



NYCLU

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This was a year of historic outrage and defiance, of grief and grit.

Year One of Trump 2.0 has been an unprecedented, all-out assault on our democracy, our freedoms, and our communities — and with your support the New York Civil Liberties Union brought the fight in New York like never before.

The Trump administration has done everything it could to roll back the clock on civil rights and racial equality. It has gutted the Voting Rights Act, driven a shameless campaign to prevent Black and Brown people from voting and undertaken the most brazen partisan gerrymandering to eliminate Black and Brown representation in Congress and keep the Republican party in power.

Trump raided our neighborhoods and separated families; targeted protestors, critics, and academics; weaponized the justice and immigration systems; ran roughshod over due process and longstanding constitutional precedent; stepped up its attacks on women and trans people; and demanded our schools teach lies. The list of MAGA madness goes on.

They wanted us overwhelmed, fractured, and afraid. But we're New Yorkers.

Right out of the gate, the NYCLU gave state leaders a plan to shore up New York's protections, and we pushed for state action. We sued to stop ICE from weaponizing courthouses to make arrests, and we sued over inhumane conditions in ICE facilities. We condemned universities' capitulation and we championed the rights of students to demonstrate. We won new state protections for reproductive healthcare and we sued to challenge county and school trans bans that have been fueled by the Trump administration.

We linked movements together to defend democracy and led large protests to demand NO KINGS and HANDS OFF! We educated, trained, and organized thousands of New Yorkers to know their rights and build community power.

This is a precarious moment for our democracy. But I find enormous hope in the ways the entire ACLU family has responded. In the last year, we have taken care of our neighbors, organized and educated ourselves, marched in the streets, and held our representatives accountable.

And through it all we have made amazing music! Have a listen to NYCLU Artist Ambassador Shaina Taub's anthem for our times, [Huddled Masses](#). I guarantee it will help energize you for the fight ahead.

It will take all of us, We the People, to fight back with all we have — not just to return to the country and New York we had, but to build toward the future we need.

In solidarity,

Donna Lieberman

Donna



BY THE NUMBERS



SEEK JUSTICE: In 2025, we filed **41** lawsuits and amicus briefs in support of civil liberties and fielded **1,969** requests for legal assistance, whether for referral or for further investigation. The legal actions included **21** direct cases and **20** amicus briefs. Of those, we partnered with ACLU in **13** total cases in 2025: six direct and seven amicus briefs.



STAND UNITED: We brought together **96,391 members** and **131,657 donors** across New York's **62 counties**.



TAKE ACTION: We rallied **292,070** e-activists and social media followers. Over **11,000** people volunteered with us, including **2,000** who joined our ranks this past year. We monitored **104** protests with **321** trained protest monitors.

We've released a new suite of Know Your Rights materials to help immigrant New Yorkers, students, trans people, and others, and we've held more than **400** trainings to make sure community members have the knowledge and resources they need to assert their rights.

We couldn't have done all this without New Yorkers like you. Last year more than **56,000** of you sent over **215,000** emails to lawmakers urging them to take action to safeguard New York from the Trump onslaught. Our supporters across the state have been with us every step of the way.

Cover illustration: Ishita Jain

2025 IN REVIEW

In 2025, the NYCLU powered through the first year of Trump's second presidency and became an integral part of the ACLU strategy to make New York a firewall for rights and justice. We used every tool to push back against the unprecedented attacks on civil rights, civil liberties, and democratic institutions.

Immigrant rights was a major focus. We defended the rights of immigrants in court, challenging ICE's courthouse arrests and winning court orders to end the most inhumane detention conditions and to require access to legal counsel. Locally, we rallied the community in upstate Sackets Harbor to advocate successfully for the return of a family detained by ICE, and across the state we played a central role in mass mobilizations like Hands Off and No Kings. In Albany, we continued to push New York leaders to pass the New York for All Act to strengthen protections for immigrant communities. Behind the scenes and out loud, we pressured colleges and universities that capitulated to Trump and failed to protect academic freedom and student rights on campus.

Looking ahead to 2026, we mapped out [state](#) and [New York City](#) agendas for bold measures to fortify civil liberties against the attacks of the Trump regime. In this report, we provide just a few highlights, but for a fuller picture of our work, including litigation to make sure the NY Equal Rights Amendment has the power to protect New Yorkers as intended, visit the [NYCLU website](#).

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

Mahmoud Khalil's Release and Free Speech Court Challenge

The NYCLU, the ACLU, and our partners proudly represent Columbia student Mahmoud Khalil against the Trump administration's deportation efforts. Khalil, a green card holder married to a U.S. citizen, was kidnapped from the lobby of his NYC apartment building and imprisoned for 10 months solely because of his support for Palestinian rights. We finally secured his release, and we will continue to fight for his protected constitutional rights.

Nassau County Voting Rights Model Victory

The NYCLU and co-counsel secured a landmark consent decree resolving the Nassau County redistricting litigation, marking a significant victory for voting rights on Long Island. The settlement replaced a discriminatory 2023 legislative map with a revised plan that increased the number of majority-Black, Latino, and Asian districts from four to six and created an additional district addressing the prior dilution of Asian political influence in the Greater New Hyde Park area.

The resolution followed two weeks of trial and extensive motion practice, including emergency briefing on Christmas Eve after Nassau County attempted to remove the case to federal court. The outcome reflected tireless hours of litigation and collaboration among NYCLU staff and partners, including the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, the ACLU Voting Rights Project, and Steptoe LLP.

Student Suspension Reform in Buffalo

After a multi-year campaign to end years of extraordinarily high rates of suspensions, particularly of Black and Brown students, in the Buffalo Public Schools, the NYCLU, in collaboration with Attorney General Letitia James, won an agreement to reform the BPS district's disciplinary policies and reduce its reliance on punitive disciplinary tactics, provide meaningful support to students, and lower the astronomical suspension rates. Under the settlement, students will be entitled to a fairer process, including broader rights to a hearing, that should prevent some of the lasting harm to thousands of children.

PROMOTING EQUALITY

A Win for Free Speech in ICE Custody

The NYCLU secured a settlement in *PLS v. DHS* that affirmed the First Amendment Rights of people detained by ICE. NYCLU Director of Immigrants' Rights Litigation Amy Belsher explained, "People trapped in immigration detention, and lawyers like us, rely on written communications to relay deeply personal information about immigration cases and can be the difference between whether someone returns home to their family or faces deportation. As the Trump administration keeps arresting immigrant New Yorkers en masse and forces more people into these deplorable detention facilities, it's essential that people's First Amendment rights are respected and upheld." The settlement guarantees that detained immigrants can file grievances, communicate with the press and legal organizations, and participate in peaceful advocacy without fear of punishment or retribution.

Advancing Health Equity in Albany

The NYCLU helped strengthen protections for reproductive and gender-affirming care with the passage of a "shield" law to better protect providers and patients from out-of-state attacks on them. The NYCLU

continues to advocate for hospital transparency and health data privacy bills that would advance health equity and protect patient privacy.

Blocking Nassau County's Anti-Trans Sports Ban

The NYCLU won a significant victory for the Roller Rebels, a gender inclusive roller derby team, when an appeals court blocked a Nassau County ban on trans women and girls using county-run athletic facilities. The NYCLU is working to solidify the victory in the final stages of the appellate process. The ruling sends a strong message to the Trump Administration and Nassau officials lining up to do his bidding: New York law protects the equal rights of trans people and New Yorkers will not allow politicians to erase trans people from public life.

PURSUING JUSTICE

Challenging Racial Profiling: "Stop-and-Frisk on Wheels"

The NYCLU, alongside the NAACP and the Bronx Defenders, sued the NYPD over illegal vehicle searches, identifying a pattern of racial profiling targeting Black and Latino drivers and seeking to end this illegal, racially biased practice. After FOILING police departments, the NYCLU found that across all 78 precincts in NYC, Black and Latino drivers were consistently more likely to be searched after being stopped, with the highest concentration of searches occurring in predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods. NYCLU Senior Counsel for Criminal Justice Litigation Daniel Lambright stated, "Far too many Black and Latino drivers in New York City are treated like criminals when their vehicles are searched during what should be routine traffic stops, merely because of the color of their skin. The NYPD's targeting of Black and Latino drivers with baseless vehicle searches is nothing more than stop-and-frisk on wheels, and it must come to an end."

Protecting Protest

The NYCLU won a landmark settlement to rein in hyper-aggressive police interference with peaceful protest in the lawsuit filed in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd. The *Payne v. de Blasio* settlement established clear structure and oversight of NYPD protest policies with a four-tiered response system that prioritizes de-escalation and minimizes police presence at protests whenever possible. An oversight committee will meet regularly to evaluate compliance, while the New York City Department of Investigation will conduct detailed reviews of two protests every six months and issue public progress reports with recommendations. In this era of heightened national tensions and protest activity, these steps move New York closer to more consistent protection of free speech and assembly rights.

PROTECTING PRIVACY & AUTONOMY

Expanding End-of-Life Autonomy with the Medical Aid in Dying Act

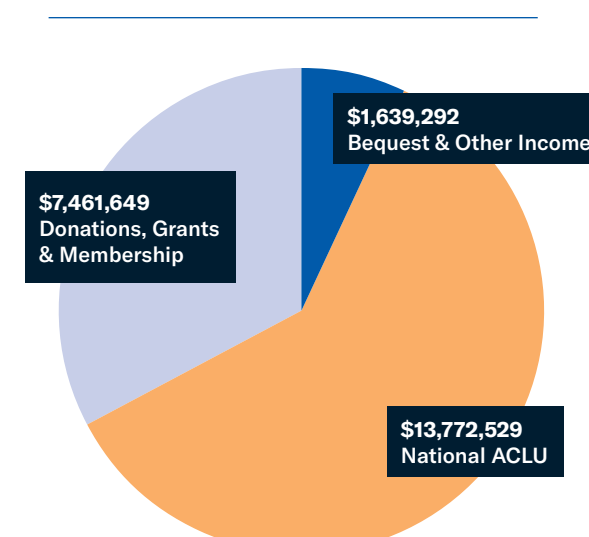
After years of advocacy, New York took a historic step toward protecting the dignity and autonomy of people approaching the end of their lives with the passage of the New York Medical Aid in Dying Act. The law gives terminally ill New Yorkers, under strict safeguards, the option to request medication they can self-administer to transition peacefully on their own terms. The NYCLU helped shape and champion the legislation, emphasizing that decisions about when and how to die rest with patients.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

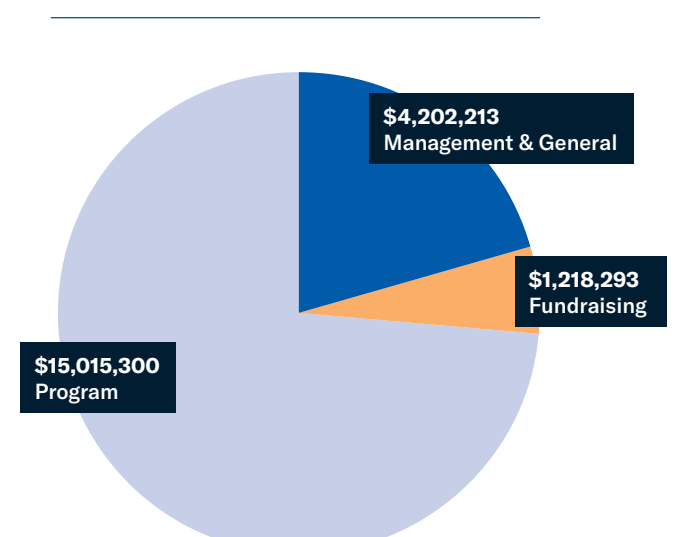
FY26: APRIL 1, 2025 – MARCH 31, 2026

Please Note: These are unaudited financials through 12/31/2025. Our audited financial statements will be made public upon filing at a later date.

Support and Revenue – \$22,873,470



Expense – \$20,435,806



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