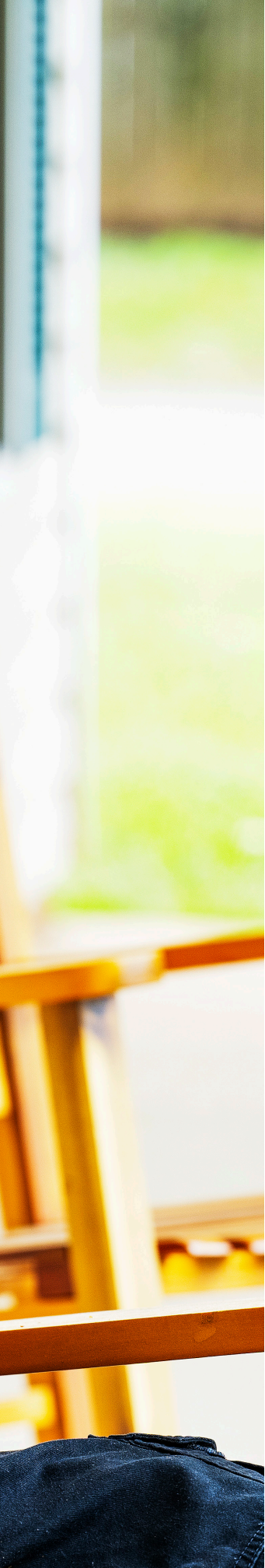
With urging from the SPLC and community activists, the mayor of Montgomery, Alabama, signed an executive order forgiving all unpaid municipal court fines older than 10 years.

After advocacy from the SPLC and community activists, the city of Chickasaw, Alabama, agreed to stop the criminalization of residents unable to pay sewage and trash bills.

The SPLC released *Learning Gap: Mississippi's Education Funding Disparities Deny Opportunities for Students of Color*, a report exposing racial inequities plaguing the state's public education system and how to fix them.

After help organizing from the SPLC Action Fund, community members in Gulfport, Mississippi, influenced the city's final proposal for federal community development funds, ensuring the proposed budget equitably supported the most economically under-resourced areas for the first time in 20 years.





Alabama resident CJ Jones told his story of being warehoused on in-school suspension at an “alternative” school for months without due process to members of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Decarceration

The SPLC works to reform the criminal legal system and immigration enforcement systems so they operate fairly and equitably; to ensure the dignity and humanity of those interacting with these systems; and to reduce the population of jailed, detained and incarcerated youth and adults in the United States.

After years of advocacy from the SPLC and community partners, the Pasco County School District of Florida reached a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice to end discriminatory predictive policing against students with disabilities.

The SPLC testified at the United Nations alongside young Black Alabamian CJ Jones and his father on racial inequities in the U.S. education system and the school-to-prison pipeline. The SPLC Action Fund’s five years of advocacy in Alabama culminated in the Legislature passing a law in the 2024 session to establish due process protections for students facing long-term suspensions and expulsions.

The SPLC filed a motion to challenge “pay to stay” fees Florida prisons imposed to collect millions of dollars from formerly incarcerated people.

In Louisiana, the SPLC reached a settlement with the Jefferson Parish School Board in its lawsuit, *S.L. v. Jefferson Parish School Board*, to amend policies that led to involuntary placement of students in punitive alternative schools without due process.

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a statement of interest in support of the SPLC’s lawsuit *Yellowhammer v. Marshall*, which successfully challenged threats of prosecution for aiding pregnant Alabamians traveling out of state for abortion care.

The SPLC filed a lawsuit after a Florida department failed to release important data on involuntary psychiatric examinations of children under the Florida Mental Health Act, also known as the Baker Act, in *Disability Rights v. Florida Department of Children and Families*.



Alabama State Office

The SPLC's Alabama state office is part of our growing effort to create change at a grassroots level across the Deep South, working with community partners to uplift and reinforce work to secure voting rights, economic justice and social equity for all.

Organizers worked extensively in the Black Belt to organize and support a network of underserved communities with unmet sanitation needs. They provided technical assistance to sustain engagement.

Organizers continued to serve our statewide water advocacy network coalition to strengthen education and stay current on wastewater advocacy policies for communities that are disenfranchised.

Through “The South’s Got Now: Beyond the Vote,” the Alabama state office designed and executed a multi-county get out the vote (GOTV) campaign targeting young voters, voters of color and returning citizens, particularly in underrepresented areas like the Black Belt, Calhoun, Etowah, Montgomery, Mobile, Houston, Barber, Macon and Russell counties.

Organized and hosted a voter festival in Mobile’s James Seals Precinct, a high-priority area for turnout. The effort successfully registered new voters and strengthened community partnerships for future engagement.

Coordinated a National Voter Registration Day phone/text banking effort and organized in-person canvassing across counties, with a focus on tracking and data-informed outreach.

Created a three-pronged GOTV plan and presentation for staff and partners, providing a clear roadmap for execution and impact measurement.

To support legal strategy development for a rural south Alabama community, the state office documented community experiences of systemic racism and explored ways to challenge entrenched local power structures and prevent harassment and intimidation of community members.

Built relationships with rural communities in the Black Belt, listening to and elevating their concerns around policing, land theft and racially motivated neglect or harm.



Photo by David Naugle



In July, SPLC Georgia state office and QuestCDC hosted the annual Westside Block Party in Atlanta which drew more than 150 participants and hosted 20 community partners.

Georgia State Office

The SPLC's newly created Georgia state office has hit the ground running, working to empower voters prior to the 2024 elections and work with community members on Atlanta's west side to improve economic and cultural growth.

The Georgia state office opened in 2024. State Director Yterenickia Bell was hired in May, followed by the hiring of an associate director for outreach and a regional organizing manager.

The “I Got 5 on It” movement/power building campaign engaged Black and Brown voters in Georgia over five weeks before Election Day. Staff and volunteers were able to engage with residents in 100 of the 159 counties in Georgia.

A get-out-the-vote text-a-thon was held with Delta Sigma Theta sorority, the Atlanta chapter of The Links community service organization and ACLU Georgia that had more than 100 participants sending texts to 1.3 million women of color urging them to vote early.

During National Voter Registration Week, SPLC Georgia partnered with When We All Vote/Civic Nation to increase visibility and awareness about the 2024 elections.

SPLC Georgia ran a door-to-door canvassing program in Cobb County with 20 canvassers knocking on 11,849 doors targeting all women of color in the cities of Smyrna, Marietta, Mableton, Powder Springs, and Austell by election day in November 2024.



MISSISSIPPI
GOT NOW
The Road to 60

From the
to the Pew
the Public

Scan to
more a
State
State

Mississippi State Office

The SPLC established its first state office in Mississippi in 2021. Since then, its Advocacy Institute has trained and empowered dozens of leaders who are now spearheading change in their respective communities.

Continued hosting the Mississippi Advocacy Institute, a nine-week immersive learning experience designed to train and empower community leaders with the tools needed to effect systemic change.

Launched the inaugural Truth, Poverty and Democracy Tour, traveling from north Mississippi through the Delta and into central Mississippi. The tour spotlighted the experiences of residents facing economic injustice. It was co-hosted with partners including ACLU Mississippi, the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus, One Voice, the Mississippi Poor People's Campaign, NAACP Legal Defense Fund and alumni from the SPLC Mississippi Advocacy Institute.

Through a yearlong partnership with Jackson State University, SPLC Mississippi supported civic engagement activities across new student orientation, welcome week, homecoming and other high-traffic campus events.

SPLC Mississippi launched "Levels to This," a dynamic, interactive game designed to demystify government structures and electoral processes. Through family-friendly, gamified sessions hosted in community spaces across the state, we've helped participants build a practical understanding of how federal, state and local governments work — and how to influence them.

With leadership from 2023 SPLC Mississippi Advocacy Institute Fellow Shequite Johnson in collaboration with the Sunflower County Youth Court, we launched a pilot program to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline in Sunflower County focused on addressing root causes of youth justice involvement, reducing formal petitions and recidivism, increasing support for students with special education and mental health needs, developing trauma-informed technical assistance frameworks and enhancing stakeholder capacity to support Black youth.



Skylar Kantola, a JEDI training specialist with the SPLC, speaks to members of the SPLC Alabama Advocacy Institute program.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The SPLC's Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) team works to ensure that the SPLC's values are not only reflected within its work, but within its workplace culture. Its efforts provide a strong foundation for the SPLC's mission as a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond.

The JEDI team conducted a second survey of SPLC's employees in March to assess the efforts the organization has taken since 2022 to improve workplace culture and morale. The results showed that the SPLC staff felt the organization had made progress in transparency and internal communication, both weak points in the initial survey.

In conjunction with the release of its survey results, the JEDI team hosted a series of presentations with employees to take questions and explain the results. The group also held coaching sessions with executive and leadership team members, offering recommendations for continuing to improve workplace culture.

The JEDI team completed phase two of an employee learning workshop initiative. The workshops, which were offered in-person and virtually, examined issues of systemic violence, an introduction to intersectionality, liberation and resistance to oppression across LGBTQ+ communities. It also highlighted the SPLC's work in dismantling oppressive systems of power. A survey showed at least

87% of respondents found that the session and materials increased their skills in identifying and intervening in oppression as well as harmful language and behaviors. The first phase of the workshop series, launched in 2022, examined the root causes of structural racism in the U.S.

The JEDI working group drafted a vendor-vetting process to help the SPLC ensure partners are aligned with our principles. The working group is composed of democratically elected representatives from across the SPLC. It works to ensure JEDI principles are applied within the organization and to foster a workplace climate that improves the sense of belonging and trust among employees while recognizing that disagreement is a natural part of work culture.

The JEDI team provided guidance and leadership support to the Alabama state office's first Advocacy Institute, a series of education seminars created by the SPLC to build advocacy skills among those most affected by systemic disenfranchisement. It also continued providing support for the Mississippi state office's Advocacy Institute.





SPLC's Learning for Justice magazine featured an interview with Charles Person, one of the original Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights Movement.

Learning for Justice

In our work with educators, families, students and communities, Learning for Justice seeks to uphold the mission of the SPLC: to be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

Broadened our focus to community learning to provide a pedagogy for movement building and justice.

Refocused our website as a learning center for online civic and political action learning with new and engaging learning modules that embrace learning across age groups (adults, youth and children) while maintaining space for educator resources for more in-depth classroom and school applications.

Tested youth action planning content and resources for LFJ's community justice site models at the SPLC Mississippi Road to 60 Freedom Summit in Jackson, Mississippi.

Led a student fellowship for 22 students on social justice and action across three HBCUs in the South: Dillard University (Louisiana), Tougaloo College (Mississippi) and Paine College (Georgia).

Trained school- and community-based educators on the implementation of Teaching Hard History and teaching critical practices for social justice education resources.

Civil Rights Memorial Center

A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), it is one of Alabama's premier civil rights sites and serves as the interpretive center for the Civil Rights Memorial, which honors the martyrs of the movement and inspires visitors to continue the march for racial equity and social justice.

The John Lewis quilt exhibit was installed from February through May.

The Wall of Justice area of the CRMC was updated in December.

Students completed the first-year activities for the Youth Leadership Institute, including training sessions, attendance at the MYSummit in Raymond, Mississippi, and other trips centered on education and health equity.



15K+

Paid visitors toured the CRMC in 2024

Acknowledgments

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