

The below letter was published in the April 5, 2007 issue of The Chronicle of Philanthropy:

ACLU Chief Deserves Praise for Leadership

To the Editor:

The *New York* magazine article excerpted in "Press Clippings" ("[New York: Incivility at Civil-Liberties Union](#)," March 8) paints a highly distorted picture of the leadership of Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Compounding the many faults of the original article, the condensed version concentrates on Mr. Romero's success as a fund raiser but gives scant attention to the extraordinary leadership he has shown in using increased resources to bring about vigorous and effective ACLU advocacy during the most critical period for civil liberties at least since the McCarthy era.

Your excerpts amplify the voices of a handful of critics whose views have repeatedly failed to sway the rest of the ACLU, most particularly the democratically elected and governed national board, which has spent untold hours dealing with their concerns.

I know the ACLU well, having worked for it for 15 years, served on the national board and executive committee for nearly a decade, and funded it for the last 10 years.

The vast majority of ACLU members, staff, and board members are inspired, as I am, by Mr. Romero's leadership and feel extremely fortunate to have him at the helm during these difficult times for the Bill of Rights.

Gara LaMarche
Vice President and Director of U.S. Programs
Open Society Institute
New York, New York

Mr. LaMarche last month stepped down from his job at Open Society and will become chief executive of Atlantic Philanthropies on April 16.