



**55**  
YEARS

# JUSTICE TAKES A FIGHT

## Thank you for your unwavering partnership!

You are building the world we want to see, where power is redistributed to those on the margins. We are dismantling:

- Abusive state power
- Patriarchy
- Structural racism
- Oppressive economic structures

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Photo by Vlad Archin

Let us make the most of our spring lest we forget the winter we survived. As spring brings blossoms of hope on the pandemic front, it is also a season in which we continue to harvest the deadly effects of white supremacy and anti-Black racism. For the Center for Constitutional Rights, the promise of new springs and the cruelty of past winters ground our work and mission. We recognize that while America can organize itself with dispatch to vaccinate hundreds of millions of people against COVID, it also chooses not to put resources into eradicating systemic anti-Black racism. Moreover, 2020 exposed the systemic failures of the American version of democracy and clarified the need for transformational change. Like the videos we've seen showing Black people taking their last breaths, these systemic failures could not be more clear.

But clarity is a precursor to a solution if one can stay focused on the problem long enough. Thanks to you, we did. You helped us pivot through the obstacles put in our path so that we could tackle obstacles put in the paths of our movement and community partners. With your steadfast support, the Center for Constitutional Rights is unrelenting and unapologetic in our commitment to fight white supremacy, patriarchy, violent state power, and economic repression, and to work towards transformational change.

At times, I think we even surprised ourselves with the incredible pace of the work in the past year, filing emergency case after emergency case to free COVID-vulnerable

persons from detention, stop assaults on the asylum system, challenge police violence, and protect the social safety net for non-citizens from Trump. We did this in partnership with courageous clients and movement partners who heroically mobilized to take on new threats, and we did this with you, who made sure we had the resources to be nimble and try new approaches while never losing sight of our long-term work.

I am deeply proud of all the ways our staff, board, movement partners, and you persisted in the face of the unprecedented challenges of 2020. Together, we ensured that the fight for justice wasn't on lockdown. This year marks the [Center for Constitutional Rights' 55th year](#) in the fight of (and for) our lives. Our half a century of work equips us with the experience, relationships, and perspectives required to be transformational in this moment. Our history also teaches us that these pivotal moments can disappear and we must make the most of them. Together, we can celebrate lessons learned and important recent wins, including a [long-fought Supreme Court victory challenging Muslim profiling by law enforcement](#), and [halting relentless government attacks on low-income immigrants of color](#).

**The future is waiting to be written, and with your help, we can write it together. With your crucial partnership, this could be the year we all see justice blossom.**

The future is waiting to be written, and with your help, we can write it together. With your crucial partnership, this could be the year we all see justice blossom.

In Gratitude and Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Warren".

Vince Warren  
Executive Director

# STRUCTURAL RACISM

## DISMANTLING WHITE SUPREMACY

“*They call me lifer but that’s not my name. I am human, I am fallible, I am change*”

—From “*They Call Me Lifer*” by Matthew Garcia, who is serving a Death by Incarceration sentence in Pennsylvania

The Center for Constitutional Rights was born out of the fight for racial justice, when our work began on behalf of Civil Rights Movement activists in the 1960s. Understanding that white supremacy has shaped the law in profoundly harmful ways, we place the struggle to uproot racist oppression at the core of all we do. Thank you for partnering with us in our work to dismantle structural racism and advance liberation. One of our earliest cases was *Hamer v. Campbell*, in 1966, when we represented legendary voting rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer in a historic suit that led to the overturning of racist elections in Mississippi.

Today, our dedication to advancing racial justice continues with timely cases like *Belton v. Gautreaux*, a federal class action suit that sought immediate release amid the COVID pandemic of medically vulnerable people and an overhaul of health procedures at a notoriously decrepit Louisiana prison housing almost entirely Black persons, in a state that is the carceral capital of the world.

In New York, we sought to end the City curfew on protests following the Floyd uprisings and sued to stop discriminatory police enforcement of social distancing requirements. When the police unions

sued to keep police disciplinary records shielded from the public, we intervened and obtained near total victory in the suit on behalf of long-term partner Communities United for Police Reform to demonstrate how police secrecy harms communities and the struggle for accountability. In *Scott v. Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole*, we are working to show the human impact of Death by Incarceration (DBI) sentences (also known as life without parole) in a complaint that explains the inherent irrationality, injustice, and inhumanity of Pennsylvania’s carceral system. To raise awareness and shift public narratives about the issue, we co-hosted a virtual community forum in January that centered the voices and visions of those impacted by DBI sentences.

Police Unions are trying to roll back **#Repeal50A** efforts and re-establish **police secrecy.**

Along with **Communities United for Police Reform (CPR)**, **WE ARE FIGHTING BACK.**

We honored Black History Month and celebrated Black futures in February with programming around the theme “Agendas for Black Liberation”, including weekly calls to action, a live-art event, and a screening of *Nationtime*.

**Thank you for your unfailing support through all of this.**

# PATRIARCHY

## FIGHTING GENDER-BASED OPPRESSION

A series of attacks on cis/trans women and non-binary people during this year's Women's History Month laid bare to how prevalent and deadly misogyny and patriarchy remain, particularly for those who are marginalized due to racism, transphobia, and xenophobia.

On Trans Day of Visibility 2021, the Center for Constitutional Rights reaffirmed our [commitment to a broad-based vision of gender self-determination and dismantling patriarchy](#).

Our work to dismantle patriarchy dates back 50 years to when public agencies forced employees who became pregnant to take unpaid leave. In 1971, New York social worker [Jane Monell sued for forced loss of work and income](#), and the Center for Constitutional Rights fought alongside her all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which made a landmark decision that local governments could be held liable for damages in such cases under the Civil Rights Act.

*We are representing Black trans prisoners' rights activist Ashley Diamond in a lawsuit that is one piece of a multifaceted fight for systemic change for incarcerated trans people.*

Today, we are challenging patriarchy and patriarchal violence on multiple fronts. We are representing [Black trans prisoners' rights activist Ashley Diamond](#) in a [lawsuit](#) that is one piece of a multifaceted fight for systemic change for incarcerated trans people. We recently submitted public comment opposing a proposed Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

rule change that would have permitted discrimination against trans people seeking to access homeless shelters—and thanks to you, we won! After public backlash, HUD backed away from the proposal. Then, in February, HUD announced that for the first time, the agency will enforce the Fair Housing Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. In recent years, we have been working to support fair treatment of LGBTQIA+ and disabled people in the NYC homeless shelter system through [Lopez v. NYC Department of Homeless Services](#), and are honored to walk with our courageous clients.

***We could not do this crucial work without your steadfast partnership.***



Ashley Diamond, Art courtesy of Micah Bazant (they/them)

# OPPRESSIVE ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

## COMBATING ABUSIVE CORPORATE POWER

**W**hether it's defending labor rights or challenging corporate environmental racism, the Center for Constitutional Rights has decades of experience exposing and combating oppressive economic structures. Thank you for your generous support as we fight alongside movements for social, environmental, and economic justice.

When more than 10,000 steelworkers lost their jobs in Youngstown, Ohio in the late 1970s as a result of private steel companies' decisions, the Center for Constitutional Rights argued that corporations with enormous economic power that receive substantial benefits from government sources must act in a manner consistent with the best interests of the

community. Our amicus argument in [Local 1330, United States Steelworkers of America vs. U.S. Steel](#) was intentionally educational and political, using the courts to frame the legal question in political terms, and highlight the impacts on communities.

The question of corporations' responsibility for their impact remains. In October, we joined more than a dozen human rights organizations in filing an amicus brief in a case against [Nestlé USA and Cargill](#), two U.S. corporations alleged to have contributed to child slavery and forced labor in the Ivory Coast. We argued the [Alien Tort Statute](#) must apply to U.S. corporations. The case was heard by the Supreme Court in December; a decision is forthcoming.

We continue supporting community struggles against environmental racism in "Cancer/Death Alley," a 100-mile stretch of Louisiana known for the cancer risks associated with a high number of petrochemical plants. In January, we successfully advocated on behalf of Concerned Citizens of St. John in their fight for public records and transparency against the local

school board, as the community fights to protect children from the pollution emitted from a Denka/Dupont chemical plant a half a mile from an elementary school where 90 percent of the students are Black.

**We continue supporting community struggles against environmental racism in "Cancer/Death Alley," a 100-mile stretch of Louisiana known for the cancer risks associated with a high number of petrochemical plants.**



Protesters at Death Alley, Photo by Rise St. James

**Thank you for your unwavering partnership as we continue the fight!**

# ABUSIVE STATE POWER

## CHALLENGING UNJUST GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Challenging abuses of power is at the heart of our work, and we could not do it without you. From American Indian Movement leaders to antiwar activists, the Center for Constitutional Rights has defended protestors in the face of illegal government surveillance and repression. Our historic work in cases like [U.S. v. Banks and Means/Wounded Knee](#) and [Kinoy v. Mitchell](#) exposed government abuses. Today's work includes pushing back against government attacks on low-income

[Make the Road New York v. Department of Homeland Security](#)). The cases challenged rules that created a wealth test to bar immigrants from seeking permanent residency. In February, the Biden administration rescinded the regulations.

Continuing to demand concrete actions for justice and human rights in the first 100 days of the new administration, [we organized more than 100 non-governmental organizations](#) in February to call

*“ I do not want to become an informant, but the government says I must in order to be taken off the No-Fly List. How can the government tell me that the only way I can see my family again is if I turn my back on my community? ”* —Awais Sajjad, a plaintiff in *Tanvir v. Tanzin*

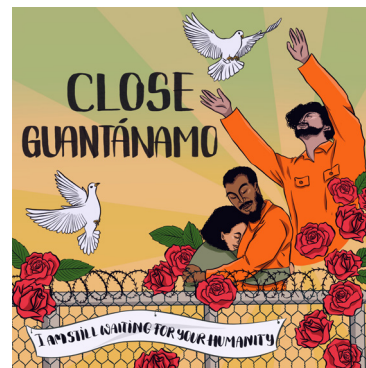
communities of color, challenging racial and religious profiling by law enforcement, calling for the closure of Guantánamo, and demanding accountability for international crimes in Palestine.

We are glad to announce a flurry of positive developments:

In December, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously held that individuals can sue federal law enforcement officials for damages under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In our long-running case, [Tanvir v. Tanzin](#), we are challenging law enforcement targeting of Muslims and highlighting the FBI's abuse of the No-Fly List to coerce American Muslims into spying on their religious communities.

We fought the Trump administration's attacks on low-income immigrants of color and people with medical conditions through three cases with the grassroots, immigrant-led Make the Road ([Make the Road New York v. Pompeo](#), [Make the Road New York v. Cuccinelli](#), and

on Biden to close Guantánamo and end indefinite detention. We currently represent victims from Palestine and the Palestinian diaspora before the International Criminal Court (ICC). In March, after extensive advocacy from our allies and us, the prosecutor announced the opening of an investigation into [crimes against humanity and war crimes in Palestine](#). This victory follows [our win before the ICC](#) last year to authorize an investigation into crimes in Afghanistan, including the U.S. torture program.



Art courtesy of Vy Vu @vyvu.art

**...we organized more than 100 non-governmental organizations in February to call on Biden to close the prison in Guantánamo...**

# Double the Impact of Your Gift

## Take Advantage of Board Chair Katherine Franke's Match

Thanks to Katherine Franke's generous match, you can double the impact of your commitment by **making a new or increased gift to the Michael Ratner Campaign for the Next Generation at [ccrjustice.org/MRC](https://ccrjustice.org/MRC).**

# Justice Sustainers

## Monthly Donors Make Our Work Possible

*Thank you, Justice Sustainers!*

The fight for justice never stops—and it makes a huge difference to have funding we can count on to sustain our work. Recurring monthly gifts allow us to plan ahead and to leverage resources to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise. That means more hope for our clients, more support for grassroots movements, and more justice for all.

**Don't forget to give by establishing an automatic monthly gift at [ccrjustice.org/donate](https://ccrjustice.org/donate).**

# Thelma Newman Planned Giving Society

## Supporting Justice for Generations to Come

Thelma Newman was not a wealthy woman, yet she made a six-figure gift to the Center for Constitutional Rights to support our work into the future. And she hoped to inspire others to do the same.

Newman was the legal assistant to our co-founder Morty Stavis at the United Electrical Workers. She knew the fight for justice is long, and wanted to support it even beyond her own lifetime.

The members of our Thelma Newman Planned Giving Society have included us in their estate plans. Join them and **make the struggle for justice an enduring part of your legacy at [ccrjustice.org/TNS](https://ccrjustice.org/TNS).**

### If you would like to learn more about:

Becoming a *Justice Sustainer*, joining the *Thelma Newman Society* or supporting the *Michael Ratner Campaign for the Next Generation*, please contact our Director of Development Theda Jackson-Mau at [tjackson-mau@ccrjustice.org](mailto:tjackson-mau@ccrjustice.org) or 212-614-6448.

# THANK YOU!

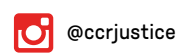
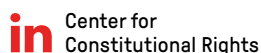
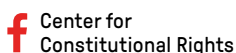
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**[ccrjustice.org/donate](https://ccrjustice.org/donate)**  
Online gifts are a quicker and greener way to give!

### BY MAIL TO:

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