2019 IMPACT REPORT
TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission & Vision ........................................ 4-5
Letter from the President .............................. 6
Voting Rights ............................................. 8-11
Racial & Economic Justice ............................. 12-15
Criminal Justice Reform ............................... 16-19
Pro Bono & Volunteers ............................... 20-21
Metrics & Financials .................................. 22-23
Staff & Board .......................................... 24-25
Take Action ............................................. 26-27
We are Texas lawyers for Texas communities, boldly serving the movement for equality and justice in and out of the courts.
We envision a Texas where all communities thrive with dignity and justice, and without fear.

We believe that legal advocacy and litigation are critical tools to protect and advance the civil rights of everyone in Texas, particularly our State’s most vulnerable populations, and to effect positive and lasting change to law and policy. We believe that by serving the rising social justice movement in Texas with excellent legal representation and bold strategies, we can respond to the needs of the communities we serve.
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On this day, in the midst of a global pandemic, it’s hard to remember that this is, still, just a moment in time. Like every moment, it was shaped by our past and will, ultimately, yield to the future we create.

It’s a scary time for our staff and the Texas communities we serve. But I’m comforted when I look back at our collective achievements. Because you were beside us, the Texas Civil Rights Project did things in 2019 that some called impossible. With you, we built a diverse coalition to defeat Texas Senate Bill 9, the sharpest attack on voting rights in years. With you, we sparked a national conversation about the administration’s cruel Remain in Mexico policy and used litigation to protect the most vulnerable asylum seekers. With you, we reformed bail practices in Houston, Texas, so that people accused of misdemeanor crimes no longer sit behind bars just because they can’t afford bail.

Our 2019 Impact Report tells the stories behind these victories and many more. It reminds us of what’s possible when we band together and take care of each other. It reminds me, and our entire team, of how grateful we are that you are part of this movement for justice and equality.

Those of us who fight to build a society that cares for each other have always known that a democracy for the most vulnerable among us is a more resilient democracy for everyone.

That’s why we feel deeply the urgency of our work in 2020 — to defend the sanctity of our elections, fight for asylum seekers at our border, and end the unjust practices that funnel black and brown people into the criminal legal system. You have already stepped up with us too, sending encouraging notes, joining us in virtual spaces, and digging deep to ensure that the most vulnerable among us have the resources they need to weather this storm.

We thank you for your kindness, generosity, dedication, and partnership and hope that you will stay connected, tune in, take action (online, for now), and, when we are able, carry on our fight in person. Together, we are ready for the new challenges of this moment — together, we will bend the arc of history toward justice in 2020.

Mimi Marziani
President of the Texas Civil Rights Project
Senior Staff Attorney, Karla Vargas, holds a sign at our rally commemorating the 1-year anniversary of family separation in McAllen, Texas.
VOTING RIGHTS

Eliminating systemic barriers that exclude millions of people from the ballot box.

The right to vote is fundamental, yet millions of eligible Texans, a disparate number of whom are young, poor, people with disabilities, and people of color, remain shut out of the democratic process. Our Voting Rights Program focuses its work on empowering and defending historically disenfranchised communities by tackling the systemic issues that suppress voting rights in Texas. Every voting rights project TCRP undertakes advances one or more of our four overarching initiatives: expanding access to voter registration, easing access to the ballot box, empowering grassroots voting rights allies with direct legal assistance, and fighting voter suppression.

TCRP’s Own Our Vote campaign works with grassroots partners to increase compliance with Texas’ unique high school voter registration law, requiring schools to offer voter registration to eligible students twice each year.
Expanding Access to Voter Registration

+172%

Percent increase of high schools that now provide eligible students with the opportunity to register to vote. 540 high schools in 2019, up from 198 in 2016.

Easing Access to the Ballot Box

+6M

Number of Texas voters that can now vote at any polling place in their county on election day.

Empowering Grassroots Voting Rights Allies With Direct Legal Assistance

~100,000

Number of registered voters who were protected from an unconstitutional voter purge attempt.

TCRP's Own Our Vote campaign works with grassroots partners to increase compliance with Texas' unique high school voter registration law, requiring schools to offer voter registration to eligible students twice each year.

Sweeping voting rights reforms do not have to come from the federal or state government. Our Democracy From the Ground Up campaign advanced high-impact county-level reforms that make democracy more accessible to everyone.
TCRP Senior Attorney James Slattery speaks against SB 9 at the Texas Capitol.

Photo Credit: Casey Chapman Ross Photography
Following closely on the heels of our successful suit to halt then-Texas Secretary of State David Whitley’s attempt to purge nearly 100,000 Texans from the State’s voter rolls, TCRP raised the alarm about Senate Bill 9, an omnibus, anti-voter bill introduced in the Texas legislature. SB 9 would have made it harder for people with disabilities and the elderly to vote, threatened voters with jail time and enormous fines for innocent mistakes made while registering, and shifted polling locations away from communities of color and into white neighborhoods.

Thanks to the work of our partner organizations across Texas and the voices of thousands of concerned voters — together with the rapid response efforts of our funding partners — TCRP and our State’s growing voting rights movement successfully executed a strategic campaign to ensure that SB 9 would never become law.

Our coalition generated 7,767 letters opposing SB 9 to the Texas House Representatives and delivered them at a joint press conference in front of the Capitol, where organizers and members of impacted communities spoke out in protest. We mobilized hundreds of Texans who waited late into the night to testify about the bill’s main problems. SB 9 ultimately never received a vote on the House floor, rendering it defeated.
Empowering communities by fighting discriminatory policies that prevent social and economic equity.

With an office in the Rio Grande Valley along the Texas-Mexico border, TCRP’s Racial and Economic Justice Program has been dedicated to defending the rights of immigrant and borderland communities since the founding of our organization nearly 30 years ago. Working closely with community partners and allies, and with unique access to the courts in McAllen, our team is on the front lines of the Trump administration’s cruel effort to end asylum as we know it. For the past three years, TCRP has fought back against a relentless onslaught of inhumane policies that violate basic human and civil rights.

Former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro accepted our invitation to visit the Rio Grande Valley to see the horrifying impact of current immigration and asylum policies. Castro and many other high profile candidates and officeholders have joined us to raise awareness and push for accountability and justice for those seeking safety at our borders.

TCRP Racial and Economic Justice Legal Director Efrén C. Olivares speaks at a community forum, to raise awareness about the administration’s border wall plans and ensure that border residents know their rights.
0 Feet of border wall have been built on our clients’ land.

20,000 Immigrants TCRP has screened for family separations.

67 Square miles of Texas land in the Rio Grande Valley would become no-man’s-land if the wall were built—an area the size of Washington, D.C.

1,154 Separated families our team has interviewed in McAllen, Texas alone since the start of the crisis—nearly half in 2019.

95% Percent of the families we were able to maintain contact with were reunited.
TCRP attorney embraces one of our clients after successfully arguing for her to be removed from the “Remain in Mexico” program and be allowed to pursue asylum in the United States.
When B.G.P., a twenty-nine-year-old woman with disabilities who cannot communicate without the help of her mother, sought asylum in the United States with her mother, her young child, and her younger sister, Customs and Border Protection officials separated them inside a detention facility and forced them to sleep in freezer-like conditions. Several days later, without warning, and after refusing B.G.P. even an initial asylum interview, officials placed her entire family in the Remain in Mexico program, leaving them stranded in Matamoros, Mexico, where the family went without adequate access to food or medicine and faced threats of violence and harassment because of her disability, gender, and their status as migrants. The Department of Homeland Security never offered B.G.P. a rationale or opportunity to appeal, and violated its own regulations by failing to provide her an interpreter, notetaker, or even a telephone suitable for deaf people. B.G.P.’s case is one of many that our team on the ground has seen where vulnerable people are illegally placed in the Remain in Mexico program, with no transparency or accountability. Infants, children, pregnant women, disabled people, LGBTQ people, and Mexican Nationals have all been returned to Mexico, despite the clear danger this puts them in. But B.G.P. and her family didn’t give up. TCRP attorneys warned the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that if they did not release our deaf client into the United States to await asylum, we would sue on B.G.P.’s behalf for their unlawful application of the Remain in Mexico policy, on the extremely vulnerable. Following our warning, Customs and Border Protection finally allowed the family to be processed and released into Brownsville, TX to pursue their asylum claims.

Since the program began in January of 2019, the Remain in Mexico policy has sent tens of thousands of asylum seekers back to areas deemed too dangerous for travelers by the U.S. State Department. TCRP has mobilized support nationwide for ending cruel and inhumane immigration policies. We have hosted congressional delegations so that our lawmakers can see conditions at the border for themselves and pushed congress to conduct oversight hearings for the first time. Our team remains on the front lines, fighting every day alongside clients like B.G.P. and her family.
TCRP’s Criminal Justice Reform Program strives to remedy the injustices of Texas’ criminal legal system for people suffering inside and outside of jails and prisons. Texas locks up more people than all the other states combined. To dismantle the drivers of mass incarceration and mass entanglement with the criminal system, we challenge the entire pipeline of disparate criminalization: unfair policing, prosecution and judicial process, probation and parole, and for-profit practices. Our approach to public safety is one grounded in civil rights and racial justice. Together with our partners, we hold stakeholders accountable to Texas communities in and out of the courtroom.

TCRP Criminal Justice Reform Director Natalia Cornelio and Senior Attorney Meagan Harding joined our partners at the Texas Organizing Project to ask Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo to support misdemeanor bail reform. He said yes!
Percent of the roughly 50,000 individuals charged with misdemeanors in Harris County annually will now qualify for pre-trial release without paying cash bail.

Decrease in fines from $500 to $50 for juveniles cited for nighttime curfew violations in Houston and Dallas. The cities also eliminated daytime juvenile curfew ordinances.

Average amount of years people placed in solitary confinement spend in isolation.

Number of individuals surveyed for our investigation into the State’s torturous use of solitary confinement.
TCRP President Mimi Marziani and Senior Attorney Meagan Harding participate in a panel discussion on life in solitary confinement in Texas. The event, held at Texas Southern University, featured findings from TCRP’s report, *Torture by Another Name: Solitary Confinement in Texas*, authored by Harding.

4,165

Number of individuals Texas held in solitary confinement as of May of 2019.
Texas holds more prisoners in prolonged solitude — six years or longer — than all the other states and Federal Bureau of Prisons combined. Solitary confinement is a barbaric and torturous practice that humiliates people and offends their basic human rights and inherent dignity. Policy makers in Texas have long known of the severe harm caused by holding people in prolonged isolation. Yet, Texas continues to hold thousands of people in isolation for years on end, sometimes decades.

In late 2019, TCRP published *Torture by Another Name: Solitary Confinement in Texas*, our comprehensive report detailing the current use of isolation in the Texas criminal justice system.

In preparation for this report, we interviewed nearly 200 individuals housed in solitary confinement, conducted numerous in-person visits, received information from responses to public information act requests, and met with Texas Department of Criminal Justice (“TDCJ”) officials. Our investigation proves that, despite the lip service of TDCJ and lawmakers, there is little evidence that meaningful changes have, in fact, been implemented.

Our report recommends changes to TDCJ policies such as limiting the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 days and only for true and verifiable security threats, ending automatic solitary confinement for specific groups, and bringing oversight to the process by which individuals in solitary confinement are evaluated so that they receive individual assessments, privileges, and release based on behavior. This report was the first step in a longer campaign of litigation and other advocacy that will continue in 2020.
TCRP’s efforts to serve the movement for equality and justice depend heavily on pro bono partnerships with members of the private bar. Every year, we work with dozens of law firms and individual attorneys who dedicate their time, passion, and expertise to a range of diverse projects, from discrete legal research, to our Voting Rights Task Force and Election Protection Coalition, to serving as co-counsel on large-scale, sometimes years-long litigation. We are deeply grateful for each and every attorney who has contributed to our efforts over the years. In particular, we wanted to highlight the remarkable contributions of our 2019 Kristi Couvillon Pro Bono Awardees.

**PRO BONO PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>235</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of volunteer attorneys on TCRP’s Voting Rights Task Force.</td>
<td>Number of research hours our pro bono partners contributed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carl Blair & Glenda Pittman
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP
  Andrew Tutt
  R. Stanton Jones
  Stephen K. Wirth
  Sam Callahan,
  Graham W. White
  Jayce Lane Born

Haynes & Boone LLP
  Luis Campos
  Brent Beckert
  Paloma Z. Ahmadi
  Wes Lewis

for their leadership and dedication to TCRP’s Voting Rights Task Force and Election Protection efforts.

for their work on Anibowei v. Lynch, challenging the federal government’s practice of unlawfully searching and seizing cell phones and their contents at ports of entry.

for their tireless work defending immigrants and asylum seekers at the Texas-Mexico border.

Clockwise from top: TCRP Voting Rights Legal Director Beth Stevens, Senior Attorney Ryan Cox, Charles Siegel (Partner at Waters Kraus, co-counsel), Senior Attorney Hani Mirza, Paralegal Chris Rainbolt.

TCRP attorneys meet with co-counsel in New Orleans in preparation for oral argument at the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Stringer v. Pablos, TCRP’s litigation seeking to enforce the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) for the Texas Department of Public Safety’s online driver’s license transactions.

Attorney Glenda Pittman accepts her 2019 Kristi Couvillon Pro Bono Award at TCRP’s 2019 Bill of Rights Dinner.

Photo Credit: Casey Chapman Ross Photography
### METRICS & FINANCIALS

#### General Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th>New Staff Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New Board Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Cases in active litigation or engaged in pre-litigation investigation and advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Major Advocacy Campaigns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Outreach Metrics

| 176 | Press hits, including features in the New York Times, Washington Post, ProPublica, CNN, Vox, Time Magazine, Texas Monthly, Houston Chronicle, and every other newspaper of record in the state |
| 4,725,427 | Impressions on our social media platforms or 403,205 engagements on our social media platforms |
| 4,713 | People took an action to advance our work in 2019 |

#### Financial Metrics

| 85% | Of funding goes to direct program activities |
| 48  | States, plus DC, are home to our donors |
| 4,154 | Grassroots donors in 2019 |
| 95% | Rating on Charity Navigator |
2019 Revenue
$5,704,060

- 45%: Donations
- 42%: Contracted Revenue
- 6%: Events
- 6%: Litigation Revenue
- 1%: Other

2019 Expenses
$3,904,152

- 67%: Personnel
- 12%: Operating
- 7%: Community Engagement
- 7%: Staffing & Training
- 4%: Program Expenses
- 3%: Travel
OUR STAFF & BOARD

Ali Lozano
Outreach Coordinator

Andy Udelsman
Fellow/Staff Attorney

Ash Hall
Digital Coordinator

Beth Stevens
Legal Director, Voting Rights Program

Carrie O’Connor
Staff Attorney

Chris Rainbolt
Paralegal & Office Manager

Chris Rivera
Paralegal & Office Manager

Dani Marrero Hi
Outreach Coordinator

Efrén C. Olivares
Legal Director, Racial & Economic Justice Program

Emily Eby
Staff Attorney

Emma Hilbert
Staff Attorney

Erin Thorn Vela
Staff Attorney

Faith Castillo
Election Protection Legal Fellow

Georgina Guzman
Paralegal & Office Manager

Hani Mirza
Senior Attorney

Ivy Le
Press Manager

Jackie Portillo
Grassroots Partnerships & Database Manager

James Slattery
Senior Attorney

Joaquin Gonzalez
Staff Attorney

Josh Levin
Election Protection Outreach Fellow

Karla Vargas
Senior Attorney

TCRP Staff
Photo Credit: Casey Chapman Ross Photography
Laura Derrick  
Institutional Partnerships Manager

Laura Peña  
Visiting Attorney

Louis Bedford  
Election Protection Legal Fellow

Meagan Harding  
Senior Attorney

Megan Garcia  
Accounting & Human Resources Manager

Melissa Elfont  
Operations Manager

Mimi Marziani  
President

Nabil Valencia  
Finance & Operations Associate

Natalia Cornelio  
Legal Director, Criminal Justice Reform Program

Peter Steffensen  
Staff Attorney

Ricky Garza  
Staff Attorney

Roberto Lopez  
Outreach Coordinator

Rolando Pérez  
Intake Coordinator

Stephanie Schweitzer Garza  
Director of Strategic Partnerships

Stephanie Gomez  
High School Voter Registration Coordinator

Taylor Keenan  
Director of Finance and Administration

Zenén Jaimes Pérez  
Director of Advocacy & Communications

Ryan Cox  
Senior Attorney

Zach Dolling  
Fellow/Staff Attorney

TCRP Board of Directors (not pictured: Alex Andrade, Alan Schoenbaum, Elizabeth Moore)  
Photo Credit: Casey Chapman Ross Photography

Alan Schoenbaum  
(Secretary)

Carlos Moctezuma Garcia  
(Vice Chair)

Kenneth Marks  
(Chair)

Tom Gutting  
(Treasurer)

Alex Andrade

Elizabeth Moore

Lisa Andrade Gónima

Ashlee McFarlane

Gina Karam Millin

Oscar Rodriguez

Carla Powers

James Nortey

Rita Lucido
For nearly 30 years, working hand-in-hand with grassroots partners and ordinary people across the state, we have fought to ensure that all Texans can thrive with dignity, justice, and without fear. We are, uniquely, Texas lawyers for Texas communities.
Join the Conversation

www.facebook.com/TexasCivilRightsProject
www.twitter.com/txcivilrights
www.instagram.com/txcivilrights

Take Action

Sign up (https://txcivilrights.org/take-action/sign-up/) for our mailing list, become a member, volunteer (we welcome legal and non-legal volunteers).

Contribute

You can fight for the rights of Texas’ communities by contributing to the Texas Civil Rights Project. Contributions to TCRP directly support our legal advocacy, both in and out, of the courtroom and are tax deductible.

Contribute Online

www.txcivilrights.org/take-action/contribute

Contribute by Mail

Please make a check payable to the Texas Civil Rights Project and mail it to:

Texas Civil Rights Project
1405 Montopolis Dr.
Austin, TX 78741

Other Ways to Contribute

1. Join the Justice Corps!
2. Do you have a Donor Advised Fund?
3. Does your employer offer matching gifts?

Explore these options and more at https://txcivilrights.org/take-action/other-ways-to-give/ or contact us at development@texascivilrightsproject.org or at (512) 474-5073 ext. 102.