



U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

Civil Rights Division at 65

A Report on Recent Cases and Highlights

December 2022



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MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL



Protecting civil rights was a founding purpose of the Department of Justice in 1870. Indeed, the Justice Department began its work during Reconstruction to enforce the rights promised by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. This required confronting the racist conduct of the Ku Klux Klan and others who used terror and violence to keep African Americans from exercising their civil rights.

Today, more than 152 years later, far too many people in our country still face discrimination, harassment, and violence simply because of who they are, what they look like, who they love, or what they believe. The Civil Rights Division, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, works each day to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all who live in America, especially some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Over the last 65 years, we have been dedicated to our mission of advancing civil rights by enforcing laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), disability, religion, familial status, national origin, and citizenship status.

In commemoration of the Division's 65th anniversary, we are issuing this report to showcase some of our recent accomplishments. Notably, these successes would not have been possible without the critical support we received from important partners, including U.S. Attorney's Offices, other federal agencies, state and local law enforcement offices, civil rights stakeholders, and the general public.

To advance the cause of justice and protect the civil and human rights of every person remains our most solemn obligation. Many of you have long served on the front lines, advancing this mission and standing shoulder to shoulder with us. Your continued efforts have provided the Division with a valued partner. We hope that this report provides an important foundation for continuing our dialogue.

In protecting civil rights, we face challenging issues and formidable barriers. Despite the extraordinary work over the last 65 years, we know that progress can often be difficult, and not always linear. But, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, while "the arc of the moral universe is long ... it bends toward justice." We will follow that arc and persevere in our work. We will meet the challenges and overcome the barriers. With fairness and fortitude, we will advance the cause of civil rights.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristen Clarke". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Kristen Clarke
Assistant Attorney General

INTRODUCTION



“In our tenure here at the [Justice] Department, the mission to protect civil rights remains urgent. We remember the words of Dr. [Martin Luther] King [Jr.] that ‘progress is not automatic or inevitable,’ and that every step requires ‘the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.’ ... And we remember the obligation we have to protect Americans’ civil rights and liberties in all of the work we do – in every investigation and every case, and as we fulfill every one of our responsibilities.”

— Attorney General Merrick B. Garland

The U.S. Constitution promises equal justice under the law. The [Civil Rights Division](#) enforces laws designed to give meaning to that promise.

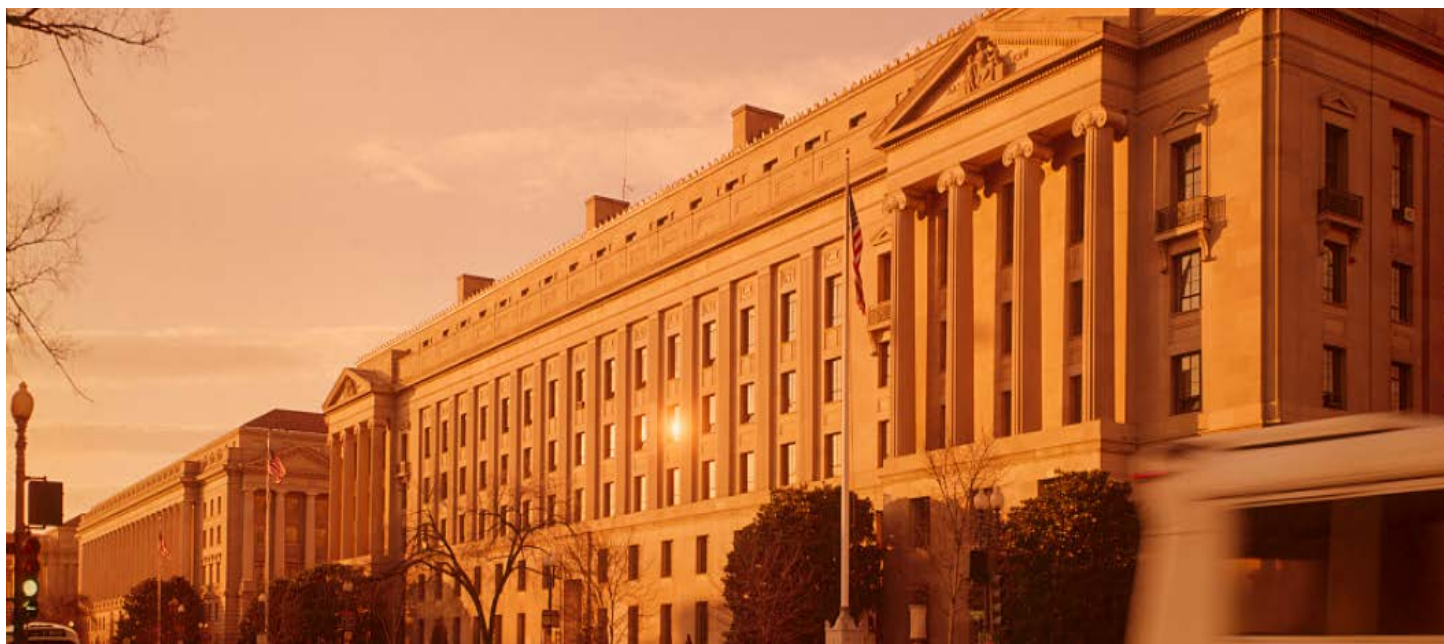
For 65 years, we have fought to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all who live in America, especially some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Through the robust and even-handed enforcement of federal civil rights laws, we expand access to opportunity and justice for everyone.

In pursuing the nation’s founding ideals of human dignity and equal justice, the Division focuses its work in four primary areas:

- Ensuring equal opportunity and fairness for all people at home, at school, in workplaces, and in accessing basic services;

- Preserving our democratic principles and institutions at the ballot box, in how we worship, and in the military;
- Fighting bias-motivated violence and exploitation; and
- Ensuring our justice system operates consistent with the Constitution and is accountable to the people it serves.

We see every day that, despite the great progress we have made as a nation, longstanding civil rights challenges endure. At the same time, new challenges have emerged as America changes and grows. Today, we must address both—bringing to bear all of the tools at our disposal—to combat discrimination in all its shapes and forms.



OVERVIEW OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Since its creation in 1957, the [Civil Rights Division](#) has been at the center of many of our nation's battles to advance civil rights. For example, we helped dismantle the segregation that plagued our public schools. We fought persistent discrimination that sought to block African-American voters from exercising their rights. We prosecuted federal hate crimes and acts of bias-motivated violence across the country. We ensured that women have equal opportunities in the workplace. And we guaranteed that people with disabilities can live in their own homes and communities.

As the primary agency responsible for protecting the civil rights of all people in the U.S., we enforce [federal laws](#) prohibiting the deprivation of constitutional rights and discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), religion, disability, familial status, national origin, and citizenship status.

Over the last 65 years, the Division has grown in size and scope. Today, we have more than 600 dedicated employees who enforce the civil rights of all people living in the U.S., including racial and ethnic minorities; members of all religious faiths; women; people with disabilities; servicemembers and veterans; those housed in public institutions; victims of hate crimes, law enforcement misconduct (including the use of excessive force), and human trafficking; people seeking access to reproductive care; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals; immigrants; and people who speak other languages.

The Division's enforcement, engagement, and policy work is carried out by 11 sections:

- [Appellate Section](#)
- [Criminal Section](#)
- [Disability Rights Section](#)
- [Educational Opportunities Section](#)
- [Employment Litigation Section](#)
- [Federal Coordination and Compliance Section](#)

- [Housing and Civil Enforcement Section](#)
- [Immigrant and Employee Rights Section](#)
- [Policy and Strategy Section](#)
- [Special Litigation Section](#)
- [Voting Section](#)

The Division's overall operations are supported by the Administrative Management Section, and our goals are supported by two cross-sectional working groups:

- [Indian Working Group](#)
- [LGBTQI+ Working Group](#)

The Division uses various tools to protect people's civil rights including strong enforcement, robust community outreach and engagement, and effective policy coordination. We also work in close partnership with [U.S. Attorney's Offices \(USAOs\)](#), other federal agencies, and state attorneys general.





RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT A GLANCE

In 2021 and 2022, the Civil Rights Division achieved impressive results, including:

\$20 million The second largest redlining settlement in Justice Department history. The case resolved claims in July 2022 that Trident Mortgage Company discriminated against communities of color in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. The resolution is bringing needed credit services to people living in these neighborhoods.

\$14.25 million The largest monetary resolution the Division has ever recovered in the 35-year history of the Immigration and Nationality Act's anti-discrimination provision. Reached in October 2021, the case resolved claims that Facebook routinely discriminated against U.S. workers by holding thousands of jobs for temporary visa holders.

\$4.5 million The largest damages award in a case alleging sexual harassment in housing. The case settled claims in December 2021 that a landlord of hundreds of rental units sexually harassed tenants and housing applicants for more than 15 years. The agreement also banned the landlord from owning or managing rental properties in the future.

\$2 million The significant monetary settlement in a case challenging an unlawful exam that screened out African-American candidates for law enforcement jobs in Baltimore County, Maryland. In addition to replacing the unlawful exam, the resolution will offer priority hiring for up to 20 qualified African-American candidates.

135 The number of school districts with desegregation orders monitored by the Division. After finding concerns in one of these matters in Madison County, Alabama, we reached a resolution in July 2022 that gave students equal access to academic programs and made sure that they are not unfairly disciplined or punished.

131 The number of large landlords, mortgage servicers, and auto finance companies serving sizeable military bases receiving letters issued jointly by the Division and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to explain the financial rights of servicemembers and veterans. To amplify this effort, we also shared the letters electronically through various networks.

52 The number of people who have been convicted or pled guilty to hate crimes, including three men who targeted and killed Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia; a man who fatally attacked a synagogue and burned a mosque in California; and a man who conspired and targeted nine men in Texas for violent crimes because of their sexual orientation.

45 The number of outreach events reaching servicemembers and veterans in all five military branches, reserve components, and the National Guard, as well as military families, state and federal agencies, and outside advocacy groups supporting the military community.

43 The number of housing discrimination cases and statements of interest filed under the Fair Housing Act.

23 The number of statements of interest and amicus briefs filed to protect voting rights in the Supreme Court; the Third, Fifth, Eighth, and Eleventh Circuits; and in federal district courts in Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin.

4 The number of [guilty pleas and convictions](#) obtained in February 2022 against the four former Minneapolis police officers involved in the deprivation of George Floyd's constitutional rights that led to his death. Former police officer Derek Chauvin pled guilty to federal civil rights violations and was sentenced to over 21 years in prison, while the other three police officers were convicted and sentenced to prison.

Over 65,000 The number of Uber users who were improperly charged wait time fees due to their disabilities. Our multi-million dollar [settlement](#) with Uber in July 2022 compensates these people and requires Uber to end its wait time fee policy for people with disabilities and their riding companions.

Over 15,000 The number of CVS, Rite Aid, Kroger, Meijer, and Hy-Vee pharmacy and store locations at which people with disabilities are now able to receive COVID-19 vaccinations using independent and private website appointment scheduling. These changes were made by the companies in 2021 and 2022, after we entered into [separate agreements](#) with each on website accessibility.

Over 1,000 The number of community leaders, civil rights advocates, and government colleagues who joined the Division for a robust dialogue about the fight against hate during the October 2021 virtual conference entitled [Confronting Hate: Strategies for Prevention, Accountability, and Justice](#). This event—the Division's first virtual conference—helped shine a light on the rising tide of hate, including the role of online hate in organizing and amplifying hate groups in a way that may lead to threats of violence and physical violence.



Ensuring Equal Opportunity and Fairness



REALIZING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS

In Brief

- For most people, education is key to achieving the American dream. [Brown v. Board of Education](#) was a landmark 1954 Supreme Court case in which the Justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional. Since then, there have been legislative and legal efforts that prohibit schools from discriminating against students because of their sex, national origin, color, language, religion, or disability.
- One of the first goals of the [Civil Rights Division](#) was to keep the promise of the *Brown* case by making sure schools followed the law. Today, we still enforce desegregation orders in 135 school districts so that all children, no matter who they are or where they're from, can be successful at school.
- We promote and protect access to equal opportunities in elementary and secondary schools as well as higher education. When schools include people from all backgrounds, they help *all* students succeed in our increasingly diverse nation.

Enforcement

We enforce federal civil rights laws in elementary, secondary, and higher education cases by:

- **Challenging modern-day forms of segregation** by taking on school policies that isolate or remove students from classrooms because of race, disability, or other characteristics protected by law.
- **Combating hate and harassment based on race, national origin, and religion** in schools. For example, we fought harassment and violence against Asian students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Enforcing prohibitions on sex discrimination** on school campuses and in school programs and activities. This includes combating sexual harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recent Cases

Newark Public Schools, NJ

In September 2021, we worked with the USAO in New Jersey to [resolve](#) an investigation into Newark Public Schools, New Jersey's largest school district, after we found that it failed to serve its English language learners. Our settlement agreement under the [Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974](#) improves language instruction and supports English learners so they can become fluent

in English. It will also help their parents get important information in a language they understand.



San José State University, CA

In September 2021, we [resolved](#) an investigation under [Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972](#) with San José State University after we found that for years, the University:

- Did not act as it should have on reports of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, of female student-athletes by a former athletic trainer; and
- Retaliated against two University employees for their roles in reporting or opposing the harassment and retaliation.

Under the settlement, achieved with help from the USAO for the Northern District of California, the University paid \$1.6 million to student-athlete survivors and made major improvements to its Title IX process.

Davis School District, UT

In October 2021, we partnered with the USAO for Utah to [resolve](#) an investigation under [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) to end severe peer and staff harassment of Black and Asian-American students. We found that the Davis School District repeatedly failed to act on reports of race-based harassment, including racial taunts, slurs, and assaults. The settlement agreement requires the district to make major changes to its systems and policies to end its racially hostile environment and biased discipline practices.

United States v. Madison County Board of Education, AL

In July 2022, we secured a [consent decree](#) with Madison County in a longstanding school desegregation case. The consent order addresses our findings that Black students faced unnecessary barriers to participating in gifted and advanced programs; that they were subjected to exclusionary discipline at disparate rates when compared to their white peers; that Black high schoolers were more likely than their white peers to be referred for subjective infractions; and that the district's recruitment and hiring processes left several schools without a single Black faculty member.

Highlights

Outreach on Advancing Educational Opportunities for All Students

In June 2022, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of [Plyler v. Doe](#), which held that all children, no matter what their or their parents' immigration status is, have a right to enroll in public schools. We made a [video](#) to keep alive the important promise of the *Plyler* case.

Resources for Students, Parents & School Officials

We develop and share fact sheets and letters that help students, parents, school officials, and others understand civil rights laws about education. We also worked with the Department of Education to develop and share resources on the following topics:

- [COVID-19 Related Harassment in Schools](#)
- [Discrimination Against Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander as well as Muslim, Arab, Sikh, and South Asian Students](#)
- [English Learner Student Participation in Educational Programs](#)
- [Confronting Discrimination Based on National Origin and Immigration Status](#)





Kristi Kimmel & Frederick County Public Schools, MD

The Civil Rights Division, in partnership with the USAO in Maryland, found that Frederick County Public Schools improperly secluded and restrained students as young as five years old in violation of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Kristi Kimmel's son Zeke has autism and is non-verbal with a sensory processing disorder. Ms. Kimmel describes 15-year-old Zeke as inquisitive and loving. "Zeke's got a great sense of humor. He's active and loves swimming, hiking, jumping, and walking with our dogs."

Since before kindergarten, Zeke has attended school full-time, and over the years, Ms. Kimmel saw his verbal communication improve. "We worked very hard to get verbal communication from him ... [at one time] there were 20-plus words that he used regularly."

But once the school Zeke attended started secluding and restraining him, that progress stopped, and he lost all ability to communicate functionally. Ms. Kimmel observed a big change in Zeke's personality. "He became aggressive and was even destructive to property. He was breaking windows." He also became withdrawn and began to isolate himself. "Zeke didn't want contact with us. When we'd go to touch him, he would flinch."

Ms. Kimmel decided to act. She met with Zeke's school officials to tell them of the distress he felt at home, but the school ignored her concerns. The school told her to "trust [their] process" because they've "been doing this for years." She didn't feel heard until the lawyers and experts in the Civil Rights Division began to look into the restraint and seclusion incidents that had become a common practice in the school district.

State law and the school district's own policies limit the use of seclusion and restraint to "emergency situations." Yet we discovered that in the 2017 to 2020 school years, nearly all the students who were secluded and restrained were ones with disabilities, even though students with disabilities make up only 11% of the total enrolled students.

Reflecting on the case, Ms. Kimmel said, "The DOJ, and all the people I worked with ... really listened and were compassionate and caring. That's what I needed at that time [to be told], 'look, you're not wrong in this, and I'm sorry it's happened.' The DOJ made me feel my voice was heard. And my voice was Zeke's voice because he doesn't have one."

As a result of our [settlement agreement](#), the school district ended the use of seclusion, overhauled its restraint practices, and trained staff on the use of proper behavioral interventions for students with disabilities.

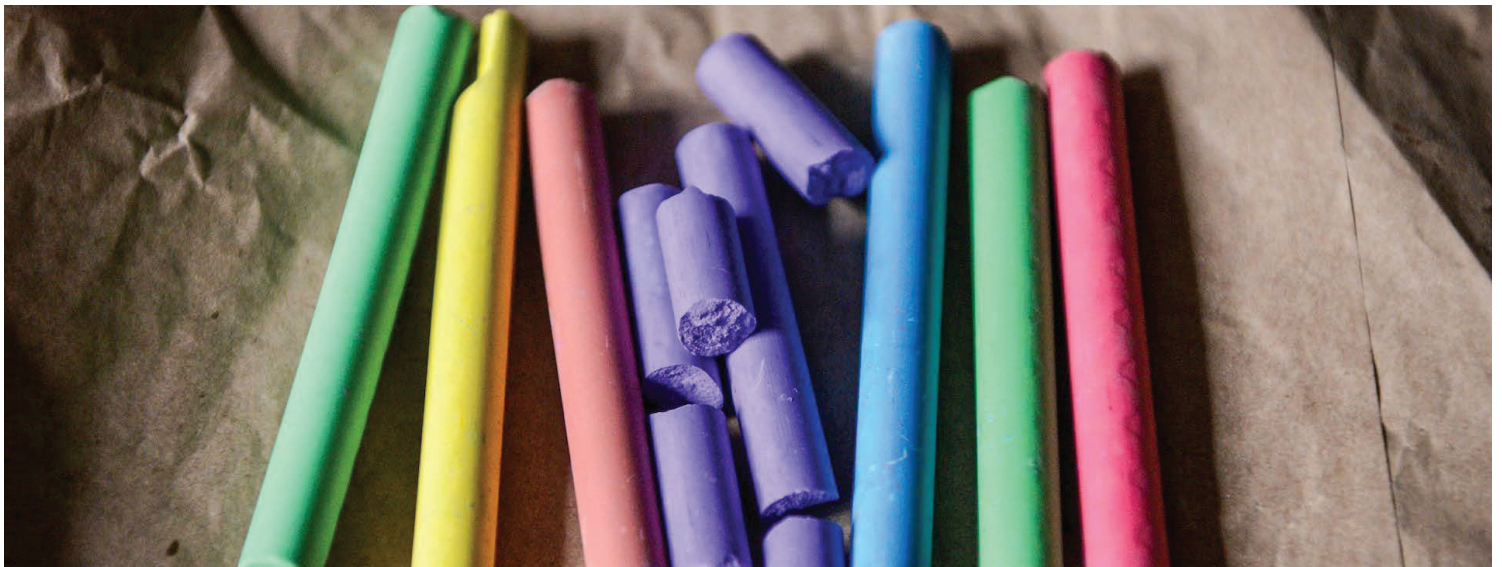


Photo by Daniel Watson

PROMOTING DISCRIMINATION-FREE WORKPLACES

In Brief

- The ability to work, earn a living, and climb the economic ladder is at the heart of our nation's promise. Too often discrimination and retaliation keep this promise from people.
- Congress passed [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) to protect employees from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, and religion. Since then, Congress passed additional laws to protect other marginalized communities, including recent immigrants legally allowed to work in the U.S.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) works to promote equal employment opportunity and workplace fairness across the country.

Enforcement

We safeguard the rights of workers from discrimination, harassment, and other unlawful employment practices by:

- **Protecting state and local government employees** from discrimination, including tests or policies that improperly screen out minorities, women, and people with disabilities from many public safety jobs, like police officers and firefighters.
- **Enforcing immigration-related employment discrimination laws** that prohibit unfair employment practices, such as requiring extra documents to prove the right to work based on citizenship status.

Recent Cases

United States v. South Dakota Department of Social Services

The South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) paid \$350,000 in back pay and other monetary relief to 52 Native American job applicants to [settle](#) a Title VII lawsuit. In our complaint, we alleged that DSS intentionally discriminated against Native American job applicants at its Pine Ridge Indian Reservation Office.

In addition to monetary damages, our consent decree required injunctive relief to ensure fair treatment in hiring in the future. DSS completed final payments in April 2021.



United States v. Facebook

In October 2021, we [settled](#) a case under the [Immigration and Nationality Act \(INA\)](#) with Facebook to resolve claims it routinely discriminated against U.S. workers (including U.S. citizens and certain non-U.S. citizens with permission to work) by holding thousands of jobs for temporary visa holders. In the resolution, Facebook agreed to:

- Set aside \$9.5 million to compensate victims of the alleged discrimination;
- Pay a civil penalty of \$4.75 million;
- Train its employees; and
- Change how it recruits and hires.

This settlement is our largest under the INA since its enactment 35 years ago.



Employers Recruiting at Georgia Tech University

In June and September 2022, we [settled](#) cases under the INA with 20 employers that posted job ads with unlawful citizenship status restrictions on Georgia Tech University's job recruitment platform. In some cases, the job ads blocked non-U.S. citizen students from applying. Many of the employers also posted unlawful and discriminatory ads on other college job recruitment platforms. Under the settlement, the employers [agreed](#) to pay more than \$1.1 million in civil penalties, undergo training, and change their recruiting practices.

Highlights

Combating Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

To better fight sexual harassment in state and local government workplaces, the [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Initiative](#):

- Finds best practices to prevent sexual harassment in state and local government workplaces;
- Develops tools to hold employers accountable; and
- Educates employers about their legal obligations.

In April 2022, we collaborated with the Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women to host a virtual event entitled [Access to Justice for Survivors of Sexual Harassment, Assault, and Misconduct](#). The program emphasized the Division's cross-cutting efforts to address sexual misconduct in employment, education, housing, and criminal justice matters.



United States v. Pennsylvania, et al.

In December 2021, a court approved the [settlement](#) in a Title VII sex discrimination lawsuit that we brought against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State Police. We alleged that the police department's use of physical tests for entry-level hiring discriminated against women by disproportionately screening them out of state trooper jobs.

As part of the resolution, Pennsylvania agreed to pay \$2.2 million to compensate the women who were harmed by the improper test. The agreement also required Pennsylvania to offer priority hiring relief with non-competitive retroactive seniority for pay and leave accrual for up to 65 qualified women.

United States v. Baltimore County, MD

In May 2022, a court approved our Title VII [resolution](#), which gave \$2 million to African-American job candidates not considered for Baltimore County's sworn law enforcement jobs because of an unlawful screening exam. The court's approval also cleared the way for:

- Relief to be given to hundreds of allegedly disqualified African-American applicants; and
- Up to 20 qualified African-American applicants to be hired on a priority basis.

The settlement also required Baltimore County to replace the unlawful exam with a new method to select applicants that complies with federal law.

Outreach & Coordination on Employment Laws

We educate employers, victims of discrimination, and the public about their rights and responsibilities. On average, every year—including in 2020 and 2021—we participate in over 100 events and webinars, reaching over 7,000 employees, employers, and others.

To increase access to our services and resources, we entered into over 60 agreements with federal, state, and municipal fair employment practice agencies and foreign governments. Through these agreements, we work with our partners to promote workers' rights.

And when thousands of Afghans resettled in the U.S. in 2021 and 2022, we worked with the Department of Homeland Security and developed outreach materials for their workplace needs. This included a [fact sheet](#) in [Dari](#) and [Pashto](#) explaining employment rights for Afghan special immigrant visa holders and parolees. Our outreach efforts meant that thousands of newly-arriving Afghans (and their service providers) learned about their employment rights and work authorization documents.

Employer & Worker Hotlines

We operate employer, worker, and disability hotlines to quickly answer questions and help informally resolve employment-related issues. Each year, we assist thousands of callers in many languages and conduct hundreds of workplace interventions. For example, in 2021 and 2022, we handled over 26,000 calls raising immigration-related employment issues on our [Employer and Worker Hotlines](#). In those instances, we helped resolve many problems before employees filed charges. During that time, we preserved the jobs of at least 550 workers, creating about \$12.5 million in economic value.



GUARANTEEING FULL AND FAIR ACCESS TO HOUSING AND LENDING

In Brief

- Where people live is central to many parts of daily life, including access to transportation, education, employment, healthcare, and a safe environment. Owning a home is also an important way to build wealth and financial security.
- More than 50 years ago, Congress passed the [Fair Housing Act \(FHA\)](#) to expand opportunities by prohibiting discrimination in public and private housing markets across the country. Congress also passed the [Equal Credit Opportunity Act \(ECOA\)](#), further safeguarding people's rights to fair credit to buy homes and cars and obtain other financing.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) protects people and families from discrimination to enjoy their housing of choice and obtain fair access to credit, including home mortgages, auto financing, and business loans.

Enforcement

We enforce federal civil rights laws in housing, lending, and public accommodations to make sure that people can:

- **Access housing free from discrimination** during the sale or rental of housing.
- **Obtain credit on an equal basis and free from discrimination**, including a fair opportunity to apply for credit with the same loan terms and standards for getting a loan as other borrowers who have the same credit characteristics.
- **Enter and enjoy public accommodations** like hotels, restaurants, night clubs, and theaters free from discrimination.



Recent Cases

United States v. Joseph Centanni

In December 2021, we [resolved](#) a case against Joseph Centanni, the former owner and manager of hundreds of New Jersey rental units. Working closely with the USAO in New Jersey, we alleged that since at least 2005, Mr. Centanni engaged in a pattern of sexually harassing female and gay or bisexual male tenants and housing applicants.

Through a consent decree, we obtained our largest monetary settlement in a case alleging sexual harassment in housing—\$4.5 million. Our resolution requires Mr. Centanni to:

- Pay nearly \$4.4 million in monetary damages to the tenants and applicants he harassed and a \$107,050 civil penalty;
- Dismiss the retaliatory housing court judgments, including evictions, he got against tenants he harassed and repair their credit; and
- Sell all of his residential rental properties and never own or manage similar properties again.

United States v. Meta Platforms, Inc. F/K/A Facebook, Inc.

In our first case challenging algorithmic discrimination under the FHA, we secured a groundbreaking [settlement agreement](#) with Facebook, Inc. (now known as Meta Platforms, Inc.) in June 2022. Working with the USAO for the Southern District of New York, we alleged that Facebook developed and used algorithms in its housing advertising system that, in part, unlawfully used race, color,

religion, sex, disability, familial status, and national origin to determine which users got housing ads.

Under the settlement, Facebook will stop using one of its algorithm-based tools for housing ads and develop a new system for housing ads to address certain disparities based on race, ethnicity, or sex. Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke stated, “This settlement is historic, marking the first time that Meta has agreed to terminate one of its algorithmic targeting tools and modify its delivery algorithms for housing ads in response to a civil rights lawsuit.”

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) & United States v. Trident Mortgage Company

In July 2022, we joined with the CFPB and the USAO for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to [settle](#) claims against Trident Mortgage Company for redlining neighborhoods of color in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania metropolitan area, which includes Camden, New Jersey, and Wilmington, Delaware. The settlement brings much-needed credit services to neighborhoods Trident avoided for years. Under the settlement, Trident must pay:

- At least \$18.4 million for a loan subsidy fund to increase credit opportunities for residents of redlined neighborhoods;
- \$750,000 to develop community partnerships to provide services that increase access to residential mortgage credit in those neighborhoods;
- \$875,000 for advertising and outreach;
- \$375,000 for consumer financial education; and
- A \$4 million civil money penalty.

Highlights

Preventing Sexual Harassment in Housing

Some landlords, maintenance workers, property managers, housing authority staff, and others with control over housing demand sexual acts for housing or engage in persistent, unwelcome sexual conduct—preying on vulnerable people and families desperate to stay in or find a home. The [Sexual Harassment in Housing Initiative](#) supports our outreach and enforcement efforts to fight sexual harassment in housing. In 2021 and 2022, we filed and resolved 16 cases alleging sexual harassment in housing.



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress Archives

Combating Redlining Initiative

In October 2021, Attorney General Merrick B. Garland and Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke announced the [Combating Redlining Initiative](#) to find and remedy lenders’ unlawful redlining practices across the country. Redlining happens when banks and other lenders don’t offer credit in communities of color. This initiative is our most aggressive and coordinated effort to fight redlining so far. We’ve teamed up with federal and state prosecutors across the country, as well as other federal agencies, to act on lending discrimination in more places than ever.

Victims of Sexual Harassment by Kentucky Landlord

The Civil Rights Division filed a lawsuit alleging that Kentucky landlord Gordon Whitescarver repeatedly sexually harassed several female tenants over several years in violation of the Fair Housing Act.

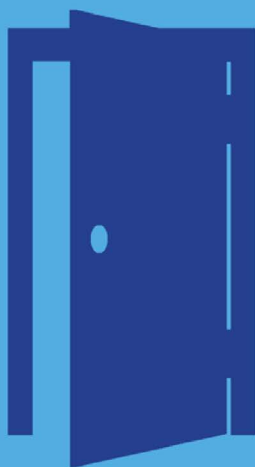
Working closely with the USAO for the Western District of Kentucky, the Division argued that Mr. Whitescarver entered the homes of female tenants without their consent, touched female tenants without their consent, made repeated and unwelcome sexual comments, requested sexual acts, offered reduced rent or free rent in exchange for sexual acts, and took adverse housing-related actions against female tenants who refused his sexual advances.

In describing why she agreed to be a part of the lawsuit, one target of the landlord's harassment stated:

"I wanted to be able to see justice served. Not just for me, but for all of the others ... If I had stayed quiet, what good was that really helping this situation? ... Even though it was something that happened long ago, it was still something I suffered from, because every time I seen him, I quivered inside. I wanted my voice to be heard."

In December 2021, the Division [resolved](#) the lawsuit. Mr. Whitescarver was required to pay \$220,000 to 11 women subjected to his harassment and abuse. One of the women recognized the profound influence the case had on her and her family. She said,

"It has not only impacted me, but also my daughters. They knew everything that was going on ... it gave them courage to ... be able to speak on anything that happens to them that is not acceptable...."



**You should never
have to choose
between housing
and sexual
harassment.**

ENSURING ACCESS AND EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In Brief

- There are more than 60 million people with disabilities in the U.S. Yet many continue to be excluded from fully participating in public life.
- Passed in 1990, the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) transformed society, giving people with disabilities the right to equal opportunity with respect to employment, goods and services offered by private business, and state and local government programs.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) uses new and familiar ways to protect civil rights and make sure people with disabilities can fully take part in their communities.

Enforcement

We protect the rights of people with disabilities by:

- **Fighting workplace discrimination and harassment** in recruitment, hiring, employment, training, pay, social activities, and providing reasonable accommodations.
- **Making sure state and local government programs and services are fair and accessible**, including in education, healthcare, social services, transportation, voting, and criminal justice.
- **Promoting accessibility at places of public accommodation** so that spaces like hotels, restaurants, retail stores, theaters, doctor's offices, fitness centers, and recreation facilities can be enjoyed by everyone.



Photo by Disabled and Here

Recent Cases

COVID-19 Website Access – CVS, Rite Aid, Kroger, Meijer & Hy-Vee

In 2021 and 2022, we entered into [five agreements](#) allowing people with disabilities to access COVID-19 vaccination websites. Pharmacies (CVS and Rite Aid) and grocery chains with pharmacies (Kroger, Meijer, and Hy-Vee) have over 15,000 locations nationwide. Because of these agreements, the pharmacies updated their websites so they're easier for people with disabilities to use and to schedule COVID vaccination appointments.

United States v. Oregon & Lane v. Brown

In August 2022, Oregon fulfilled the terms of a [landmark settlement](#) resolving a case challenging the state's provision of employment services for people with disabilities in sheltered workshops. These are segregated facilities that exclusively or primarily serve people with disabilities, in which they have little or no contact with non-disabled persons. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in sheltered workshops often earn wages well below minimum wage. By contrast, supported employment services assist people with IDD prepare for, obtain, and succeed in integrated workplaces at competitive wages.

After a 2015 class-action [settlement](#), more than 1,115 workers received jobs in the community, leaving sheltered workshops to work with non-disabled peers and earn competitive wages. At least 7,000 people with IDD, including 4,900 youth who finished school, have now received the state services they need to work.

Highlights

Outreach on Disability Laws

We educate the public on their rights and responsibilities under federal disability laws by:

- Providing free [guidance and resources](#) to those trying to follow the law, including the recently published: [Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA](#); [Algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, and Disability Discrimination in Hiring](#); and [COVID-19 and the Americans with Disabilities Act](#);
- Providing [ADA.gov](#) as a one-stop resource; and
- Operating an [ADA Information telephone hotline](#).

Community Integration for People with Disabilities

In [Olmstead v. L.C.](#), the Supreme Court ruled that the ADA makes it illegal to keep people with disabilities apart from others for no reason. People with disabilities have the right to live and get services with everyone else in the most integrated setting.

More than 20 years later, the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency shows how important it is to give people with disabilities safe places to live other than in institutions. Since the pandemic started, more than 200,000 long-term care facility residents and staff have died from COVID-19. In addition to protecting against the pandemic, our enforcement of *Olmstead's* “integration mandate” has:

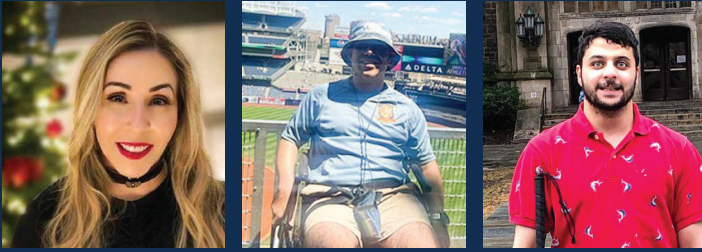
- Allowed thousands of people with disabilities to live in their own homes instead of in institutions and not be separated from others at work or school; and
- Helped people with disabilities around the country be more independent and have greater opportunities to fully take part in their communities.

Protections for People with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

In April 2022, we published [guidance](#) explaining how the ADA protects people with OUD who are in treatment or recovery, including what OUD discrimination looks like in employment, healthcare, and state or local government services. We also:

- [Notified](#) the Indiana State Board of Nursing that it didn't follow the ADA because it denied a nurse looking to get her nursing license back the chance to go to a substance abuse program because she takes legally prescribed medicine for her OUD;
- [Made a resolution](#) with the Massachusetts Trial Court to solve claims that its drug courts were discriminating against those with OUD;
- [Resolved claims](#) with Ready to Work, a Colorado-based employment, residential, and social services program for people experiencing homelessness, that didn't admit a person taking prescribed OUD medicine; and
- [Sued](#) the Pennsylvania court system because it didn't let people in its court supervision programs use prescribed medicine to treat OUD.





Mary Vaccaro, Perry Canales, Seif Saqallah & Uber

The Civil Rights Division found that Uber had unfairly charged fees to people who, because of their disabilities, needed more time to get into an Uber car.

Mary Vaccaro has quadriplegia and uses a manual wheelchair that can be broken down and stored in a car's trunk—a process that usually takes a minimum of five minutes, even with the help of a nurse. Perry Canales has cerebral palsy and uses a manual wheelchair and generally needs more than two minutes to have his wheelchair broken down and stored in a trunk when an Uber car arrives. Seif Saqallah identifies as an American Muslim man who is blind with no sight. He often has difficulty locating the Uber car and boarding within two minutes, even when he is ready and waiting for the vehicle to arrive.

When Ms. Vaccaro, Mr. Canales, and Mr. Saqallah noticed wait time fees on their rides they promptly asked for refunds from Uber, informing the company that they have disabilities and needed more time to board because of them. For Mr. Canales and Mr. Saqallah, Uber initially granted their requests for refunds but eventually stopped granting refunds, informing them that they had reached the maximum amount of refunds allowed. For Ms. Vaccaro, Uber refused altogether to refund her and continued to charge her the wait time fees.

Ms. Vaccaro, Mr. Canales, and Mr. Saqallah decided to act because, as Mr. Canales said, “this issue was always about more than just me.” Mr. Canales went on to say “When DOJ gets involved, it is about stopping the law from being broken, which helps everyone. I relied on the government to be there, and they were.”

In July 2022, we worked with the USAO for the Northern District of California to [resolve](#) a complaint that Uber violated the ADA by continuing to charge a wait time fee to passengers who, because of their disabilities, need more than two minutes to get into an Uber car. In our multi-million-dollar settlement, Uber agreed to end its wait time fees for all Uber riders who need more time to get into cars because of their disabilities. Uber also agreed to offer several million dollars to the more than 65,000 Uber users who were charged such fees due to their disabilities.



Italian Americans in the West collection (AFC 1989/022), American Folklife Center, Library of Congress Archives

PROTECTING VOTING RIGHTS AT THE BALLOT BOX

In Brief

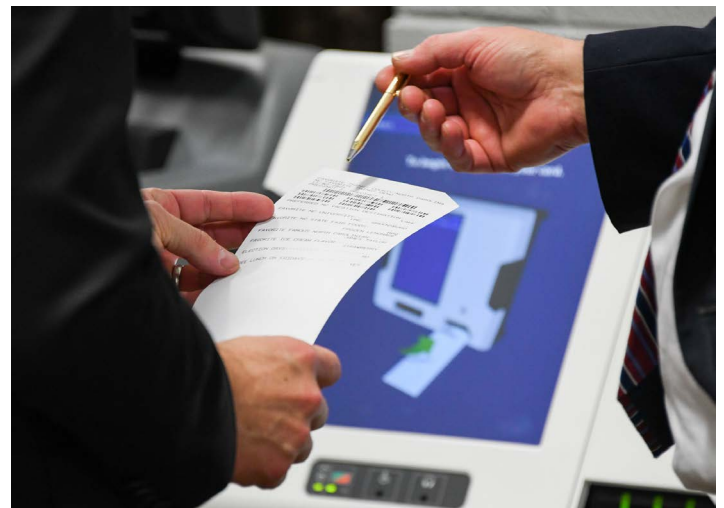
- The right to vote is the bedrock of our democracy. Our society must protect and defend free and fair elections that reflect the will of the American people.
- When President Lyndon Johnson signed the [Voting Rights Act \(VRA\)](#) in 1965, he announced: “Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote.”
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) is committed to using all available tools to fight unlawful limits on voting rights, as well as to counter voter discrimination and suppression across the country.

Enforcement

To be sure all eligible people can vote, we enforce federal laws by:

- **Protecting voters from discriminatory practices based on race, color, and language minority status** in voter registration, election procedures, and government body election methods.
- **Ensuring access for voters with disabilities and who speak a minority language** so they can get help from people they choose and use an accessible voting system.
- **Enforcing certain federal election requirements in states** to ensure eligible citizens can register to vote and use provisional ballots when their names aren’t on voter rolls.

to register eligible voters in time and canvass and count eligible provisional ballots.



Recent Cases

United States v. Georgia

In June 2021, we [sued](#) Georgia, challenging several provisions of Senate Bill 202. Our complaint alleges that those provisions were adopted, at least in part, with the purpose of denying or limiting voting rights because of race, violating Section 2 of the VRA. The case is still in litigation.

United States v. Oneida County Board of Elections, NY

In July 2021, the court entered a [consent decree](#) with the Oneida County Board of Elections to settle a lawsuit under the [National Voter Registration Act \(NVRA\)](#) and the [Help America Vote Act](#). Under this decree, the County Board will address its 2020 election violations, where it failed

United States v. New Jersey

In September 2021, the court entered a [consent decree](#) with New Jersey to settle a lawsuit under the NVRA. Under the decree, the state will designate disability paratransit programs as voter registration agencies.

United States v. Texas

In November 2021, we [sued](#) Texas, arguing several provisions in Senate Bill 1 violate the VRA by limiting how much help voters with a disability or who can’t read or write can get, as well as section 101 of the [Civil Rights Act \(CRA\)](#) by requiring rejection of mail ballots and mail ballot request forms for errors that don’t verify voter eligibility. The case remains in litigation.

United States v. Galveston County, TX

In March 2022, we [sued](#) Galveston County, challenging its commissioners court redistricting plan as having a discriminatory purpose and result that violates Section 2 of the VRA. The case remains in litigation.

United States v. Arizona

In July 2022, we [sued](#) Arizona to challenge several provisions in House Bill 2492. The complaint alleges that these provisions violate the NVRA and Section 101 of the CRA. The case remains in litigation.

Highlights

Language Access at the Ballot Box

Section 203 of the VRA protects communities with large numbers of citizens who have limited English proficiency and speak the covered minority languages of Spanish, Asian languages, Native American languages, and Native Alaskan languages.

More than 330 jurisdictions must provide election materials and information in covered minority languages. In December 2021, the Census Bureau released new determinations of which jurisdictions across the country are covered by the language minority requirements of Section 203 of the VRA. As a result, we undertook extensive outreach, including letters, calls, and election day monitoring, where appropriate, with a particular focus on jurisdictions and languages that are more recently covered.

“The Department of Justice is committed to making sure that all eligible voters can cast a vote; that all lawful votes are counted; and that every voter has access to accurate election information. We have taken actions across the country and we will not stop doing all that we can to safeguard the right to vote.”

– Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke

Congressional Testimony on Voting Rights

In 2021, Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke testified before both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees

in support of the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. In the Senate hearing, she [stated](#): “Congress must act now to restore the Voting Rights Act to prevent [the country] from backsliding into a nation where millions of citizens, particularly citizens of color, find it more difficult to register, cast their ballots, and elect the candidates of their choice.”

Guidance for Voters & Election Officials

We help develop new policy guidance and outreach materials to assist state and local election officials and the public understand federal voting laws. Examples of our materials include:

- [Guidance under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act for Redistricting and Methods of Electing Government Bodies](#)
- [Guidance on Federal Statutes Affecting Methods of Voting](#)
- [Guidance on Federal Law Constraints on Post-Election “Audits”](#)
- Know Your Voting Rights; Your Guide to Federal Voting Rights Laws ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
- [Guide to State Voting Rules That Apply After a Criminal Conviction](#)

We also helped to launch [justice.gov/voting](https://www.justice.gov/voting), a new website that educates the public about voter registration and the election process.

Election Monitoring

We monitor elections around the country under our federal statutes that protect the right to vote. During the November 2022 general election, we [monitored](#) elections in 64 jurisdictions in 24 states and operated a call center to receive election complaints.



SAFEGUARDING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

In Brief

- The freedom to practice our religion of choice without fear or harm is a founding principle of our nation.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) enforces laws that prevent and address religious discrimination in schools, housing, credit, places of public accommodation, institutions, and workplaces.
- We also prosecute people who commit religion-based hate crimes and protect the religious freedom of people across the country.

Enforcement

We uphold many federal civil and criminal laws that protect religious freedom and liberty by:

- **Fighting religious discrimination and harassment** in education, employment, housing, lending, and places of public accommodation.
- **Prosecuting hate crimes based on religion** that affect not only the victims, but also their families, communities, and places of worship.
- **Protecting the rights of people in prisons or jails** to practice their religions.
- **Helping religious schools or places of worship** overcome unlawful zoning or planning restrictions that keep them from using land for religious purposes.

We work closely with USAOs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to investigate and prosecute religion-based hate crimes. We also collaborate with state attorneys general and local district attorneys who prosecute people who vandalize houses of worship and assault or threaten people because of their religious beliefs.

Recent Cases

United States v. Township of Toms River, NJ

In March 2021, we worked with the USAO in New Jersey to resolve allegations that the Township of Toms River changed its zoning code so that houses of worship would have a much harder time opening. For example, the Township enacted a 10-acre parcel minimum requirement, which was a great burden to the Township's Orthodox Jewish population. Because of their faith and religious

traditions, the Orthodox Jewish community has religious services at small houses of worship that they walk to and from on the sabbath and holidays. Under the [consent decree](#), the Township will:

- Update its zoning code;
- Train its employees; and
- Create an effective process to receive and resolve complaints.



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress Archives

Michigan & Michigan Department of Corrections

In November 2021, we [resolved](#) an investigation into policies at the Michigan Department of Corrections that made it impossible for some people to practice their religions, such as:

- Requiring a five-person minimum for group worship and religious activities;

- Banning group religious practices for certain religions, like Hindu, Yoruba, Hebrew Israelite, and Thelema practitioners; and
- Limiting access to the kosher-for-Passover diet to those on the kosher diet all year.

Highlights

Outreach to Religious Communities

We help the public understand civil rights laws about religious freedom with widespread outreach. For example, after the January 2022 attack and hostage crisis at the Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, we met with interfaith leaders to talk about the rise in hate crimes and discrimination faced by religious communities.

In 2022, we also continued hosting quarterly meetings between federal agencies and organizations representing Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian communities to discuss religious discrimination facing their communities.

United States v. Richard Tobin

In November 2021, a court [sentenced](#) a New Jersey man, who was a member of a white supremacist group called “The Base,” to prison. He pled guilty of planning, with members of a white supremacist hate group, to threaten and intimidate African Americans and Jewish Americans by vandalizing minority-owned properties throughout the country. We worked closely with the USAO in New Jersey and the FBI to prosecute the case.

United States v. John Earnest

In December 2021, a man prosecuted by the Justice Department was [sentenced](#) to life in prison plus 30 years after he opened fire at the Chabad of Poway synagogue, killing one person, injuring three others, and endangering the lives of more than 50 others. He had tried to set fire to the nearby Dar-ul-Arqam mosque the month before. We worked closely with the USAO for the Southern District of California and the FBI to prosecute the case.



Photo by Lainie Berger

United States v. Stafford County, VA

The Civil Rights Division alleged that Stafford County violated the [Religious Land Use And Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000](#) by changing its zoning ordinance to prevent the All Muslim Association of America (AMAA) from developing a religious cemetery.

AMAA is an organization devoted to ensuring that Muslims receive a proper religious burial. It operates religious cemeteries in Virginia and services the entire eastern seaboard. After several years of searching for space to develop a new religious cemetery, AAMA found and purchased a parcel in Stafford County. County officials told AMAA that cemeteries were allowed on the parcel under the zoning code. After learning that AMAA had purchased the parcel and planned to develop a religious cemetery, the County changed its zoning code to prevent AMAA from using the land.

After the Division filed a lawsuit, Stafford County repealed its zoning ordinance and approved AMAA's plan to develop a religious cemetery. The County also paid AMAA \$500,000 in damages to settle a private companion case.

AMAA expressed gratitude for the [resolution](#). AMAA remarked:



“The work of the DOJ lawyers helped us to vindicate our rights to use our land for a fundamental and necessary religious purpose—the burial of religious Muslims consistent with their religious beliefs. We are very grateful to the Department of Justice for standing up for the rights of all Americans to practice the religion of their choosing.”

On August 14, 2022, AMAA broke ground at their new religious cemetery location.



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress Archives

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS

In Brief

- Servicemembers and veterans protect and move forward our democracy. In turn, the [Civil Rights Division](#) safeguards the brave members of the armed forces, as well as the veterans who have already served, from discrimination and unfair treatment.
- The [Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative \(SVI\)](#) builds on our important enforcement work by sharing information, identifying servicemember and veteran needs, and coordinating resource distribution.
- On Veterans Day 2021, Attorney General Merrick B. Garland directed SVI to conduct more outreach on civil rights protections and access to legal aid and to develop policies and strategies to support and protect the military community.

Enforcement

We enforce federal civil rights laws that protect servicemembers, veterans, and their families by:

- **Promoting financial security for servicemembers** in housing and credit to improve the quality of their lives while they're serving our country.
- **Safeguarding servicemembers' employment rights** so they can go back to civilian jobs after serving without being harmed by their present, past, and future military service.
- **Ensuring servicemembers and their families can register and vote absentee** in federal elections when they're away due to military orders.
- **Enforcing anti-discrimination laws protecting veterans with disabilities** in mostly all aspects of life like, education, employment, housing, public accommodations, voting, and state and local programs.

Recent Cases

Memorandum of Agreement with Ohio

In March 2021, we reached an [agreement](#) with Ohio to ensure that military servicemembers, their family members, and U.S. citizens living overseas could fully participate in the May 2022 federal primary election. The agreement remedied the state's violation of the [Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act \(UOCAVA\)](#).

United States v. Central Texas College of Killeen & United States v. Tidewater Community College, VA

In May 2021, we worked with the USAO for the Western District of Texas to reach [settlements](#) with two community colleges—Central Texas College of Killeen and Tidewater Community College—to give students with disabilities, including veterans, adequate access. Both schools, which have high veteran populations, agreed to:

- Make facilities like classrooms, dormitories, libraries, technology centers, and places of recreation, accessible;
- Update parking, entrances, restrooms, service counters, drinking fountains, and routes to and from (as well as inside) buildings to make them accessible;
- Make sure assembly areas, such as auditoriums, have the required wheelchair and companion seating; and
- Put a plan in place to make sidewalks accessible with curb cuts in their borders.



Photo by Devan Gowans

United States & Gunn v. Prince George County, VA & Virginia Retirement System (VRS)

In April 2022, we partnered with the USAO for the Eastern District of Virginia to settle ground-breaking [litigation](#) against Prince George County and VRS for violating Major Mark Gunn's employment rights. We sued the county and VRS because they violated the [Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act \(USERRA\)](#) by not rehiring Major Gunn as a detective and refusing to award him proper pension credits and payments when he came back from active duty.

Highlights

SVI Coordinating Committee

In 2021, we started the [SVI Coordinating Committee](#) in the Justice Department to share information and resources about servicemembers, veterans, and their families, including increasing their access to legal aid. The Committee, chaired by the Division, meets quarterly and has members from across the Department.

Targeted Outreach to the Military Community

In 2021 and 2022, we conducted [45 outreach events](#) reaching members of all five military branches, reserve components, and the National Guard, as well as military families, state and federal agencies, and advocacy groups supporting the military community. Topics included financial, employment, voting, and disability rights.

We're also strengthening and supporting outreach to military families through the [White House Joining Forces Initiative](#).

Inter-Agency Coordination on Servicemember & Veteran Matters

To find ways to better reach servicemembers, veterans, and their families, we work with key agency partners across the federal government. For example, in 2021 and 2022, we released several joint letters with CFPB, telling 131 large [landlords](#), [mortgage servicers](#), and [auto finance companies](#) serving sizeable military bases to explain their obligations to comply with federal laws that protect servicemembers and veterans.

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Thomas Gorgeny & GM Financial



In September 2022, the Civil Rights Division filed a [lawsuit](#) against GM Financial for violating the [Servicemembers Civil Relief Act \(SCRA\)](#) by illegally repossessing 71 servicemembers' vehicles and denying or mishandling over 1,000 vehicle lease termination requests from servicemembers.

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Thomas Gorgeny was one of the affected servicemembers. He had leased a car from GM Financial while living in Austin, Texas. While there, he received deployment orders outside of the country and thus wouldn't be able to use the vehicle. The SCRA allows servicemembers to terminate vehicle leases in these situations, and prohibits lessors from charging fees related to those termination.

Officer Gorgeny followed all of the SCRA's requirements to terminate his lease. But while he was serving overseas, GM Financial sent him a bill for over \$15,000 for the remaining term of the lease. This caused Officer Gorgeny significant stress during his deployment when he needed to be focused on his military duties.

Because of the Division's lawsuit, Officer Gorgeny never had to pay that \$15,000 bill, and he received an additional payment of \$2,033 to cover his damages. Under the resolution, GM Financial also agreed to pay \$3.5 million to the other affected servicemembers, repair the servicemembers' credit, and provide SCRA training to its employees.

Combating Bias-Motivated Violence and Exploitation



ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING HATE CRIMES AND HATE INCIDENTS

In Brief

- Hate crimes affect many others aside from the harm caused to their direct victims. Families and communities across the nation fear they may also be threatened, attacked, or forced from their homes because of how they look, how they worship, whom they love, or if they have a disability.
- We know every hate incident, even if it doesn't meet the definition of a crime, still hurts each victim and whole communities.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) uses every tool we have to redress acts of hate and discrimination, such as working with our partners to build trust between law enforcement and communities.

Enforcement

We investigate and prosecute hate crimes committed because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

Our hate crimes cases involve murder, physical and sexual assault, threats, arson, and destruction of religious property. Our attorneys are experts at working with the FBI, USAOs, and state and local law enforcement.

Recent Cases

United States v. Jose Gomez

In February 2022, a Texas man pled guilty to a hate crime and was [sentenced](#) to 25 years in prison for using a knife to violently attack an Asian family at a store in Midland. The defendant believed that the victims were Chinese and at fault for the COVID-19 pandemic.

United States v. Malachi Robinson

In July 2022, a Missouri man [pled guilty](#) to shooting a teen because of the victim's sexual orientation. After a chance meeting in a local library, the defendant walked with the teen to a local park, where he shot him eight times. The defendant also texted his girlfriend around the same time that he might shoot the teen because of the teen's sexual orientation. The defendant faces up to life in prison.

United States v. Travis McMichael, et al.

In August 2022, a Georgia jury convicted three men for hate crimes and trying to kidnap Ahmaud Arbery in 2020. Mr. Arbery, a young Black man, was jogging on public

neighborhood streets when he was chased down and shot to death. All three defendants were [convicted](#) on multiple counts, including using violence to intimidate and interfere with Mr. Arbery because of his race. Two defendants were sentenced to life in prison, and the third was sentenced to 35 years in prison.



Photo by Julie Vianello

United States v. Daniel Jenkins, et al.

Between June and October 2021, four Texas men were [sentenced](#) to prison for their involvement in a scheme to target gay men for violent crimes. The defendants targeted nine male victims in and around Dallas, subjecting them to kidnapping, carjacking, and hate crimes, because the defendants believed the victims were gay. Members of the conspiracy used Grindr, a social media dating platform, to lure gay men to an apartment complex. When the men arrived, the conspirators held the men at gunpoint and forced them to drive to local ATMs to withdraw cash from their accounts. The defendants were sentenced to 11, 20, 22, and 23 years.

Highlights

Hate Crimes Enforcement & Prevention Initiative

We lead this initiative, along with the Justice Department's Anti-Hate Coordinator. Together, we work to accomplish agency-wide mandates set forth in the Attorney General's May 2021 [Memorandum Improving Efforts to Combat Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents](#), including implementation of our requirements under the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act/Jabara-Heyr NO HATE Act.

Through this initiative, we work with our Justice Department partners to:

- Improve hate crime and hate incident reporting;
- Support training to improve law enforcement's ability to identify and investigate hate crimes;
- Offer grants and resources for victim services;
- Coordinate enforcement and prevention efforts with other agency partners; and
- Reach out to communities and advocates.

Confronting Hate: Strategies for Prevention, Accountability & Justice

In October 2021, we hosted a [virtual conference](#) that brought together over 1,000 community leaders, advocates, law enforcement officials, and government colleagues to explore challenges and successful practices in fighting hate.

The Confronting Hate event studied [emerging issues](#) in hate crimes enforcement and prevention through panels featuring leading experts, academics, and advocates. One panel focused on the spread of online hate and how to address and prevent it. Another panel focused on the use of tools other than criminal prosecution to combat hate, including restorative justice, civil litigation, and public awareness campaigns.

Congressional Testimony on Hate Crimes

In March 2022, Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke [testified](#) before the Senate Judiciary Committee on our hate crimes enforcement and prevention work. In the hearing, she said:

“Acts of unlawful hate come in many forms—from online harassment and

verbal threats to physical assaults, cross-burnings, attack on houses of worship, vandalizing places of business, and mass murder. But these acts have one thing in common: they terrorize not only individuals and families, but entire communities because of their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and gender or gender identity.”



United Against Hate Community Outreach Program

Responding to growing incidents of hate, the Attorney General directed the Justice Department to boost efforts to fight hate crimes and incidents. With critical help from the Hate Crimes Enforcement and Prevention Initiative, we developed the [United Against Hate \(UAH\)](#) community outreach program. Designed to be led by U.S. Attorneys in their districts, the program improves hate crime and incident reporting by teaching community members how to identify, report, and prevent acts of hate. We also created hypothetical scenarios and included videos portraying real-life hate cases and stories to promote robust interaction and trust-building between community members and law enforcement.

After developing the *UAH* program, we worked closely with the [Executive Office for United States Attorneys](#) to train three USAOs to pilot the program. Positive feedback from community members and law enforcement led to several new ways for USAOs to build relationships with communities targeted by hate. Based on feedback from the

pilot, we expanded the program to 16 more USAOs.

In September 2022, the Attorney General [announced](#) during the White House *United We Stand* Summit that all 94 USAOs would put the *UAH* program into effect in the coming year.

Hate Crimes in the LGBTQI+ Community

The LGBTQI+ community has faced its share of acts of hate. In September 2022, we partnered with the FBI and other components to talk with representatives from approximately 40 LGBTQI+ community organizations at a summit held at the FBI's offices. During the event, Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke provided an overview of the Division's enforcement and policy work,

including hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Attendees were also provided with an overview of the FBI's civil rights program as well as instructions on how the FBI manages and mitigates civil rights threats.

Hate Crimes Website

Together with the [Community Relations Service \(CRS\)](#), we created and launched the Justice Department's [Hate Crime Website](#). The website houses resources for each state and territory and other resources related to the Department's work combating hate crimes. The website's traffic has steadily gone up, with more than two million unique visitors since its launch in 2018.



Listening to the Voices of Survivors of Acts of Hate

Perhaps the most inspiring part of the Confronting Hate virtual conference was seeing the courage of [survivors of hate and violence](#). This included the families of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr., both victims of hate crimes whose tragic deaths led to the passage of the [Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act of 2009](#). We also heard from Hong Lee, Taylor Dumpson, and Kiah Morris.

Dennis and Judy Shepard, Matthew Shepard's parents, along with Louvon Harris, James Byrd Jr.'s sister, spoke about the importance of education—specifically, teaching young people basic principles of tolerance, compassion, and appreciation for differences. Both families stressed that advocacy and outreach are especially needed in rural areas and small towns, where people who are “different” may be singled out. Ms. Harris said:

“[Y]ou’re not born to hate. It’s a learned behavior. Anything learned can be unlearned, and people often fear because they don’t know each other; they don’t communicate. Knowledge will help them to understand that this person, even though he looks different ... they’re an individual and have something good [to offer] society.”

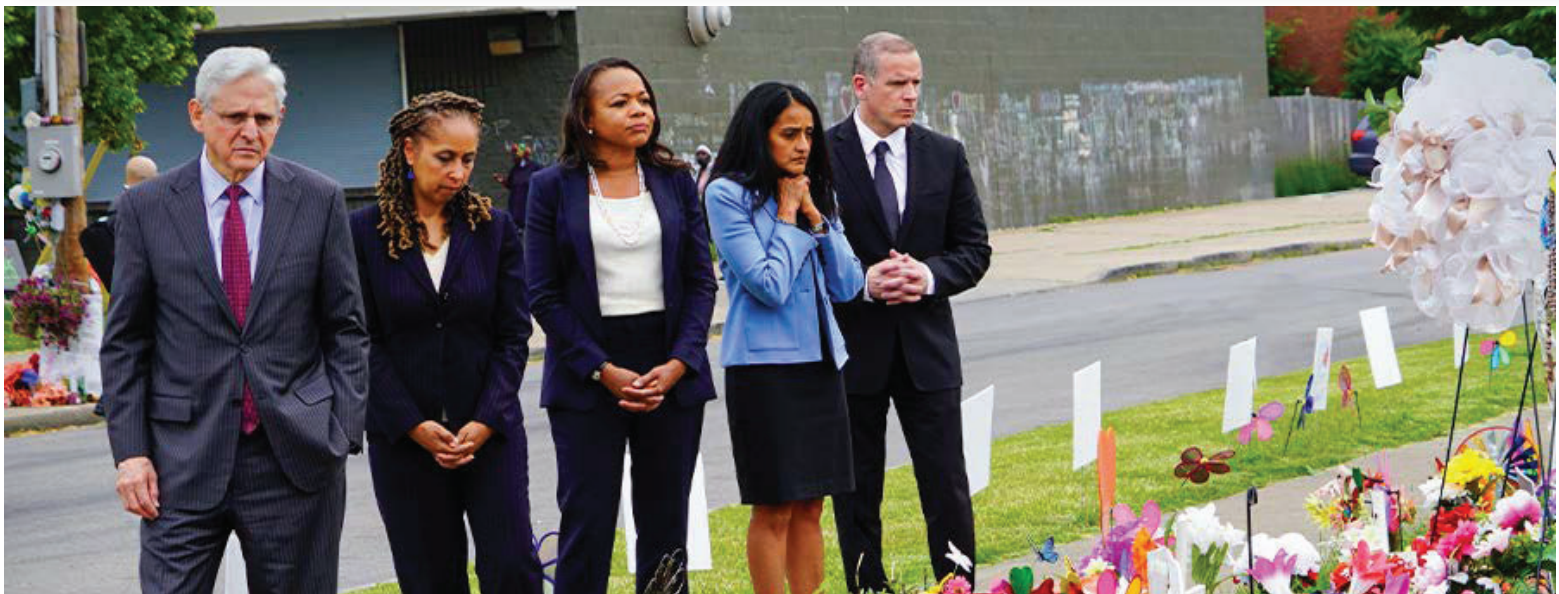
Both families continue this impactful educational work through foundations established in the names of their loved ones.

Hong Lee, an Asian American woman from California, emphasized the importance of a different kind of

education—bystander training. When Ms. Lee was subjected to racist and sexist comments at a restaurant, staff and customers tried to help. After the incident, Ms. Lee co-founded Seniors Fight Back to help defend against rising levels of anti-Asian hate, especially targeting the elderly.

Taylor Dumpson, the first Black woman president of the student government at American University in Washington, DC, was harassed based on her race after the founder of the Daily Stormer and many of his followers “doxed” her and posted her personal information online. Ms. Dumpson continued to receive threats and online harassment as of the date she spoke at the Confronting Hate conference. But she did not allow these acts to deter her from her goal of becoming a civil rights attorney, nor did she let it break her. Instead Ms. Dumpson fought back by pursuing litigation against the Neo-Nazis who cyber-harassed her, and she won.

Kiah Morris, the first Black woman to serve in Vermont's state legislature, shared painful details about how the online threats targeting her and her family escalated from the virtual world to the real world. She stated, “I started receiving death threats on computers ... then [we] had vandalism on our property, swastikas on the routes where I walked my dogs.” In 2018, Ms. Morris withdrew from her re-election campaign. As of the date of the conference, she served as the Movement Politics Director for Rights and Democracy Vermont and as a Commissioner for the Vermont Commission on Women.



GUARDING ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

In Brief

- People should have fair and safe access to reproductive healthcare.
- Under federal law, it's unlawful to use violence, threats of violence, or property damage to block access to reproductive health services.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) is committed to protecting healthcare providers and people seeking legal reproductive health services.

Enforcement

We enforce the [Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act \(FACE Act\)](#), which makes it illegal to block a person from reproductive health services. Examples of crimes under this law are:

- Physical attacks on clinic employees and patient escorts;
- Attempted arson of clinics;
- Blocking clinic entrances; and
- Threats of bodily harm to providers or recipients of reproductive health services.

This federal law covers physicians, patients, clerical workers, and escorts at reproductive health and pregnancy counseling facilities.

Recent Cases

United States v. Robert Dear

We are working with the USAO in Colorado to prosecute a case against Robert Dear, who was indicted on 65 counts of violating the FACE Act. Mr. Dear drove to a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs to wage a “war” because the clinic offered abortion services. Mr. Dear took a dozen guns, more than 500 rounds of ammunition, and propane tanks with him. According to the [indictment](#), Mr. Dear wounded eight people and killed three, including a police officer. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty that includes death or up to life in prison.

United States v. Emily Hari, et al.

In 2017, the defendants formed a militia group and planned several criminal acts, including an attempt to set fire to the Women’s Health Practice in Champaign, Illinois. One of the

defendants used a sledgehammer to break a window and placed a PVC device inside the organization in an attempt to damage or destroy the building. The device did not ignite, and was found by an employee later in the day. In September 2021, the defendants, who were convicted for this and other crimes, received sentences ranging from 14 years to life in prison.



Highlights

Protecting the Pursuit of Reproductive Healthcare

We are a key member of the [Reproductive Rights Task Force](#). Since July 2022, we’ve worked with Justice Department staff to find ways to protect reproductive healthcare access since *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* were overturned. In this role, we help develop the federal government’s response to national incidents. With other federal agencies, we’ve organized outreach to reproductive healthcare providers and

pregnancy crisis center staff. We've also invited providers to our Task Force meetings, where they can raise local issues with the law enforcement agencies investigating incidents.

We also lead the Justice Department's [National Task Force on Violence Against Health Care Providers](#) and work closely with federal and state prosecutors on how to conduct joint prosecutions to protect the pursuit of reproductive care.

National Law Enforcement Trainings

In 2021 and 2022, we held national FACE Act law trainings for local law enforcement agencies, targeting places that want to learn more about identifying and investigating

incidents against reproductive health service providers. These trainings covered:

- The elements of civil and criminal FACE Act offenses;
- How to respond when investigating incidents involving reproductive healthcare; and
- Resources for local law enforcement agencies to use with their federal partners.

“The Justice Department will not tolerate unlawful and violent conduct that interferes with the work of reproductive health clinics. We will use federal civil rights law to protect clinics and staff that provide reproductive health services while safeguarding the rights of their patients.”

– Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke



Photo by Danielle Flowers, Amber Iris Photography

PROTECTING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In Brief

- Human trafficking is a crime involving exploitation of a person for labor, services, or commercial sex, or commercial sexual exploitation of minors.
- Every year, millions of vulnerable men, women, and children are trafficked in the U.S. and worldwide. Human traffickers prey on victims from marginalized communities, including racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous communities, children and at-risk youth, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ individuals.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) provides subject matter expertise to our partners, works with USAOs to prosecute traffickers, and assists victims as they work to rebuild their lives.

Enforcement

We work with federal partners to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases involving:

- **Forced labor**, including domestic servitude and debt bondage.
- **Sex trafficking of adults**, including recruitment, harboring, transporting, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting for commercial sex acts.
- **Victims from other countries** who are brought to the U.S. and compelled to provide labor or services or to engage in commercial sex.

Human trafficking cases often involve multiple crimes that occur across state lines, and even in other countries, over the course of several years. Most cases involve more than one victim. To lead the prosecution of these particularly complex human trafficking cases, we work closely with federal, state, local, and international law enforcement, as well as domestic and global anti-trafficking experts. In 2021 and 2022, we partnered with the Criminal Division and USAOs to bring more than 430 human trafficking cases and charge more than 684 defendants. Together, we have secured over 478 criminal convictions.

Recent Cases

United States v. Thuy Tien Luong

K.D., a Vietnamese U.S. citizen, worked at a nail salon for owner Thuy Tieng Luong, who she believed was a friend. Ms. Luong forced K.D. to work 10 hours a day, six to seven days a week for little to no pay.

She further exploited K.D. by:

- Physically abusing K.D.;
- Threatening to hurt K.D.'s relationship with her family by sharing private information;
- Falsely claiming that K.D.'s poor work damaged her nail salon and requiring her to repay a falsely created debt in the amount of \$180,000; and
- Threatening to have K.D. arrested if she didn't repay the false debt.

In June 2022, after a jury found Ms. Luong [guilty](#) of compelling the victim into forced labor, a court [sentenced](#) her to 15 years in prison and ordered her to pay \$75,000 in restitution.



United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

Lonnie Mitchell targeted at least four young women and one minor victim suffering from drug addictions. Mr.

Mitchell freely provided his victims with drugs to increase their addiction; he then withheld the drugs from them, threatening to make them feel extreme withdrawal if they did not perform for him. He forced his victims to record themselves engaged in sex acts with others, then threatened to embarrass and shame them by publicly releasing images.

As part of his coercive scheme to control the victims, Mr. Mitchell also regulated the amount of food the victims could eat and when they could eat, and confiscated their identity documents and credit cards. He also engaged in physical violence and threats of physical violence.

In June 2022, a jury [convicted](#) Mr. Mitchell of sex trafficking and violating the Mann Act. On December 2, 2022, Mr. Mitchell was [sentenced](#) to 60 years and ordered to pay over \$950,000 in restitution.

United States v. Julio Ruiz Chuta

Due to limited opportunities in Guatemala, a family reached out to Julio Ruiz Chuta, an acquaintance living in the U.S., to see if he could help their 15-year-old son. Believing Mr. Chuta's offer to care for the victim and serve as his guardian was sincere, the family sent their son alone to the U.S. Mr. Chuta pretended to be his family member so the Office of Refugee Resettlement would place the unaccompanied 15-year-old in his care and custody.

Instead of going to school and making friends, the victim found himself working to pay off a smuggling debt from Mr. Chuta. Mr. Chuta forced the victim's family to turn over the deed to their house in Guatemala as collateral for the debt. Only after Mr. Chuta threatened the victim's family and refused to return the victim's immigration documents did the victim report Mr. Chuta's behavior to the social worker appointed by the Department of Health and Human Services. That report led to law enforcement's investigation.

In July 2022, a jury found Mr. Chuta [guilty](#) of alien smuggling for financial gain.

Highlights

National Strategy on Human Trafficking

In January 2022 the Justice Department issued its [National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking](#). This strategy directs a comprehensive, collaborative, and agency-wide approach to detecting trafficking threats, protecting victims, prosecuting traffickers, and preventing future human trafficking through enhanced partnerships throughout the Department and beyond.

“The Civil Rights Division is committed to seeking justice for trafficking survivors. We will work tirelessly to hold traffickers accountable for these heinous crimes that erode the safety of our communities.”

– Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke

Engagement on Human Trafficking

Success in identifying victims and fighting human trafficking calls for extensive coordination with international, federal, state, and local entities. These joint efforts have allowed us to increase our outreach to provide 110 anti-trafficking trainings and presentations in 2021 and 2022.

Audiences for our trainings have included law enforcement, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and multilateral organizations. Some trainings have covered ways to identify forced labor and sex trafficking, such as common indicators of trafficking schemes. In 2021 and 2022, over 13,000 people attended these presentations.

Human Trafficking Website

Together with our anti-trafficking partners, we updated the Justice Department's [Human Trafficking Website](#). The website includes information on how federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement entities, NGOs, and service providers can apply for grant funding or access technical assistance from the Department's [Office of Justice Programs](#).

Ensuring Our Justice System is Accountable and Accessible



PROMOTING EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE POLICING

In Brief

- Effective and accountable policing is essential to our democracy.
- Every person in this country deserves policing that doesn't discriminate and is lawful, responsive, and transparent.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) is committed to ensuring that there is trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

Enforcement

In addition to prosecuting law enforcement officers who engage in misconduct, we also investigate law enforcement agencies and institutions for constitutional violations. We hold these agencies accountable by:

- ***Making sure people can peacefully protest*** under the First Amendment.
- ***Guarding against the use of excessive force*** under the Fourth Amendment.
- ***Protecting against excessive bail and fines as well as cruel and unusual punishment*** under the Eighth Amendment.
- ***Guaranteeing equal protection of the law*** under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Most of the time, these complex investigations are focused on allegations of excessive use of force or discrimination by government officials. But some investigations also deal with sexual misconduct; theft; unlawful stops, searches, and arrests; deliberate indifference to serious medical needs; or a substantial risk of harm to a person in custody.

Recent Cases

George Floyd & Minneapolis Police Department, MN

In May 2020, George Floyd died in the custody of four Minneapolis police officers. Bystanders' videos showed Police Officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Mr. Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes. During that time, Mr. Floyd cried out in pain and pleaded for the officer to remove his knee.

Many bystanders begged and pleaded for the officer to get off of Mr. Floyd before he finally stopped moving, speaking, or breathing.

Two of the three other officers at the scene also pressed Mr. Floyd's unresisting body to the ground and didn't stop Officer Chauvin, even though one officer checked for and didn't find Mr. Floyd's pulse. The third officer stood a few feet away, interacting with and occasionally taunting bystanders, but also did nothing to stop Officer Chauvin from killing Mr. Floyd.

In 2022, after an intensive federal investigation into Mr. Floyd's death, Officer Chauvin pled guilty to two federal criminal civil rights violations and accepted a [sentence](#) of more than 21 years in prison. The other three officers were convicted of all charges, including civil rights violations for deliberately ignoring Mr. Floyd's severe medical distress. They were also [sentenced](#) to prison.



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress Archives

United States v. Eric Kindley

In October 2021, a former private prisoner transport officer was [sentenced](#) to life imprisonment plus five additional

years (and more than \$20,000 in restitution) for sexually assaulting two different women in his custody during transports in 2014 and 2017, and for knowingly possessing a firearm in furtherance of the 2017 sexual assault. The years-long investigation revealed that the defendant had victimized more than a dozen women throughout the country.

United States v. Springfield, MA

In April 2022, a court entered a [consent decree](#) resolving our pattern-or-practice investigation into the Springfield Police Department Narcotics Bureau’s alleged use of excessive force. We found problems in policies, training, and accountability that allowed for violent uses of force to go unreported and unchecked.

Under the decree, Springfield will improve policies and training to make sure that officers avoid force whenever possible, use de-escalation tactics, understand when force can be used, and report all instances where force is used. Springfield also will provide better supervision to officers and improve investigations of complaints of officer misconduct. When officers violate use-of-force policies, the decree will ensure that Springfield holds officers accountable.

New Law Enforcement Investigations

In 2021 and 2022, we announced eight new pattern-or-practice investigations in the following jurisdictions:

- Louisville, Kentucky, Metro Police Department;
- Minneapolis, Minnesota, Police Department;
- Phoenix, Arizona, Police Department;
- Mount Vernon, New York, Police Department;
- New York Police Department Sexual Victims Division;
- Louisiana State Police;
- Worcester, Massachusetts, Police Department; and
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Police Department.

Highlights

Putting Police Reforms in Place

Through our investigations and other work, we identify and put in place reforms to make sure that policing is safe and constitutional. To do this work, over the past two years we have participated in over 100 ride-alongs with police officers. We also had dozens of meetings with command

staff and have spoken to hundreds of police officers in individual interviews, focus groups, and roll-call briefings. We have held virtual and in-person meetings with well over 1,000 community members, and hundreds more have submitted messages to the Division.

“Protecting the civil rights of all Americans and building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve are among the Justice Department’s most important responsibilities.”

– Attorney General Merrick B. Garland

Outreach on Effective Policing

In our outreach efforts on effective and accountable policing, we create and share resources about our work and build relationships with communities and others. We also coordinate with state attorneys general offices that have similar enforcement authority, including hosting a full-day convening with the state attorneys general offices regarding civil investigations in 2022.



PROTECTING PEOPLE IN THE CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

In Brief

- Many adults and youths detained or incarcerated in facilities across America face dangerous and unlawful prison conditions.
- In 1980, Congress passed a law to end these harmful practices and strengthen the civil rights protections of the incarcerated.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) investigates systemic violations to make sure tens of thousands of those institutionalized get safe and adequate care and services in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Enforcement

We make sure adult and juvenile justice systems are treating people safely and fairly by:

- **Protecting the rights of incarcerated persons** in state or local prisons and jails.
- **Ensuring adequate access to programs and treatment in facilities**, including medical and mental health treatment.
- **Protecting the rights of youth confined in juvenile detention and commitment facilities** run by or for state or local governments.
- **Ensuring youths' civil rights** are upheld in juvenile arrests, courts, and probation systems.

Recent Cases

United States v. South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice

We investigated the Broad River Road Complex, South Carolina's long-term juvenile correctional facility, and found that its Department of Juvenile Justice did not keep children reasonably safe from harm and used prolonged and punitive isolation. During an [11-month period](#) at the facility, fights and assaults happened two out of every three days. One child was attacked four times in three hours. Staff didn't intervene, and instead, placed him in isolation.

Our [review](#) also showed that state staff used dangerous tactics on children. One staff member twisted a child's arm, tripped, and fell on top of him, causing an injury requiring two metal plates and nine screws to repair. Staff also used isolation over 1,000 times in a year. One youth's

stay in isolation lasted 225 days. In April 2022, we entered into a [settlement agreement](#) addressing the identified violations.

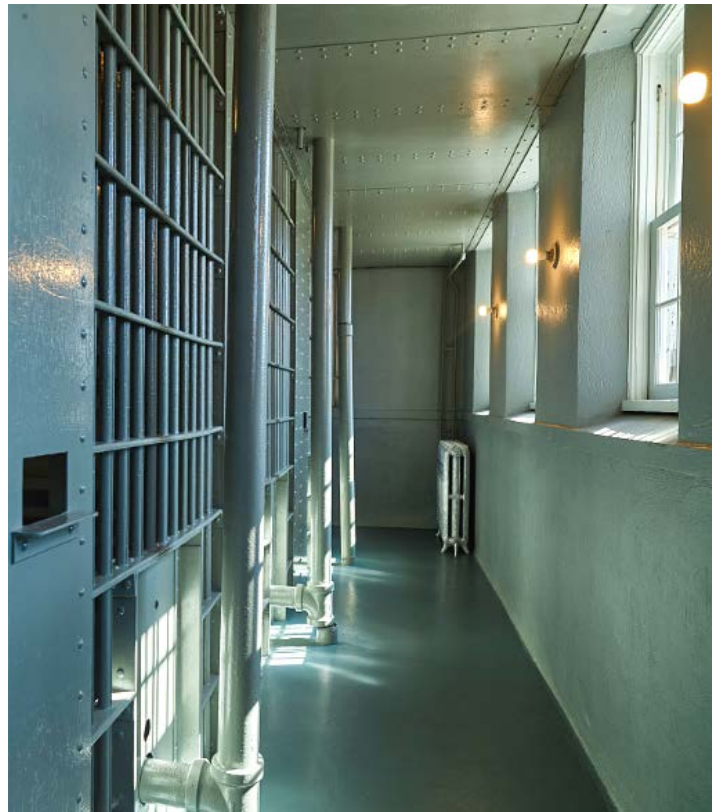


Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress Archives

United States v. Hinds County, MS, et. al.

In October 2022, a court appointed a receiver to run the Hinds County Jail. The receiver has broad authority to operate the Jail's main facility near Jackson, Mississippi, and will make sure the Jail complies with the court's orders as well as constitutional standards.

The court granted the receiver authority over admissions, releases, contracts, staff, budgets, and other Hinds County functions related to Jail operations.

The court ordered receivership to remedy the Jail's contempt of our 2016 consent decree and unconstitutional conditions. It was based on a multi-week evidentiary hearing with an extensive court record of ongoing constitutional violations, including a record number of assaults, fires, and deaths, including a homicide, suicides, and overdoses.

“Under the Eighth Amendment of our Constitution, those who have been convicted of crimes and sentenced to serve time in prison must never be subjected to ‘cruel and unusual punishments.’ We must ensure the inherent human dignity and worth of everyone – including people who are incarcerated.”

– Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke



Photo by Robert Linder

UPHOLDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR PEOPLE WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

In Brief

- The Census shows that more than 25 million people in the U.S. have a limited ability to speak, read, or write in English. Language barriers can make it hard to read a ballot, talk with a child’s teacher, or answer a court summons.
- The [Civil Rights Division](#) ensures access to justice, especially in places like state courts, no matter a person’s national origin or English language skills.
- We also support federal agencies and people with limited English proficiency (LEP) as they deal with national origin discrimination.

Enforcement

We make sure that recipients of federal financial assistance give people with LEP meaningful access to all of their programs and services by:

- **Requiring state courts to be fully accessible to everyone**, no matter their national origin or language ability.
- **Enforcing language access in public schools** by offering a range of resources for people with LEP facing barriers in the education system.
- **Making sure that people with LEP can rent and buy homes** because the process can be harder for them.
- **Protecting the voting rights of many Americans with LEP** so that race and language don’t keep any eligible voters from the political process.

Recent Cases

Colorado Office of Administrative Courts

In March 2021, we resolved concerns about alleged violations of [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 \(Title VI\)](#) where the Colorado Office of Administrative Courts was not giving people with LEP access to qualified interpreters. Under the [settlement agreement](#), Colorado updated its rule and will provide free qualified interpreters to people with LEP.



Photo by jvoves via Flickr

Fort Bend County Courts, TX

In June 2021, we [resolved](#) a Title VI investigation involving courts in Fort Bend County that allegedly discriminated against people with LEP and retaliated against a person with LEP. Under the settlement, the courts paid \$22,500 to the victim of retaliation and agreed to offer free interpreter services to people with LEP in civil and criminal cases.

Florida State Court System

In September 2021, we [resolved](#) a Title VI investigation involving the Florida State Court System. We found that a state court fired a Spanish court interpreter in retaliation for helping a person with LEP request an interpreter and assisting an advocate with filing a Title VI complaint. As part of the resolution, the court system will implement anti-retaliation policies and pay \$160,000 to the Spanish court interpreter.

Highlights

Meaningful Access to Justice

In the courtroom, where the stakes are high, a person who can't speak or understand English usually needs help to participate. This is why we use all of our tools to make sure that people with LEP have meaningful access to justice in state courts.

Our [Language Access in State Courts Initiative](#) upholds the rights of all people, no matter what their national origin or English language skills are, so they can be a meaningful part of state court proceedings and programs. Our work has changed language access policies across the country.

Access to Federal Services for People with LEP

[Improving Access to Services for Persons with LEP](#), Executive Order 13166, requires federal agencies to find what services people with LEP need and ways to provide those services. The order also directs federal agencies to issue Title VI LEP guidance to their recipients of federal financial assistance so that they, in turn, can ensure that people with LEP have meaningful access to federally-funded programs and activities.

To help improve access to federal services to people with LEP, we:

- Serve as a hub to collect and share language access resources and plans with agencies;
- Review and approve agencies' Title VI LEP guidance;

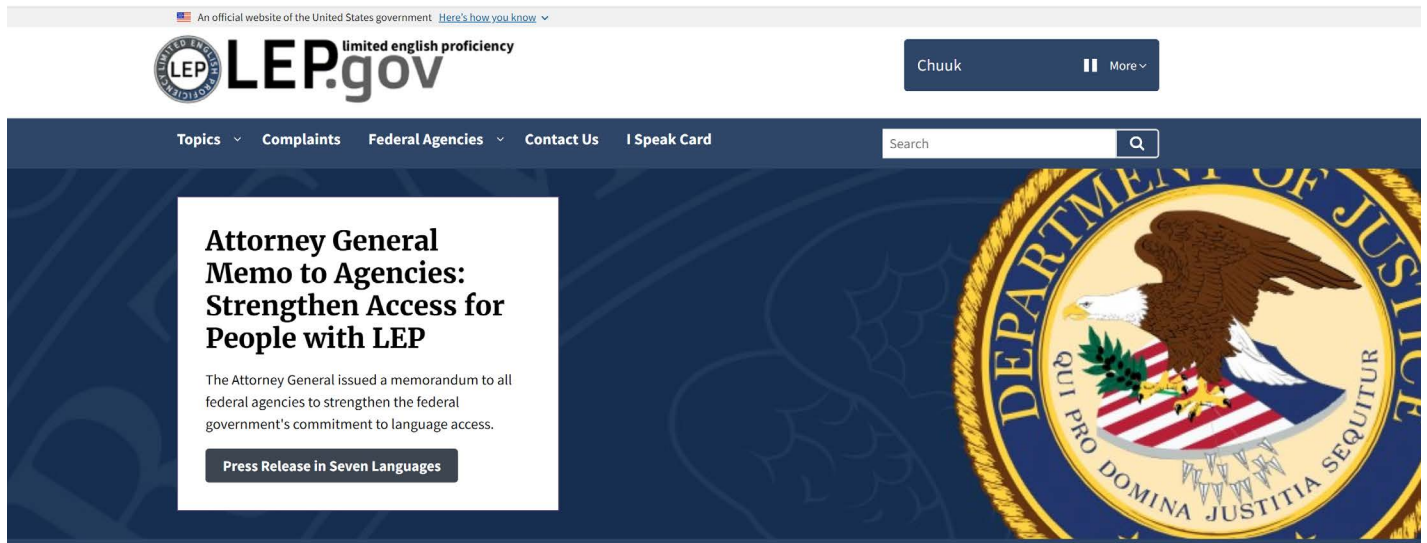
- Review and provide feedback to agencies regarding their internal language access policies and plans; and
- Work with agencies to better serve and address the needs of people with LEP.

Websites & Reporting Portals

We manage [LEP.gov](#), a website with information and resources to help grow and improve language assistance services for people with LEP. Federal agencies and recipients of federal financial assistance can find information about people with LEP in their community and identify resources to help them draft and implement language access policies and plans.

People can also use the website to file complaints if they or someone they know is treated unfairly because of their national origin or limited ability to speak or write in English. Because many of our cases start with complaints from the public, we've made it easier for people with LEP to report civil rights violations by:

- Making our [Civil Rights Reporting Portal](#) available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog;
- Translating the information people need to report hate crimes into 24 languages and posting it on our [Hate Crimes website](#); and
- Being able to take, by telephone and mail, civil rights reports in non-English languages.



Brent Thomas & South Dakota State Courts

The Civil Rights Division and the USAO in South Dakota worked with the Unified Judicial System (UJS) in South Dakota to improve access to justice for people with LEP.

In 2019, Brent Thompson, the then-Executive Director of East River Legal Services in Sioux Falls, filed a Title VI complaint alleging that the Second Judicial Circuit in South Dakota announced it would no longer provide interpreters to people with LEP in civil cases.

The Division initiated a Title VI review of UJS that uncovered language barriers and higher court costs that made it harder for people with LEP to participate in civil cases. In response, UJS introduced a bill in the state legislature to expand access to court interpreters and translators for people with LEP. That legislation became

law in 2021. To implement the new law, UJS secured additional funding to provide interpreter services at no cost to people with LEP. UJS also appointed a language access coordinator and created a language access complaint process.

In October 2021, UJS [resolved](#) the Division's review by agreeing to develop several additional tools to improve access to people with LEP. In February 2022, UJS also issued a [statewide language access plan](#) that requires all state courts to provide interpreter and translator services at no cost to people with LEP. These efforts have improved access to justice for the more than 17,000 people with LEP in South Dakota.



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress Archives

COORDINATING CIVIL RIGHTS LAW AND POLICY ACROSS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

In Brief

- Across the federal government, agencies work to address historic problems and emerging issues that may impact people's civil rights.
- Relying on its long history and extensive expertise in combating discrimination, the [Civil Rights Division](#) ensures consistency in civil rights law and policy, both inside the Justice Department and across the federal government.
- Our policy coordination and development efforts help ensure consistency and accuracy on civil rights matters and allow for more effective use of the federal government's collective resources to serve and protect the public.

Highlights

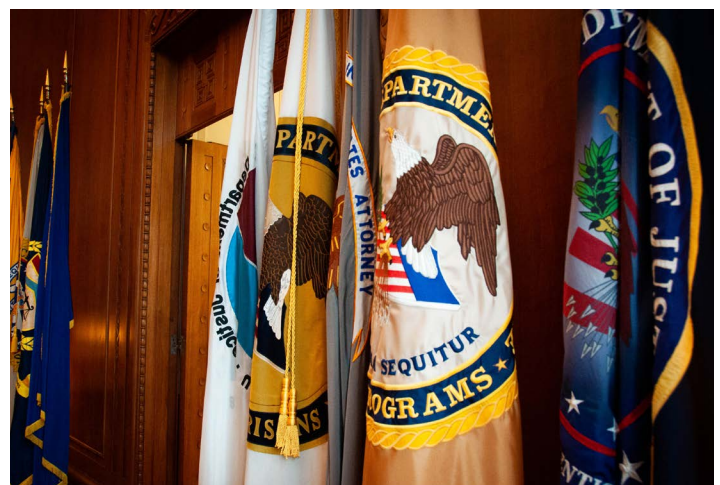
Coordinated Federal Response to Discrimination from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Under Executive Order 12250, the Division coordinates the federal response to civil rights issues and challenges across the federal government. In 2021 and 2022, we worked to ensure that agencies used their authority to pursue a [comprehensive approach](#) to advance equity and redress inequities during response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic magnified social, economic, and environmental inequalities. For example, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and businesses experienced hateful and xenophobic rhetoric and violence. Additionally, Black, Indigenous, and Latino communities, as well as people with disabilities, had higher death rates and more risk of infection and hospitalization than other groups.

To fight these inequalities and protect civil rights, we [announced](#) a set of non-discrimination principles for federal agencies, state and local governments, and recipients of federal financial assistance. We also convened meetings of civil rights offices from across the federal government to:

- Exchange information and resources on COVID-19-related harassment and discrimination;
- Identify strategies to ensure federal, state, and local efforts achieve equitable outcomes in current and future emergency planning and response; and
- Develop sources to assist recipients of federal financial assistance collect data from underserved populations.



Partnerships with U.S. Attorney's Offices Across the Country

Effective civil rights enforcement requires a strong partnership between the Division and USAOs around the country. As such, we work closely with USAOs on initiatives and programs to improve civil rights enforcement and outreach. These efforts are described throughout this report and include, for example:

- [Combating Redlining Initiative](#);
- [Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative](#);
- U.S. Attorney's Program for ADA Enforcement (currently handling over 1,000 disability related matters and cases); and
- [United Against Hate](#) community outreach program.

These partnerships are critical to many of the Justice Department's most significant civil rights accomplishments in education, employment, housing, lending, disability rights, servicemember protections, hate crimes, and law enforcement accountability.

In 2021, the Attorney General directed each USAO to name two civil rights coordinators, one for civil and one for criminal civil rights enforcement. Some USAOs have further expanded their civil rights focus. For example, the USAO in New Jersey created its own Civil Rights Division with the sole mission to enforce federal civil rights laws in the state. In Maryland, the Eastern District of Virginia, and the Eastern District of Michigan, USAOs announced new civil rights units or expansions of their civil rights enforcement initiatives to include criminal civil rights matters.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Civil Rights

Entities collect large amounts of personal data from people through the internet, emails, online activities, and social media. This data is passed through algorithms and AI systems that make important decisions in all aspects of American life such as how employers hire candidates, how banks decide who gets loans, how police departments choose to monitor individuals or communities, how courts determine risk, and how consumers are targeted. To better understand complex issues at the intersection of AI and civil rights, the Division hosted a series of listening sessions in 2021 where we heard from technologists and other subject matter experts in industry, advocacy, and academia.

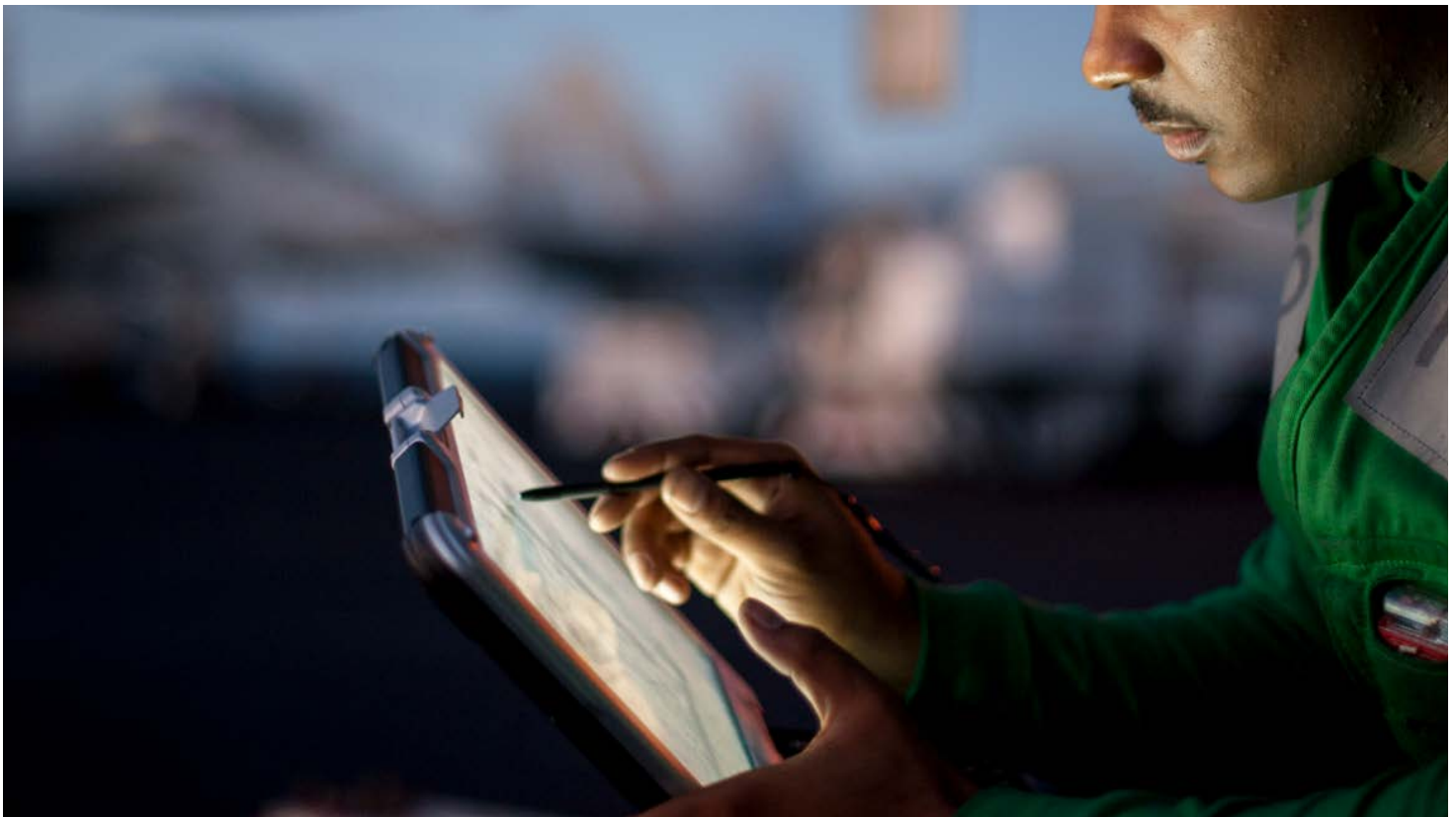
In a [keynote presentation](#) to the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information

Administration in December 2021, Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke highlighted the Division's central concerns that the lack of transparency and accountability in automated decision-making opens the door to potential discrimination. Use of algorithms and AI may perpetuate past discriminatory practices by incorporating and possibly replicating or "baking in" historical patterns of inequality. In addition to our litigation and guidance efforts, we meet regularly with other federal agencies to discuss collaboration on enforcement and policy matters related to algorithmic discrimination.

Environmental Justice

We are working to advance environmental justice through our enforcement and coordination efforts addressing the excessive and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts on historically marginalized communities. Individuals living in these disadvantaged areas are over-burdened by pollution and under-investment in housing, transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure, and healthcare.

To address these concerns, we lead the [Title VI](#) Committee of the [White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council](#), making sure that Title VI matters involving federally funded programs and activities impacting the environment and human health are consistently enforced.



In 2021, the Division opened its first Title VI environmental justice [investigation](#). We are partnering with the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate whether the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Lowndes County Health Department discriminate against the County's Black residents in their onsite wastewater and infectious diseases and outbreaks programs. The investigation remains ongoing.

“Advancing environmental justice through enforcement of our nation’s federal laws continues to be a top priority for the Department of Justice... Safe and sanitary communities are central to the social fabric of the United States. We must work together to ensure that residents are not unjustifiably placed at disproportionate risk of illness and economic harm because of inadequate access to and response from federally funded municipal programs and activities.”

– Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke

International Human Rights Program

Some of the Division’s domestic work on civil rights matters affects our nation’s foreign relations. When it does, we work closely with other Justice Department components, the State Department, and other federal agency partners to ensure that the U.S. Government provides accurate and consistent positions.

The U.S. is party to four international agreements related to human rights:

- The International Covenant on the Elimination of all Racial Discrimination (CERD);
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- The Convention Against Torture; and
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As part of these agreements, we meet with organizations and groups referred to as “Civil Society” to share current and practical information about civil rights matters and strategic initiatives to combat discrimination and acts of hate.

In August 2022, the Division was part of a U.S. Government delegation that presented on the CERD in Geneva, Switzerland. At this program, we [shared](#) information about our domestic civil rights efforts in several different areas, including voting, housing, environmental justice, and hate crimes.



CONCLUSION

“I am sometimes struck that the Civil Rights Division ... did not always exist. It’s nearly 65 years old and was borne of activism and organizing of the early Civil Rights Movement. ... Justice is built one brick at a time. And it can be dismantled the same way. When it comes to ensuring equal justice in America, we are on the case.”

—Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke

Since its creation 65 years ago, the Civil Rights Division continues to play a critical role in combating discrimination in all its shapes and forms. As a country, the United States has undeniably come a long way—the rights for which so many civil rights pioneers fought, bled, and sometimes gave their lives are now guaranteed by law. There has been tremendous movement not only legally but also in public attitudes and acceptance across the nation.

The Division’s robust caseload, however, is a stark reminder that too many people continue to face barriers to true opportunity. Whether those challenges are overt or subtle, they stand in the way of our nation’s ability to fulfill its greatest promise. Over the past two years, the Division has vigilantly continued its work to carry out this critical task. Going forward, we stand ready to protect, defend, and advance civil rights in the 21st century.





U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

