

The **ACLU** News

Justice for All November 29, 2018, our chapter held a public forum at Champaign Public Library on legislative issues in Illinois. Khadine Bennett, Director of Advocacy and Intergovernmental Affairs with ACLU of Illinois, drove straight to Champaign from Springfield as the fall legislative veto session ended to report to us on the ACLU legislative agenda, past and future. She highlighted several key issues ACLU has been pushing for: ***The right to vote while in jail under arrest or awaiting trial.*** This right exists in law, but to effectuate it the Illinois legislature passed a bill to obligate jail officials to provide information on voting rights to eligible voters in pre-trial detention and those completing their sentences. Governor Rauner exercised an amendatory veto last year to remove the mandate that people leaving prison be informed of their subsequent voting rights. Khadine expects this initiative to be revived. She noted that these measures are already being implemented here in Champaign County.

Ban the box--A question about previous convictions is asked on many college applications. There have been editorials about the need to get rid of this discriminatory question, which deters college applicants. The bill would not prevent higher education institutions from considering the information after admission in areas like campus activities and career counseling.

Some legislative victories:

HB 40, providing Medicaid funding for abortion in Illinois.
HB 303 Civil Asset Forfeiture reform. The circumstances under which the state can seize personal property in connection with a criminal investigation and the previously murky rules for getting it back are now clarified and state discretion limited. Previously even an innocent person could lose property without clear recourse for its recovery.

SB 3503 Courthouse provision for nursing mothers. The courts must now provide private lactation space (not a public restroom) for all nursing mothers not just employees. An amendment to existing law also enhances the right of nursing mothers on the job to paid lactation breaks during the workday.

Khadine emphasized that ACLU members can do two things in support of state legislation on civil rights and liberties: First, let elected officials know (see p. 2). Second, when you hear of legislation enacted, check locally to see whether and how it is being implemented where you live.

MEMBER ALERT

Steering Committee Member Barbara Jones is working with Emmalee Scott, Director of Strategic Relations of ACLU-Illinois, on ways to engage all our new members. Soon we will be sending out a survey to determine your interests in volunteering for ACLUCC. In the meantime, please contact Barbara at bmjconsulting@gmail.com if you have ideas or suggestions about the survey or other matters. We have more than tripled our local chapter membership since 2016 and need your help on state legislation, local activities, and other ideas you may have. We are also considering local "pop-up" events for small groups of new members to get to know each other and the work of our chapter. Stay tuned!

INSIDE

The Founding of the Champaign County ACLU by Sharon Irish. For a more detailed version of this essay, including pictures and references, go to: <https://www.aclu-cu.org/>



SAVE THE DATE!
PROTECTING CIVIL LIBERTIES IN ILLINOIS
ACLU Champaign County Annual Meeting Sunday April 7, 3-5 PM
Robeson Pavilion Rooms, Champaign Public Library

ACLU's work with the state legislature is critical to advancing civil liberties in Illinois. Ed Yohnka, Communications Director for ACLU of Illinois, will provide updates on the status of civil liberties legislation and what you can do to help.

We'll have refreshments, a chance to mingle, and a short annual business meeting before the program. The event is free and open to the public. Invite your friends to learn more about how ACLU is working to protect our freedom.

STEERING COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

The local ACLU Steering Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm. Contact us for the meeting room.

OFFICERS

President:
Carol Spindel
cspindel7@gmail.com

Vice-President:
Carol Leff
carolleff1947@gmail.com

Secretaries
Richard Schnuer
rschnuer@gmail.com
Amani Ayad
amani.ayad@gmail.com

Treasurer:
Esther Patt
estherpatt@hotmail.com

STEERING COMMITTEE

Tony Allegretti
Amani Ayad
Bill Brown
Bob Illyes
Barbara Jones
Robert Kugel
Carol Leff
Ben Mueller
Esther Patt
Leslie Reagan
Melissa Schoepfle
Richard Schnuer
Carol Spindel
Marsha Woodbury
Karl Weingartner
Ruth Wyman

EMERITI

Susan Cohen
Harry Hilton

ACLU Supports Local Fair Housing Campaign

Our ACLU chapter is one of more than a dozen local groups supporting the Fair Housing Campaign created in response to the Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force recommendation to repeal Section 17-4.5 of Champaign city code.

Champaign's Human Rights law, like Urbana's, prohibits discrimination in housing and employment based on conviction record; however, Section 17-4.5 of Champaign's law makes an exception for rental housing: a landlord can refuse to rent to anyone with a drug-related or forcible felony conviction until the person has lived outside of jail or prison for at least 5 years without another conviction. Even first-time offenders who are sentenced to probation lose their fair housing rights in Champaign for 5 years under Section 17-4.5 of Champaign city code.

This keeps families apart, undermines efforts to reduce recidivism and has a disparate impact on African Americans who are more than twice as likely as Caucasians to be renters and not homeowners. In fact, 41.5% of African Americans in the county have incomes below the poverty level. If you live in Champaign and would like to sign the petition to repeal Section 14.5 or if you'd like to circulate a petition, please contact Esther Patt at 217-344-8394.

Donate to Champaign County ACLU

To engage more people in the ACLU, our local chapter has held more events at which we have not asked for donations. As a result, our bank balance is falling. If you are in a position to make a donation, a gift of any amount would be appreciated. Please send your check to: **Champaign County ACLU, P.O. Box 2651, Champaign IL 61825.** (Donations to the chapter are not tax deductible).

Sign Up for ACLU Legislative Alerts

We can't count on the courts for our victories. Legislative action is vital to the protection of civil liberties. If you sign up to receive legislative alerts from ACLU of Illinois, you'll only receive email messages when your involvement is needed. With one click, you can send a message to your legislator supporting (or opposing) a bill. To receive the alerts, go to aclu-il.org, select "issues" and scroll down to the bottom of the page to sign up. You can also join the local list to receive announcements from our chapter (about 12 a year) by writing to info@aclu-cu.org.

Help Needed for Immigration Organizations in Champaign County *Ben Mueller, ACLU C-U Steering Committee member, CU FAIR President and board member of C-U Immigration Forum and Avicenna Community Health Center*

On January 24, 2019, Governor Pritzker signed Executive Order (EO) 2019-7: *Strengthening Our Commitment to Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. He calls for state agencies to review existing contracts of community-based providers of services to the state's 1.8 million immigrants, and to create new resources to give immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers the tools they need to build good lives and contribute to their communities.

ACLU strongly supports EO 2019-7. ACLU has been at the forefront of national advocacy for the rights of immigrants. The Chicago office of ACLU leads the legislative and court agenda in Illinois to support these families. Champaign County ACLU has championed immigrant rights and comprehensive immigration reform as an important area of policy support and advocacy.

We also need to direct our financial and human resources to support immigrants and refugees in our county. Champaign-Urbana has become a magnet for immigrants from all over the world, some fleeing from war and violence, others from poverty and oppression. Almost a third of the roughly 20,000 foreign-born residents in Champaign County lack the most basic services, resources and security. Many of these families live in the shadows, often in fear of arrests or deportation without the basic rights most of us take for granted. Of a total population of 208,885 in Champaign County, 24,209 are foreign born and about one third of these are undocumented.

The Champaign County ACLU encourages its membership to get to know and support three local groups who are serving our immigrant families across the county: CU FAIR (Champaign-Urbana Friends and Allies of Immigrants and Refugees); C-U Immigration Forum; and Three Spinners. Visit their websites and Facebook pages listed below or contact by email listed at these sites to attend a meeting or community event. All are 501 c 3 Not For Profit organizations where donations are tax-deductible.

CU FAIR: www.cufair-us.com FB: CU FAIR: Champaign Urbana Friends & Allies of Immigrants and Refugees.
C-U Immigration Forum: <http://cuimmigrationforum.org> FB C-U Immigration Forum

Three Spinners: www.threespinners.org FB: Three Spinners Champaign

CIVIL LIBERTIES IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS IN 1940 AND THE CREATION OF THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ACLU BY SHARON IRISH

In 2016, I came across a letter from a long-time family friend, Mulford Sibley, among my father's papers. Mulford, writing May 29, 1940, from Urbana to his sister Margaret, pinpointed the beginning of the Champaign County chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. In 1940 Mulford Sibley was a twenty-eight-year-old professor of political science at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His letter documents how the ACLU of Champaign County was formed in response to a series of challenges to free speech in central Illinois in 1940.

On April 30, 1940, three University of Illinois students were arrested and fined for posting Young Communist League handbills "on property without the owners' consent." The three spent the night in jail.

Three weeks later, on May 21, 1940, UIUC student Aaron Bindman spoke against the looming war on the corner of Wright and John Streets in Champaign. He was arrested and claimed he was beaten by police in custody.

A third confrontation developed around a meeting organized for the following day, May 22, by a Peace Coordinating Committee. The event, held on the steps of what is now Foellinger Auditorium, was attended by several hundred students. Mulford Sibley was one of six speakers. Before the meeting, the Commander of the Urbana post of the American Legion expressed his concern about the "Communist Peace meeting." He intended to send men to keep order. The Dean, Mulford wrote, "suggested to the Committee in Charge that they mollify the Legion and soothe the feeling of the Commander by inviting a respectable preacher to preside over the gathering and the Commander himself to sit on the platform." Thus World War I veteran and former commander of the Urbana American Legion post, Carlos D. Renfrew, was on the platform along with the Rev. J. Walter Malone, Jr. of the McKinley Foundation.

The fourth and most violent challenge to civil liberties took place the following Saturday, May 25, 1940. Ten Communists from Chicago visited Pekin, Illinois, to gather signatures as part of a statewide petition drive to include the Communist Party on the November 1940 ballot. A mob attacked the ten and burned two of their cars. The Communists took refuge in the courthouse and were placed in protective custody in the nearby brick jail overnight. The following morning, several cars of vigilantes tailed the sheriff and state police as the ten were driven to Peoria, where they awaited the train to Chicago in the county jail.

The next day, Sunday, May 26, 1940, a group gathered at McKinley Foundation Presbyterian campus ministry near the university, and formed a chapter of the ACLU. Ira Latimer from Chicago ACLU was there, as was Aaron Bindman, the student arrested for speaking against the war. Nearly all sixty-three people in attendance joined the new chapter. The two chapter officers were:

Charles Hagan, a political science professor.

Harry Levy, a mathematics professor.

The steering committee included:

Edgar Barton, a law student.

Joseph Leo Doob, a mathematics professor.

Gertrude Esteros, home economics, chair of the Campus Peace Coordinating Committee.

Lucien M. Hanks, Jr., a psychology professor.

Mrs. Earl E. Klein and Greeta Leigh (Mrs. Wayland Maxfield) Parrish.

Mulford Sibley.

George Washington Goble, a law professor. Recently returned from a speaking tour of Europe, he had arranged for the local Bar Association to sponsor a series of programs about constitutional rights and civil liberties.

Ira Latimer was executive secretary of the Chicago ACLU from 1936-1955. A member of the Communist Party, in 1947 he became a vocal anti-Communist. Latimer recommended the new group meet with Champaign's mayor; pursue criminal charges against the police officers who allegedly beat Bindman; sue the police for false arrest; and file charges against the police chief. The Champaign group was less litigious and aimed only for a meeting with the police chief.

The Champaign County chapter of the ACLU died sometime after its 1940 launch and was resurrected in the 1960s by Victor J. Stone and others. Victor Stone, a member of the University of Illinois College of Law faculty from 1955-1991, served on the board of the Illinois division of the ACLU from 1987-96, and received the ACLU's highest recognition, the Roger Baldwin Award, in 2002. While the precise date of its rebirth is unclear, the Champaign County chapter of the ACLU is strong and growing in 2019.

Viewer Be Aware...*On the Basis of Sex* Widely noted in the comments on the feature film about Ruth Bader Ginsburg were some changes of fact for cinematic effect. Ginsburg says she was OK with the dramatic court scene in which she breaks down, even though it never happened. Less widely noted is the conflict created by the ACLU's seeming reluctance to take on the sex discrimination case in the first place. It is true that ACLU needed a push from activist women to make gender rights a priority. But Ginsburg was already working with ACLU on these issues, was co-founder of ACLU's Women's Rights Project and in fact, the ACLU quickly decided to go with the case. As Slate's review of fact and fiction in the film puts it: 'Perhaps the greatest victim of creative license in *On the Basis of Sex* is American Civil Liberties Union legal director Mel Wulf, Ginsburg's childhood friend..., who becomes an avatar for the sexism she faced from other quarters. He comes off as skeptical about the need for a women's rights movement and gun-shy on taking cases that would advance it. In reality, when

On Tuesday, February 12, ACLU/CC sponsored a free film series: "**Mass Incarceration: An Animated Series**" at the Champaign Art Theater. The panel afterwards included Lavette Mayes, whose story comprises one of the films. Ben Ruddell of the Illinois ACLU moderated the panel. These short films had never been shown in CU. They were developed by the ACLU's Campaign for Smart Justice, with support from the Sundance Film Festival. If you missed the event, the films are available on youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4E6E7E7E7E7E7E7E)

**American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois
Champaign County Chapter**

P.O. Box 2651, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825-2651

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US POSTGE

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

We're on Facebook!
HTTPS://
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
CHAMPAIGNCOUNTYACLU

**Annual Meeting
Sunday April 7
Protecting Civil Liberties in
Illinois**

Pending ACLU Issues In Illinois and Champaign-Urbana

HB 1613 A law passed in 2004 mandated publicly available data collection for police stops of drivers and pedestrians as a tool to identify and combat racial disparities in law enforcement here in Illinois. SB 2369 (formerly SB 3415) would lift the upcoming sunset on this data collection and keep the current practice in place. The bill would also fulfil the requirement to study and identify the best use of technology to collect, compile and analyze traffic and pedestrian stop data so as to provide public awareness and improve police training and policies. ACLU Illinois newest report on this issue, *Racism in the Review Mirror*, is online at https://www.aclu-il.org/sites/default/files/racism_in_the_rear_view_mirror_il_traffic_stops_2015-2017.pdf

Net Neutrality: HB 4819 on Net Neutrality in Illinois failed to pass in the previous legislative session, but is on the ACLU agenda again for the current session.

Join the Steering Committee! -- You don't have to be a lawyer. Most members of the ACLU chapter steering committee are not lawyers or civil liberties experts. We're just people who want to help educate the community, recruit new ACLU members and engage people as citizen lobbyists to help pass civil liberties legislation. New steering committee members are needed. We meet once a month. Interested? Contact us at info@aclu-cu.org.