

TEXAS  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
PROJECT



**IMPACT REPORT**  
**2023**

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## Mission

We are Texas lawyers and advocates for Texas communities, boldly serving the movement for equality and justice in and out of the courts.

## Vision

We envision a Texas where all communities thrive with dignity, justice, and without fear.

## Theory of Change

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 affect 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

To our friends, partners, and allies:

After years of collaboration with the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) staff inside and outside the courtroom, I assumed the role of President on February 1, 2023. Under this transition, we've continued in the spirit of 'getting into good trouble' as we fight to protect our democracy, ensure the dignity of immigrants, and create a more just criminal legal system.

As my first year of leading TCRP comes to a close, I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished. Our talented team's passion and hard work have energized our progress, and I am excited to harness this momentum as we march on with our vital work. Our goal is clear: to fight for a Texas big enough for all of our communities – from the borderlands to the steps of the Capitol in Austin and everywhere in between.

Three decades ago, TCRP was founded with a deep commitment to justice and equality for all Texans, when, in the Valley, a company profited at the expense of farm workers picking crops under the

scorching South Texas sun. The workers were not allowed to drink water and didn't have access to toilets. TCRP was created by a local group of lawyers to sue the company, resulting in a win for these farm workers.

Since then, through our community lawyering model, TCRP has continued to stand up for communities who are often disregarded by those in power, whether they are facing an uphill battle with our criminal legal system, navigating the boundless bureaucracy of our immigration system, experiencing roadblocks to participating in our democracy or facing a timely civil rights issue such as accessing reproductive care. TCRP is uniquely positioned to liaise the conversation between community, capital, and the courts to ensure that all Texans can access their civil rights at every turn.

We had a busy year in 2023, welcoming new faces and taking on new cases!

Among our accomplishments are:

- *Dickinson Bay Area Branch NAACP, et al.*, which our Voting Rights team won at trial in Galveston in front of Judge Jeffrey Brown and is currently at the 5th Circuit on rehearing en banc;
- Just weeks after Governor Abbott signed it, the Beyond Borders team filed litigation against the State of Texas to prevent the implementation of SB4, an anti-immigrant bill in which Texas creates its own immigration system, including the ability of law enforcement officers to deport noncitizens; and
- The Criminal Injustice team released a report on Solitary Confinement in Texas: A Crisis with No End, which attempts to direct the Department of Justice to open investigations in two particularly troubling Texas prisons.



We are facing unprecedented times in Texas- while lawmakers continue to use immigration at our Southern border as a political tool, attempt to roll back voting rights, and continue to oppress vulnerable communities that are coming into contact with our criminal legal system- TCRP is here defending our communities.

There is much work ahead — but with your partnership, I'm confident we can build a Texas where our communities thrive with dignity and justice and without fear.

I am so grateful for your support of TCRP's mission, vision, and continued work. Your partnership makes fighting the good fight possible!

In solidarity,

**Rochelle Garza**  
President, TCRP



# TCRP at the Capitol

TCRP harnesses the power of the law to protect the civil rights of all Texans and to empower communities that have been institutionally oppressed. Given the outsized impact of the Texas legislature in designing and implementing laws that yield systemic injustices, TCRP engages in high-level policy and legislative advocacy during biennial Texas legislative sessions and serves as the go-to lawyers, policy experts, and advocates for elected officials, grassroots organizations and impacted community members in Texas.

## In 2023, our legislative team...

**Fought for Texans at 1 regular and 4 special sessions — the most in state history**

**Provided weekly legislative update emails to over 200 partners, elected officials, and community allies.**

**Analyzed 855 bills and provided summaries to legislators and community partners**

**Testified or registered a position on more than 175 bills**

**Tracked 1,218 bills during the sessions**

**Launched our Texas Lege website to provide millions of Texans easy access to information on legislation that impacts their communities**

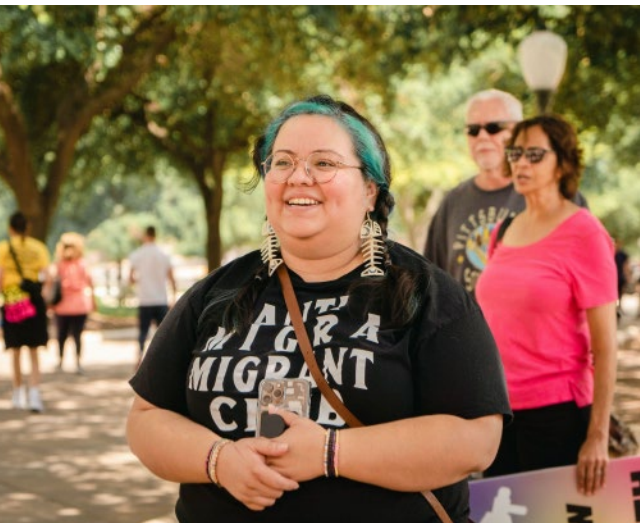




# Our advocacy ensured...



There will be a parking space reserved at each Texas polling place for curbside accessible voting for individuals with a disability (**SB 477**)



Counties must contact voters within two business days if their vote-by-mail ballots need corrections (**SB 1599**)



Cities cannot mandate criminal curfews for minors, which have been used to criminalize youth experiencing homelessness (**HB 1819**)



Proposals to expand and codify Operation Lone Star into state law were blocked (**The Texas Border Force Bill, HB 20; HB 800; and SB 2424**)

# Fighting for a Dignified Border Community



***“ Our legal team called on CBP to cease detaining children immediately and commit to transparency in the investigation of Anadith and all migrants who have died while in CBP custody. ”***

At TCRP, we share your belief that all Texans – regardless of their zip code or citizenship status – deserve to thrive in their communities, free from harm and oppression. Whether we are fighting to end harmful state practices such as Operation Lone Star or challenging Texas' unconstitutional “Deportation Law” in court, our Beyond Borders (BB) team fights for a dignified border community that welcomes all people.

In 2023, our Beyond Borders team stood by the family of Anadith Danay Reyes Álvarez, an 8-year-old girl who tragically died while in Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) custody. Our legal team called on CBP to cease detaining children immediately and commit to transparency in the investigation of Anadith and all migrants who have died while in CBP custody.

As our team supports Anadith's family in an investigation and litigation options, we are also leading a joint legal and advocacy campaign aimed at raising attention to the reprehensible CBP detention conditions, including children in particular, and demanding federal accountability for the treatment of families in CPB custody.



# Preserving Democracy for All Texans



***“Our case will impact the more than 235,000 registered voters in Galveston County and ensure that Black and Latino Galvestonians can exercise their voice in our democracy.”***

For more than a century, communities of color have experienced disenfranchisement through law and policy in Texas. Our Voting Rights (VR) team tackles the systemic issues that prevent a thriving democracy through a mix of impact litigation, legal advocacy, and our nationally renowned Election Protection Program. We seek to achieve a more democratic Texas by working closely with impacted communities and grassroots organizations to protect the freedom to vote for all Texans.

This year, our team successfully sued Galveston County, where a proposed district map eliminated the only Black and Latino majority district in the county, effectively stripping thousands of Texas voters of representation in their government. Under the proposed map, white voters made up at least 62% of the electorate in each precinct, even though the county’s total white population is only about 55%.

This ruling was one of the most significant voting rights victories in recent state history and is a testament to our growing democracy coalition. Although the case appealed to the 5th Circuit, it could impact more than 235,000 registered voters in Galveston County and ensure that the voices of Black and Latino Galvestonians are heard. No matter the outcome, TCRP remains steadfast in our fight for fair representation.





# Dismantling the Criminalization of Poverty



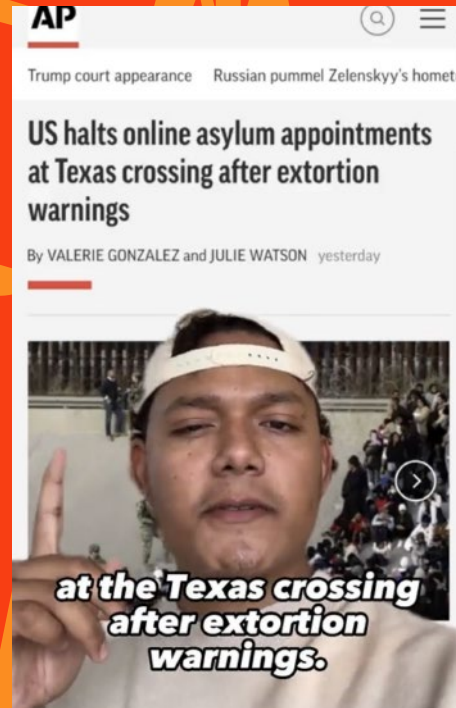
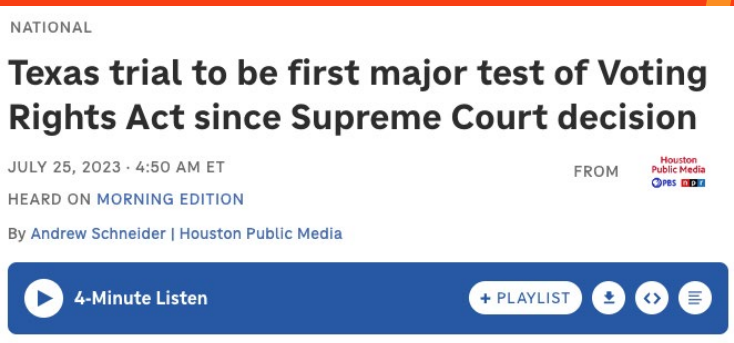
Texans of every race, class, and political ideology want to be safe in their communities. Overcriminalization and incarceration have the potential to affect every one of us, but poor, Black, brown, disabled, noncitizen, and LGBTQIA+ communities are among the most impacted.

In 2023, our Criminal Injustice (CI) team filed litigation to bring a single First Amendment claim against the City of Dallas, which passed a broad ban on “panhandling” and imposed a \$500 fee on anyone standing on public medians (under 6ft in width) or street corners. We believe this ordinance was a clear violation of Dallasites’ civil rights and a part of an increasingly hostile agenda to criminalize poverty in Texas.

Through litigation, TCRP aims to have the Dallas City Council rescind the ordinance or have a court invalidate it while reframing the narrative around public safety and homelessness. We want policymakers and the Dallas public to recognize that panhandling is a symptom of a city insufficiently invested in its unhoused communities, and that policing will only make the problem worse.



# Digital Footprint



In **2023**, the Communications team had a successful year reaching impressive metrics.

On the digital side, 2023 saw



**3,433,007**

social media impressions



and

**143,015**

social engagements  
across all platforms,

including Facebook, Twitter (X),  
Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.



**6,960** media hits were earned throughout the entirety of 2023 including media highlights of the Beyond Borders, Criminal Injustice, and Voting Rights teams, statements on federal and state-level legislative action, and issue-based commentary.

This holds the advertising value equivalency of approximately **\$185,500,000**.

Throughout 2023, the TCRP was mentioned in **CNN, MSNBC, The New York Times, Forbes, USA Today, The Washington Post, Associated Press, ABC News, Texas Public Radio, The Dallas Morning News,** and many other media outlets.

# Strategic Partnerships

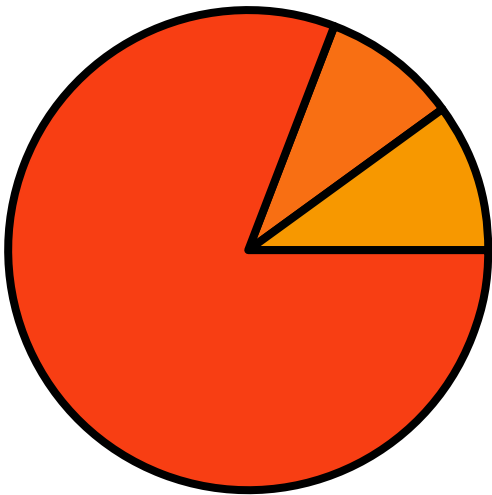
We have strengthened our Strategic Partnerships team with the introduction of our new Director of Strategic Partnerships & Development, Miranda Jimenez, whose leadership has been instrumental in growing our funding strategies for success in 2024. We look forward to her continued impact as we work to advance and protect civil rights in Texas.

We're thrilled to announce new partnerships with outstanding organizations like the Crankstart Foundation and the Open Society Foundation. Their support, along with the continued strength of our grant program, has allowed us to have a bigger impact in 2024.

Our individual donor fundraising efforts in 2023 are also worth noting. We held successful events in New York City, San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas. These events weren't just about raising funds – they were about building connections and inspiring action. Thanks to the incredible support from attendees and volunteers, our election protection program is stronger than ever. Together, we're making a difference and ensuring that everyone's voice is heard.

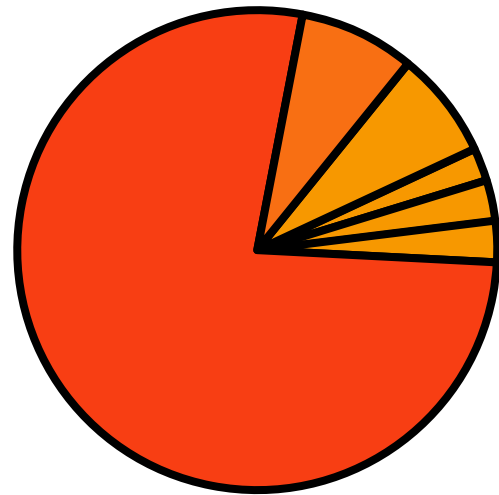
## 2023 EXPENSES \$ 6,747,229.82

Operating Expenses	10%
Payroll Expenses	81%
Community Engagement and Development	1%
Program Expenses	3%
Staff Related Expenses	2%
Travel Expenses	2%



## 2024 BUDGET \$ 7,313,377.32

Operating Expenses	8%
Payroll Expenses	77%
Community Engagement and Development	3%
Program Expenses	7%
Staff Related Expenses	3%
Travel Expenses	2%





# Growing the Movement



If we hope to overcome the relentless attacks on our civil rights, Texans from all walks of life must join the growing movement for equality and social justice. We will only succeed in our fight to make Texas a more equitable, more just home for everyone through coalition building and solidarity with our neighbors.

In 2023, our campaign to dismantle Operation Lone Star gained widespread community and institutional support. It allowed TCRP to re-grant funding to local community groups on the border. Our Beyond Borders team worked with our institutional partners

to uplift community needs and share the important work of organizing groups leading campaigns against border militarization.

In Houston, our CI team joined RISE Houston, a grassroots coalition dedicated to Re-Imagining Safety for Everyone (RISE) in Houston. Together with fellow RISE partners Pure Justice and the Houston Abolitionist Collective, TCRP joined the local fight to stop police violence and demand that Houston tax dollars be spent on community programs that make communities safe.







**TCRP Staff:**  
**Gaby Mata**  
**Kassi Gonzalez**  
**Aron Thorn**  
**Roberto Lopez**  
**Alexis Bay**

## 2023 State of the People Event

TCRP Staff: Roberto Lopez



## RISE Houston Launch Event

TCRP Staff: Chris Rivera

# New Committees

One exciting new addition to our work was our commitment to leading intersectional advocacy for disability and reproductive rights in Texas. TCRP has always been committed to championing justice, equity, and inclusivity, including safeguarding disability and reproductive freedoms. TCRP is fully committed to involving our core programs—Voting Rights, Beyond Borders, and Criminal Injustice—to protect these rights for all Texans. To this end, TCRP launched a Disability Justice Committee and Reproductive Rights Committee in 2023 to support legal and reform efforts in Texas.

As we began planning our work, our Reproductive Rights Committee collaborated with state leaders in the reproductive rights space, such as Jane's Due Process and Planned Parenthood, to help us understand how best to make an impact. As our committee surveyed local and state threats, we decided to focus on policy and public education materials that align closely with the work that TCRP has historically engaged. One of our first campaigns in the space was providing amicus advocacy against Texas' abortion ban. Alongside our partners at Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) and Women Enabled International, we filed an amicus brief on

behalf of eleven disability rights organizations and scholars in the Texas Supreme Court, urging a fair interpretation of the medical exception to the state's abortion ban.

Our Disability Justice Committee will build on our years of solidarity with the disability community in Texas. Each program at TCRP has active Disability Rights legal campaigns, including cases against inaccessible immigration protocol, failure to accommodate claims in Texas Prisons, and disability-centered challenges to anti-voter laws. After decades of this advocacy, our new Disability Justice Committee will formalize this work into our programming as we intentionally grow our partnership with the disability rights movement on intersectional issues.





# Our Board of Directors



**James Nortey | Board Chair**



**Alan Detlaff**



**Carlos Carrasco**



**Jessica Cisneros**



**Kris Beaulieu | Finance Chair**



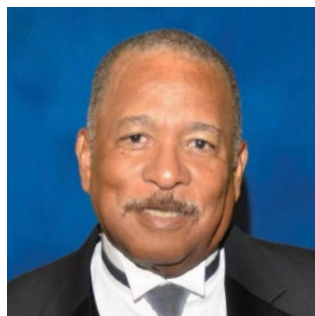
**Lisa Andrade Gonima**



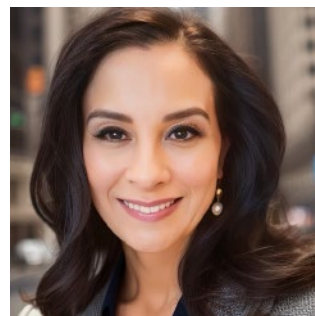
**Salina Mostajabian MD**



**Steffanie Evans | Treasurer**



**James Hurd**



**Ina Minjarez**





# JOIN THE MOVEMENT

You can advance the movement for equality and justice by contributing to the Texas Civil Rights Project.

**ONLINE  
HERE**

**BY MAIL**

Please make checks payable to the Texas Civil Rights Project and mail to:

**Texas Civil Rights Project  
PO Box 17757  
Austin, TX 78760**

**JOIN THE JUSTICE CORPS HERE, TCRP'S  
COHORT OF DEDICATED SUSTAINING  
SUPPORTERS!**

**DO YOU HAVE A DONOR ADVISED FUND?  
DOES YOUR EMPLOYER OFFER MATCHING  
GIFTS?**

To contact TCRP, please reach out to us at [development@texascivilrightsproject.org](mailto:development@texascivilrightsproject.org)

Visit our website to learn more: [www.txcivilrights.org](http://www.txcivilrights.org)

We invite you to follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@txcivilrights) for of-the-moment news and updates in this ever-changing landscape.



[txcivilrights.org](http://txcivilrights.org)