The ACLU of Hawai‘i turns 50 this year — wow! Our mission to protect fundamental rights for all people would not be possible without extraordinary support from the local community. As a private non-profit, your ACLU delivers legal, legislative and public education services every day, with never a dime of government funding. We owe our fierce independence and tireless advocacy to the courage, generosity, and talent of many individuals: volunteers, activists, donors, members, clients, attorneys, organizational allies, staff and Board leaders. We will be spotlighting these special pioneers throughout the year and will be offering opportunities to know more about your rights that promise to be thought-provoking if not downright exciting.

Join us as we reflect on an incredible journey to this moment and re-dedicate ourselves to secure a future that continues to honor island values and protect the Bill of Rights for all people.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Ankersmit,
Board President
L. Richard Fried, Jr.,
General Campaign Chair
Vanessa Y. Chong,
Executive Director

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Davis Levin First Amendment Conference featuring Edward Snowden - closed captioned on DVD and YouTube!

On stage at the sold-out Hawai‘i Convention Center was ACLU attorney Ben Wizner, returning to the islands to talk national security, civil rights and the future of privacy - alongside his most famous client. New this year: a statewide simulcast and a live Internet stream, courtesy of ‘Ōlelo Community Media, Akākū Maui, Hō‘ike Kauai and Nā Leo O Hawai‘i in Hilo and Kona; questions came from the audience and via Twitter; and a closed-captioned DVD, free to all public libraries statewide and to the public available soon. To watch the Conference online, visit http://bit.ly/1eEoGK8 or on YouTube.

On Valentine’s Day, 2015, people from Hawai‘i and around the world joined “Can Democracy Survive Secrecy?”, a live conversation with NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, via video link from Moscow.

Watch our website and social media feeds for more details, or call the event hotline: (808) 522-5906 (1-877-544-5906 toll free from the Neighbor Islands). ADA-accessible, light refreshments provided where allowable. Special accommodation requests at least two weeks in advance. We will always try to meet requests.

RSVP appreciated to help us budget, drop-ins welcome! Please bring a friend! See reverse or email: office@acluhawaii.org.
Legislative Highlights, 2015 (July 2015) Our legislative team (made up of ACLU staff, coalitions and volunteer advocates) works to pass laws advancing core rights, and to defeat bills threatening them, fighting for fairness, equal rights and common sense from a civil rights viewpoint. ACLU advocacy is made possible by donors like you - through non tax-deductible donations to the ACLU of Hawai‘i.

VICTORY! Dispensaries bill becomes law. This is the most important victory in the medical marijuana program’s 15-year history. ACLU-HI participated in a 6-month dispensary task force whose policy recommendations largely became HB 321 - which became law 7/15/14. Local advocates were critical to this win. So many passionate people and families shared stories through social media, email and a series of statewide public events, “Policy Perspectives on Medical Mari-juana,” guest speakers including Robert Jacob, mayor of Sebastopol, CA. More progress: a companion bill, SB 1251, prohibits discrimination in housing, organ transplant qualification, and parental rights based on status as a medical marijuana patient.

VICTORY! Equal protection for immigrants: We helped pass a bill establishing limited-purpose drivers’ licenses that do not require documentation of immigration status. The bill further protects against discrimination by licensing that do not require documentation of immigration status. The bill further protects against discrimination by promoting the vote.

Protecting the First Amendment with a media shield law: 48 other states protect journalists’ right to use confidential sources – it’s called a “media shield” – a vital tool to fight intimidation and government corruption and to protect transparency. Hawai‘i’s media shield law expired, and a new bill, HB 295, stalled in the Senate, leaving journalists in uncertain territory. We look forward to working with allies again in 2016 to bring Hawai‘i’s media protections into step with the rest of the nation.

Protecting the vote: Hurricane Iselle slammed into Hawai‘i Island on election day, throwing the vote into chaos for several districts, with response hampered by vague laws governing election day disaster scenarios. Determined to protect the vote, we filed an unsuccessful emergency lawsuit, then focused on SB 243 (requiring the Office of Elections to make alternate arrangements for voters unable to reach the polls on election day because of natural disaster or other widespread emergency) - SB 243 did not pass in 2015, but we will continue to advocate for strong protections for everyone’s basic right to vote.

VICTORY! Gender markers on birth certificates: Signed by Governor Ige 7/13/15, HB 631 makes it easier for transgender persons to change the gender marker on their Hawai‘i birth certificate. This is a big win for transgender persons to change the gender marker on birth certificates to reflect their Hawai‘i birth certificate. This is a big win for transgender persons to change the gender marker on birth certificates.

The ACLU is funded primarily through private donations and offers its services at no cost to the public. The ACLU does not accept any government funds.

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