

October 12, 2006

Nadine Strossen, President
American Civil Liberties Union
125 Broad Street
New York, New York 10004

Dear Nadine and Members of the Board of Directors,

The signers of this letter are long-term affiliate directors. Some of us have served for as long as 25 years or more. We have spent much of our lives working to strengthen the ACLU's work to defend and extend civil liberties.

All of us have worked closely with Anthony Romero, as well as with Ira Glasser. Some of us have even served long enough to have worked with Aryeh Neier when he was Executive Director.

We write to ensure that you know of our appreciation for the leadership that Anthony Romero and you, Nadine, have brought to the ACLU.

Our organization has never been better organized, better professionally managed and better focused on its principles than at this moment in our 86-year history. From our vantage points around the country, we have great confidence in your and Anthony's leadership, with regard to both the historically important civil liberties issues facing this nation and the significant managerial improvements that have strengthened our organization.

We strongly reject the insinuation that fidelity to the organization's principles, on the part of national or affiliate staff throughout the country has in any way diminished, and we are more committed than ever to the principled and aggressive defense of civil liberties values.

As for Anthony Romero's leadership, from the very start of his tenure, he exercised impressive leadership. He rallied both the national and affiliates staff in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He brought together all the elements of our organization - legal, legislative, communications, membership activism, and fundraising, both national and affiliate -- to work more effectively. His leadership on these matters is an important part of the history of how the ACLU responded to the attack on our constitutional values in post- 9/11 America, and it is a model for how the organization should respond to future civil liberties crises.

As a result of the organizational reforms spearheaded by Anthony, we are a far more effective force for the defense of civil liberties. As he promised when he was appointed Executive Director, Anthony has impressively strengthened the affiliates so that we are better able to defend civil liberties across the country. We are certain that Board members who are affiliate representatives or who are otherwise active in their affiliates can clearly see the results. Under Anthony's leadership, virtually all affiliates finally have staff attorneys, and civil liberties advocacy throughout the nation is stronger than ever before.

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We are enormously proud of the tremendous work of the ACLU staff as well as the national and affiliate boards of directors. We have never been more focused, collaborative, strategic and principled as we have under the current leadership. Not only has the ACLU engaged in vast amounts of civil liberties work, the ACLU has also undergone enormous improvements in organization and management since Anthony became Executive Director.

Those individuals who have organized to force a change in the administration of our organization have a right to pursue that crusade. We note, however, that the persistent repetition of a point of view does not turn that viewpoint into fact.

We ask that you keep the ACLU focused on our agenda and resist being distracted by the repetition of criticisms that have already been addressed. We all know that the Bush Administration has run roughshod over the Constitution in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The civil liberties issues before us are monumental, and no one could have led us through them more effectively than you and Anthony.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Taylor
Washington

Howard Simon
Florida

Deborah Jacobs
New Jersey

Rita Sklar
Arkansas

Dorothy Ehrlich
Northern California

Charles Samuelson
Minnesota

Ramona Ripston
Southern California

Ben Stone
Iowa

Olivia Turner
Alabama

Hedy Weinberg
Tennessee

Joann Bell
Oklahoma

Deborah Seagraves
Georgia

Chris Ahmuty
Wisconsin

Dave Fidanque
Oregon

Susan Goering
Maryland

Jack Van Valkenburg
Idaho

Kary Moss
Michigan

Scott Crichton
Montana

cc: Anthony Romero