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Reader reaction: Trust us, the ACLU of Utah is busy these days

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On [UtahPolicy.com](https://utahpolicy.com) Monday, LaVarr Webb [wrote](#) that the American Civil Liberties Union “barely knows what to do” with the spike in membership and donations generated by the backlash against the Trump administration.

He’s right that more Americans (and Utahns) are committed to defending the bedrock civil rights and civil liberties that face real threats from the current administration. Case in point, the ACLU of Utah’s membership grew by 400% in the past 18 months, and our staff increased by three individuals hired to focus on criminal justice reform and community engagement.

But he’s wrong to think that we’ve been sitting on our hands now, or during the Obama administration (which the ACLU sued dozens of times).

Here is a small sample of what the ACLU of Utah has accomplished in recent months:

> We settled a lawsuit against San Juan County (UT) to increase voting access and translation services for all county voters, and especially residents of the Navajo Nation.

> We filed a lawsuit against agents from ICE and the U.S. Marshals in response to two terrifying, SWAT-style immigration raids on the same Wasatch County family with small children at home.

- > We are organizing a debate series for District Attorney candidates in multiple counties—focusing public attention on these crucial races the rarely get any coverage.
- > We organized state-wide protests against the Trump administration’s harmful policy of separating children from their parents at the U.S. border.
- > We are resolving complaints against Utah elected officials and government agencies for blocking constituents from their social media accounts.
- > We helped to develop a new Salt Lake City Police Department policy to release body-camera footage within 10 business days of an officer-involved shooting.
- > We lobbied on a record-setting 115 bills during the 2018 legislative session. Plus, we advocated successfully for bills allowing Election Day registration and mandating data collection on prison inmate deaths and access to medical care.
- > We partnered with the Utah Disability Law Center to pursue settlement in our litigation to ensure individuals in guardianship proceedings have sufficient access to counsel during court appearances.
- > We filed two lawsuits on behalf of prisoners in Daggett County Jail who were subjected to repeated abuse involving tasers and attack dogs
- > We recently co-hosted a panel discussion on the 20th anniversary of the landmark East High GSA lawsuit against the Salt Lake City School Board—a student-led case that established the right for high school students to organize gay-straight alliances under the Equal Access Act and the First Amendment.
- > We conducted numerous “Know Your Rights” trainings for student activists, protesters, and homeless service providers, while also deploying legal observers to local marches and protests.
- > We were mentioned in the media 129 times during the first six months of 2018—an average one mention every 1.5 days.
- > The ACLU national office hasn’t been a couch potato, either. Their legal team is behind the many successful court challenges to the family separation policy, the Muslim travel ban, the removal of DACA protections, and the fake voter fraud commission. This year ACLU lawyers went to the Supreme Court to win a case to protect cell phone records from warrantless police searches (*Carpenter v. U.S.*) and to win a partial victory declaring that freedom of religion or freedom of speech doesn’t give businesses a blank check to discriminate against their customers (*Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*).