



FRONT LINE



Garvenchy Nicolas leads demonstrators in New York City to protest long-standing and unchecked police violence against Black people.

PRIORITIES

Divesting the Police

The country confronts systemic racism and demands immediate change for law enforcement.

In late May, the country convulsed with uprisings to demand justice in the police killings of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and countless others from the Black community, and to insist on fundamental changes to the role of law enforcement. In violation of demonstrators' rights, local police and federal troops—backed by the authoritarian urgings of the Trump administration—responded with even more brutality, attacking protesters and journalists with vehicles, tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, batons, arrests, and lies. As America reckons anew with its long history of racial injustice, the ACLU is launching its vision for the future of policing.

Militarization, lack of accountability, and runaway spending have all corrupted the modern police force, but white supremacy is embedded in its DNA. Policing's 19th-century origins were to protect commercial

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interests, which in the South manifested as vigilantes deputized to enforce slavery laws and terrorize enslaved people. Through Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era, these forces evolved to menace and control communities of Black people and immigrants, while protecting white power and privilege. This over-policing has bred an unchecked mass incarceration crisis and a lawless culture in which murdering unarmed Black people goes unpunished.

The ACLU’s commitment to combating police violence and addressing systemic racism is nearly as old as the organization itself. In 1931, the ACLU was instrumental in producing the government report *Lawlessness in Law Enforcement*, and subsequent historical flashpoints—the Watts Rebellion, unrest after the Rodney King beating—resulted in nationwide advocacy against racial profiling and abusive law enforcement tactics. But it is clear that new, more aggressive strategies are needed.

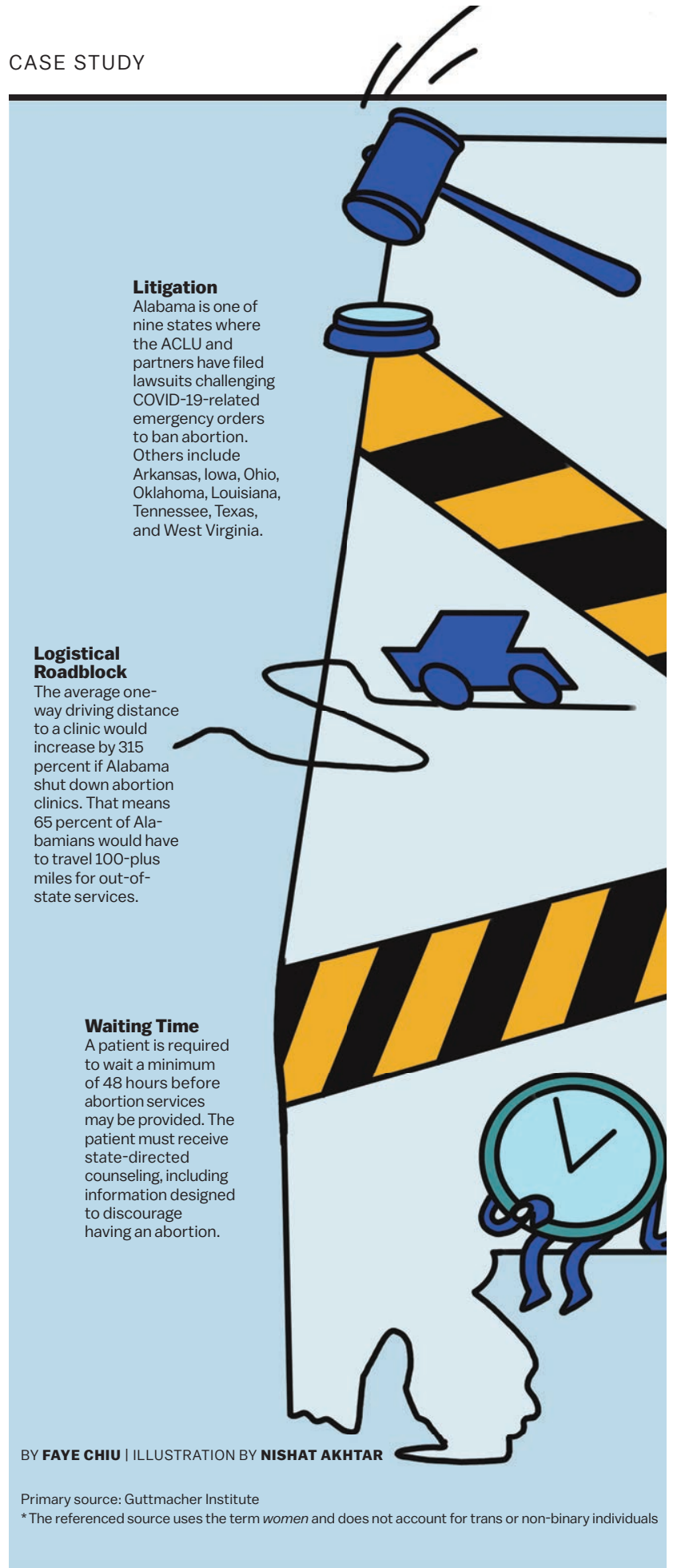
The ACLU is working with Black- and Brown-led organizations to limit law enforcement’s authority by prohibiting arrests for nonserious offenses, ultimately cutting the number of annual arrests—10.3 million—by half. Police budgets collectively total more than \$115 billion annually. The ACLU supports divesting departments of funding and redirecting the savings to community-based initiatives that bolster public health and safety in communities historically targeted by the police. Furthermore, the ACLU advocates for enforceable legal constraints whereby the use of deadly force by police is proscribed in all but the most absolutely necessary cases. Taking these actions will increase stability and resources in these communities, better aligning our social investment with our national values and constitutional ideals.

“Together with our partners and allies,” says ACLU Executive Director Anthony D. Romero, “the ACLU will help reimagine an effective and far more limited role for police in our country; implement changes that will save lives, advance civil rights, and safeguard liberties; and create the conditions to start repairing decades of harm and violence inflicted on over-policed communities of color.” —JAY A. FERNANDEZ

Contact Congress

Contact your legislators today and demand they end federal programs that arm local police with military-grade weapons and put excessive numbers of police on the streets and in schools.

Visit aclu.org/divestpolice to take action.



Litigation

Alabama is one of nine states where the ACLU and partners have filed lawsuits challenging COVID-19-related emergency orders to ban abortion. Others include Arkansas, Iowa, Ohio, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.

Logistical Roadblock

The average one-way driving distance to a clinic would increase by 315 percent if Alabama shut down abortion clinics. That means 65 percent of Alabamians would have to travel 100-plus miles for out-of-state services.

Waiting Time

A patient is required to wait a minimum of 48 hours before abortion services may be provided. The patient must receive state-directed counseling, including information designed to discourage having an abortion.

BY FAYE CHIU | ILLUSTRATION BY NISHAT AKHTAR

Primary source: Guttmacher Institute

*The referenced source uses the term *women* and does not account for trans or non-binary individuals