



KEEPING NEW JERSEY SAFE AND FREE—SINCE 1960

# CIVIL LIBERTIES REPORTER



## Meet Amol Sinha—You'll Be Seeing a Lot of Him

ACLU-NJ names Jersey-raised civil rights advocate its new executive director

**W**ith the civil liberties threats posed by the Trump administration, it would be understandable if an incoming ACLU affiliate executive director had to wonder where to begin.

But for Amol Sinha, the new executive director of the ACLU-NJ, the path ahead was clear. In his first 100 days, he has one goal: to listen.

"In the first few months, my plan is to travel across the state, listen to the needs of people here, meet with as many advocacy and community groups as possible, see where the ACLU can fit, and make the ACLU completely accessible," Sinha said. "People across the state need to know that we're here as a partner, and that we're here to collaborate to make New Jersey better."

Before starting as executive director on Sept. 1, Sinha, who lives in Jersey City, led state advocacy campaigns to address wrongful convictions nationwide at the Innocence Project.

For Sinha, who grew up in Lawrenceville, taking the helm is a homecoming, not just to his home state, but to an organization that has always anchored him. Sinha's first role as a newly minted lawyer in 2010 — after interning for the national ACLU as a student at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law — was as director of the Suffolk County Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union. He said the job posting had an unforgettably fluid yet empowering description: "Be the face of the NYCLU in Suffolk County."

Approaching the responsibility with great pride, he transformed the Suffolk County Chapter into an advocacy powerhouse, making inroads with unexpected allies like the Suffolk County Police Department and Sheriff's Office. The chapter, working with partners, convinced Suffolk County to stop honoring immigration detainees. Under Sinha's leadership, the chapter successfully defeated unconstitutional policing and surveillance schemes and investigated public schools that prohibited immigrant students from enrolling. The ACLU-NJ has done similar investigations of public schools and taken legal action as a result.

"The Board of Trustees is thrilled to welcome Amol Sinha to the ACLU-NJ family as our new executive director," said ACLU-NJ Board President Debra Guston. "We expect Amol will bring both his passion for



**Amol Sinha, pictured, started as the ACLU-NJ's executive director Sept. 1.**

civil liberties, civil rights, and social justice, and his knowledge as a longtime New Jersey resident, to continue to move the ACLU-NJ forward."

Sinha takes the helm at a time of significant growth for the ACLU-NJ, which recently added an immigrants' rights attorney, staff attorney, and several legal fellows. The ACLU-NJ plans to fill the role of public policy director soon after Sinha starts as executive director, and the organization is currently accepting applications. (Read the policy director job posting, as well as other open positions, at: [www.aclu-nj.org/careers](http://www.aclu-nj.org/careers))

The ACLU-NJ role merges what Sinha described as his two passions: advocating for constitutional rights and New Jersey.

Sinha's childhood in the Garden State was integral to his passion for civil rights. The son of Indian immigrants who came to America in the early 1970s, Sinha vividly recalls a persistent feeling that he couldn't quite articulate. He has always been proud of his roots, but, as with many first-generation Americans, he struggled to find the right balance of identities. While finding comfort in New Jersey's growing diversity, he witnessed interactions growing up that indicated some people viewed him and his family differently because of their immigrant South Asian roots. Such incidents often rolled off his parents' backs. But for him, it was an introduction to larger injustices faced by many groups.

"The issues South Asian communities face are emblematic of civil rights issues — immigrants' rights, racial justice, religious freedom, economic injustice, language access, gender-based discrimination, LGBT issues, and biased policing all impact South Asian communities in significant ways," Sinha said.

"New Jersey has the largest proportion of South Asian residents of any state, so it's meaningful for a member of that community to lead our state's ACLU," Sinha added. "But, I truly believe in unity and breaking barriers across communities. I want every community and every person in New Jersey to know they can call on the ACLU as a resource."

Sinha is the first person of color to lead the ACLU-NJ, and one of the first South Asian executive directors of an ACLU affiliate. Maya Harris, who led the ACLU of Northern California from 2006 to 2009, was the first person of South Asian descent to lead a state ACLU affiliate.

"Working for the ACLU never actually feels like work," Sinha said. "It is truly a privilege to defend the rights of the people, and it aligns perfectly with my own principles and moral compass. I'm excited to come back home and have people across the state fall in love with the ACLU, just like I did." [ACLU](#)

## Advocates Tell Legislature: Time to Legalize Marijuana and Stop Racially Disparate Arrests

**D**ozens of advocates — including those from the ACLU-NJ and New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform — testified for about four hours before the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 19 with a unified message: prohibition of marijuana has caused far more harm than good.

The hearing came days after the ACLU-NJ issued a report examining vast racial disparities in New Jersey's marijuana arrests between 2000 and 2013. Black New Jerseyans were arrested at a rate three times higher than whites during that period despite similar usage rates, according to the report. Most of those arrests involved small amounts for personal use.



**ACLU-NJ Policy Counsel Dianna Houenou, left, testifies at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing concerning legalizing marijuana, on a panel with R. Todd Edwards of the NAACP NJ State Conference and Cuqui Rivera of the Latino Action Network.**

PHOTO: AMANDA BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY

"There is no reason to cling to unjust policies that further entrench mass incarceration, worsen racial disparities, and continue to ruin lives," said ACLU-NJ Policy Counsel Dianna Houenou.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Nicholas Scutari convened the hearing to discuss S3195, a bill to legalize possession and use of marijuana for adults 21 and older. Advocates discussed the harmful racial disparities in arrests and potential benefits of a regulated cannabis industry, which could generate \$300 million annually in tax revenue.

Advocates who testified from New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform, a diverse coalition committed to legalizing marijuana, included a municipal

**Continued on page 3**

## Kaci Hickox Case Creates 'Bill of Rights' for Quarantined Individuals

Nurse's settlement is a victory of justice and science over fear

**I**n 2014, Kaci Hickox became known as the nurse who was unfairly quarantined by Governor Chris Christie. As of July 27, she's the nurse who took on Governor Christie and changed New Jersey quarantine policy as a result.

Because of Hickox's suit, filed in 2015, the Christie Administration adopted new quarantine rules that guarantee due process and allow for quarantine only when deemed medically necessary.

"We've achieved what was needed: procedures that will ensure that no one will have to go through what I experienced in New Jersey, and that no one will be quarantined unless it is medically necessary," said Kaci Hickox. "The settlement upholds the principles and values of liberty and due process."

Hickox was represented by attorneys Norman Siegel and Kate Fletcher of Siegel Teitelbaum & Evans; attorneys Steve Hyman and Alan Sash of McLaughlin & Stern; and the ACLU of New Jersey. The settlement recognizes the rights of people under quarantine to challenge their detentions, along with rights affording counsel, hearings, access to visitors, and other legal protections.



**As a result of Kaci Hickox's suit against Governor Chris Christie, New Jersey now has a "Bill of Rights" for quarantines.**

"This is a victory of justice and science over fear," said ACLU-NJ Legal Director Ed Barocas. "Kaci Hickox had the right to challenge her unwarranted detention, and because of her fight for due process, that right is more secure for New Jerseyans."

Hickox landed at Newark Liberty International Airport on October 24, 2014, en route home to Maine, after caring for Ebola patients as a volunteer with Doctors Without Borders. She was held against her will despite showing no symptoms and engaging in no activities in Sierra Leone that would have put her at a high risk for contracting Ebola.

"The settlement of Kaci Hickox's lawsuit creates a new 'Bill of Rights' for individuals subject to possible quarantine or isolation in New Jersey and sets a model for other states," said attorney

Norman Siegel, who began representing Hickox when she was still confined to a field tent in an unheated parking garage at Newark's University Hospital.

Even after a negative blood test, New Jersey held Hickox for two additional days, for a total of more than three days. [ACLU](#)



## ACLU-NJ Board of Trustees

The ACLU-NJ Committee on Trustees presents candidates filling nine open positions for three-year terms and one open position for a one-year term on the organization's Board of Trustees. Because this year's election is uncontested, we are not asking members to submit a ballot.

The ACLU-NJ depends on strong, quality leadership and encourages its members to serve on its Board of Trustees. Interested members may contact the ACLU-NJ at 973-642-2086 or email: [nominations@aclu-nj.org](mailto:nominations@aclu-nj.org).

In addition to the official nomination process, any member of the ACLU-NJ can appear on next year's ballot by gathering signatures of 50 ACLU-NJ members on a petition. Those petitions must be submitted by Sept. 30, 2017.



### Shariq Ahmad

I joined the ACLU because for years I had admired its work in NJ, and recognized its renewed importance after the presidential election last year. I am very excited to have joined the board earlier this year and look forward to helping the ACLU-NJ however I can to resist the assault on civil liberties that has been occurring with increased frequency and to fight on the front lines of the progressive movement here in NJ.

I currently work as a chief of staff in the state Legislature and am also the chairman of my local Democratic Party. I am heavily involved in community organizing in NJ's South Asian and Muslim communities and also serve on the board of the New Leaders Council, an organization that focuses on training the next generation of progressive leaders. I would be privileged and honored to continue serving on the ACLU-NJ board.



### Ronald K. Chen, Esq.

I have served on both the ACLU-NJ and national ACLU boards for many years. My desire to serve again is driven in large measure by my belief that the ACLU will be taking a leadership role in challenging the attacks on civil liberties and principles of equality that have been posed by the current political climate, and the brunt of this challenge will be borne by the affiliates, with support from national. The NJ affiliate has grown into a fully developed and well-regarded component of the ACLU and I hope to help it maintain that stature.



### Jay D. Gartman

Over the past few years, our incredibly talented ACLU-NJ staff have logged accomplishments that are unequalled in both the depth and scope that they reached during my previous decade on our Board of Trustees. I'm proud to have supported that growth.

But now we have a whole new level of civil liberties challenges facing our ACLU state affiliate, including threats to women's health care, discriminatory mass incarceration of African Americans, and federal threats to immigrant lives. If re-elected, I will continue to be 110 percent active in all assigned projects that support our staff in those efforts.

And while I am thrilled that we have quadrupled our membership over the past few months, I will work hard to make sure that our programs engage the new members and that our finances are handled responsibly.

Lastly, I have been active in the ACLU's new People Power project and hope to grow my participation in that nationwide program.



### Debra E. Guston, Esq.

I am seeking a third term as a member of the Board of Trustees of ACLU-NJ. As the current president, I have dedicated my board service to growing and building a more diverse board and to overseeing the search and hiring of a new executive director. These two major efforts, along with the general management

of the board's role in overseeing the finances of the affiliate and the staff's work to further the mission of the ACLU-NJ, have been essential in securing the long-term viability of both the

affiliate and the board. I look forward to serving another term to complete my goals as a board member and officer, which include the adoption of a new five-year strategic plan. I thank you for your support.



### Gary D. Nissenbaum, Esq.

I am the managing attorney of the Nissenbaum Law Group, LLC, a commercial law firm with offices in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas. I am also a member of the Executive Committee of the ACLU-NJ's Board of Trustees. During my past term, I presented a number of workshops on "First Amendment Issues in the Age of

Trump" to Unitarian Universalist congregations and generally made a concerted effort to help the ACLU-NJ reach out to houses of worship, social service groups, and schools. I also submitted amicus briefs together with ACLU-NJ on a number of important civil liberties issues and filed formal comments respecting the civil liberties impact of rulemaking by administrative agencies on everything from standards for law enforcement's DNA database to the inclusion of the deity in witness oaths in jury trials. It would be my honor to serve for another term as a board member.



### John M. O'Connor, Esq.

I've been an ACLU member since 1971 and these times are among the most challenging. The Trump administration's affronts to civil rights must be met forcefully. The enthusiasm of the resistance must be harnessed. In addition to its active litigation agenda, the ACLU has launched People Power to marshal grassroots action.

But these trying times also bring opportunities — to bring home to an awakened public the importance of always standing firm on civil liberties. If re-elected to the board, I plan to use past experience and present community connections to help frame and spread the ACLU's message and thwart the almost-daily attempts to roll back civil rights. I've brought civil rights cases as an assistant U.S. attorney in Manhattan, and since then I've handled pro bono civil rights cases, including a successful police race discrimination case as an ACLU cooperating attorney. I welcome the chance to continue the struggle.



### Jacob S. Perskie, Esq.

I have always thought that the ACLU (and its body of work) stands as a symbol of what it means to stand up for what is right, particularly when it is most difficult to do so. Following the 2017 election season, I sought out an opportunity to join the ACLU and contribute to its work, and although I am still

trying to find the best way to lend my talents to that end, I am proud to say I am a small part of the tremendous work being done both in New Jersey and nationally.

I am a partner in the Atlantic City, NJ, office of Fox Rothschild LLP, with a commercial litigation practice focusing on real estate litigation, trust and estate litigation, and disputes among partners, owners, and shareholders in closely held companies. Before joining Fox Rothschild LLP, I clerked for Associate Justice Roberto Rivera-Soto of the New Jersey Supreme Court.

It would be an honor to continue my service on the ACLU-NJ board.



### Afsheen Shamsi

It has been an honor for me to serve on the board of the ACLU-NJ for the last two terms, and I am putting forth my nomination to serve for another three years. I have been involved in the civil rights arena for over a decade. I began my career working for the largest Muslim civil liberties group in the nation and while there advocated for important legislative changes including the

End Racial Profiling Act nationally and anti-bullying laws in New Jersey. I am also involved in local civil rights causes in Princeton, where I live, including the large faith-based anti-racism group Not In Our Town and have also been part of the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow. I currently serve on the Princeton Civil Rights Commission and am the chair of its Education and Outreach Committee. I am passionate about racial justice and equity-based issues and would be honored to serve with you to advance the mission of the ACLU-NJ should I be elected again.



### Heather Taylor

It is with great enthusiasm that I am running for another term on the board of the ACLU-NJ. It has been an honor to serve on the board for the past six years. I am passionate about increasing government transparency, expanding voting rights, securing immigrant rights, and ending mass incarceration.

I currently serve on the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Committee on Trustees, and the Privacy and Technology Committee. If re-elected, I will continue to bring my 15-plus years of experience in grassroots organizing, lobbying, and public outreach to the service of the ACLU. I will continue to stand with the ACLU in streets, in city hall, and in the board room to fight back against any unconstitutional, hurtful, anti-American policies Donald Trump and Jeff Sessions throw at us.



### Barbara Vilkomerson

There could not be a more consequential time to belong to and support the ACLU. Our mission "to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to every person in this country" seems more under assault every day. We supporters of the ACLU share a common commitment to the organization and a passion for its mission and goals. Each year that I serve on the Board, I feel more proud to be part of this wonderful organization.

Prior to leaving corporate life, I worked at Educational Testing Service as an executive director in the Higher Education Division. My work focus was on strategic planning, business development, and program management. Prior board experience includes two elected terms to the South Brunswick Board of Education (three years as president), Planned Parenthood Association of the Mercer Area, and the Princeton Adult School. I currently work as a court appointed special advocate (CASA) for children in Mercer County. Currently, I serve on the ACLU-NJ's Personnel Committee and on the Committee of Trustees.

It would be an honor to continue serving on the ACLU-NJ board.

## Victory! Supreme Court Largely Sides with Police Accountability

On Nov. 9 last year, the morning after the presidential election, something else occupied the thoughts of ACLU-NJ Senior Staff Attorney Alexander Shalom: his appearance before the New Jersey Supreme Court to argue that the public has a right to access footage from police cameras.

The ACLU-NJ's arguments in that pivotal case largely prevailed this summer on July 11. A unanimous decision in *North Jersey Media Group v. Lyndhurst* has secured New Jerseyans' right to access most police records, including video.

The ACLU-NJ filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case on behalf of its own members and several civil rights groups. Police accountability has taken on even greater importance here and nationally amid dozens of high-profile police killings, and in particular killings of people of color, captured on film in recent years.

"The extraordinary powers we give police come with an obligation for law enforcement to shed light



The New Jersey Supreme Court's ruling in the Lyndhurst case protects the public's access to law enforcement records, including camera footage.

on officers' actions," said Shalom. "This decision will play a large role in shaping police transparency in New Jersey, establishing that in most circumstances police departments must answer to the public."

Following the decision, some police records, including use-of-force reports, will now be publicly accessible, while other records, such as dashboard camera videos, will be publicly accessible in certain circumstances. This case concerned camera footage, police use-of-force reports, and other records related to the 2014 police shooting of Kashad Ashford.

While the ACLU-NJ is pleased that the Court recognized the importance of transparency to police accountability, advocates call on the Legislature to act immediately to prevent police officials from becoming the final gatekeepers of public records.

"Footage from police cameras without accessibility to the public is nothing more than surveillance," said ACLU-NJ Legal Director Ed Barocas. [ACLU](#)



## Missing: 39,527 New Jersey Voters

OP-ED BY PORTIA ALLEN-KYLE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRANSPARENCY FELLOW, ACLU OF NEW JERSEY

It's election season in New Jersey. While we have not followed states like North Carolina and Texas in passing onerous new restrictions on voting, our laws currently keep tens of thousands of people from exercising that right each year.

People with criminal convictions cannot exercise their right to vote in New Jersey if they're incarcerated or on probation or parole. It's time for that to change. It's time for the Legislature to end criminal disenfranchisement.

A criminal conviction should not take away the fundamental right to vote — especially when our prisons and jails bear the stain of extreme racial disparities.

In New Jersey, between 70,000 and 90,000 individuals with indictable convictions, commonly known in other states as felonies, cannot vote — the highest number of any state in the Northeast.

People with these convictions do not lose their right to vote for a lifetime, but many never re-register. Losing the right to vote for any length of time imposes barriers that thwart participation in the democratic process.

According to the New Jersey Division of Elections, 39,527 people were removed from the rolls between 2010 and 2016 because of convictions, an average of 1,882 voters lost per county. That doesn't factor in the over-policing



**New Jersey's laws on felony disenfranchisement deprive people with criminal convictions of their right to vote if they're incarcerated or on probation or parole.**

from engaging in the process of electing our leaders. No matter the offense, everyone's voice counts, whether the issue is transparency at the highest levels of government or a zoning board decision down the street.

New Jersey must reform its laws, not simply to extend the right to vote to people on probation and parole, but to never take away a person's right to vote in the first place. [ACLU](#)

of people of color or some counties' loss of more voters than others.

This isn't just about presidential or gubernatorial elections, but the difference every vote makes where it matters most: in local elections. In elections decided by a few hundred or a few dozen votes, disenfranchised people make a difference.

Many states are less repressive. In Maine and Vermont, people with felony convictions never lose their voting rights. Another 13 — including Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Pennsylvania — revoke a prisoner's right to vote but not the voting rights of people on probation or parole. New York probationers can vote.

The integrity of our democracy depends on the wide participation of all members. A criminal conviction should not disqualify anyone from engaging in the process of electing our leaders. No matter the offense, everyone's voice counts, whether the issue is transparency at the highest levels of government or a zoning board decision down the street.

New Jersey must reform its laws, not simply to extend the right to vote to people on probation and parole, but to never take away a person's right to vote in the first place. [ACLU](#)

## ACLU-NJ's Alex Shalom Wins Lawyer of the Year for Role in Criminal Justice Reform

In one of Alexander Shalom's last cases as an assistant deputy public defender in Essex County, his client was skeptical about his abilities. That changed after Alex delivered his opening statement.

"You're really good," the client said. "Have you thought about becoming a lawyer?"

Shalom, senior staff attorney for the ACLU-NJ, certainly qualifies now. On June 20, he received the New Jersey Law Journal's Attorney of the Year award at the publication's Professional Excellence event. The honor recognized Shalom's dedication to expanding civil rights and civil liberties, in particular noting his work toward enacting and defending the state's historic pretrial justice reform policies.

Shalom has argued roughly 30 cases in front of the state Supreme Court, with a focus on criminal justice issues. His litigation has strengthened New Jersey's pretrial justice reform by guaranteeing defendants' due process. He won a landmark case that



**ACLU-NJ Senior Staff Attorney Alexander Shalom, right, pictured here with his family at the Women's March on New Jersey. He received the New Jersey Law Journal's Attorney of the Year award.**

established that juveniles should not receive de facto life sentences without considering their youth, and he played a major role in New Jersey's elimination of solitary confinement in juvenile facilities.

"To receive this honor, especially considering the legal talent in this state, is humbling and a reflection of the entire ACLU-NJ team's work this past year," Shalom said. "More than anything, it signals recognition that recent changes reforming a broken, unjust bail system are exceedingly important."

Shalom and his ACLU-NJ colleagues, along with partner organizations and agencies — ranging from the Office of the Public Defender to the Drug Policy Alliance — have worked since 2013 to institute the state's pretrial justice reforms, which went into effect in January 2017. The new measures practically eliminate money bail in determining whether someone charged with a crime will await trial behind bars. Instead, the state uses a risk-based assessment to determine whether a person can be released safely pretrial.

Since pretrial justice reform took effect, pretrial incarceration rates in the state are down about 20 percent, the state's Administrative Office of the Court announced in July. Of the 21,763 defendants seen by judges since January, 3,082 were detained, 2,164 were released on their own recognizance, and 15,831 were released on different levels of monitoring.

Shalom was nominated for the honor by Lawrence Lustberg, chair of Gibbons P.C.'s Criminal Defense Department and director of the firm's John J. Gibbons Fellowship in Public Interest & Constitutional Law.

"This was a breakout year for Alex, one in which he established himself as an omnipresent, effective, and distinguished protector of the constitutional rights of all New Jerseyans," Lustberg said in his nomination letter.

In his free time, Alex coaches his daughter's T-ball league. But even on the field, civil liberties aren't far from his mind. The team's name is the ACLU-NJ Liberties. [ACLU](#)

### A Breakout Year

Alex has played a major role in some of the ACLU-NJ's most trailblazing work:

- **Juvenile Life Imprisonment:** In Alex's case *State v. Comer*, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that minors could not receive de facto life sentences without consideration of their youth.
- **Right to Counsel:** Alex secured the right to counsel for bombing suspect Ahmad Rahimi, who was denied access to public defenders while receiving medical treatment under law enforcement supervision.
- **Solitary Confinement:** The Appellate Division asked Alex to represent someone sentenced to three years in solitary for throwing water and feces at a guard. The court ruled that the Department of Corrections violated the prisoner's rights by failing to meaningfully consider mitigating factors, such as mental health concerns.

## Legalization of Marijuana

Continued from page 1

prosecutor, an eminent psychiatrist, a retired New Jersey narcotics detective, and civil rights advocates from the ACLU-NJ, Latino Action Network, and NAACP New Jersey State Conference.

Testimony from opponents of legalization took less than 30 minutes and mainly repeated debunked, decades-old myths about marijuana.

The reality is that our state has disturbing racial disparities. Black New Jerseyans made up about 14 percent of the state population between 2000 and 2013. In 2000 they made up 29 percent of all marijuana possession arrests. In 2013, that number increased to 36 percent — three times the rate of white New Jerseyans. In 2015, New Jersey made nearly 25,000 marijuana possession arrests, a 27 percent increase from 2000.

A marijuana arrest brings collateral consequences that can leave a lifelong impact: removal from the workforce, lost educational and employment opportunities, ineligibility for some government benefits, and jeopardized custody of children, in addition to the stigma and consequences of a criminal record.

The ACLU of New Jersey's report included the story of a registered medicinal marijuana patient who called police to report an assault by an ex-boyfriend, only to be arrested for marijuana possession. Another man was arrested for possession after police forcibly entered and damaged his home, even though the occupants weren't suspected of any wrongdoing. [ACLU](#)

### BEYOND LEGALIZATION: Recommendations for a Fair System

1. Legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for adults — which would create jobs, increase safety, generate revenue, and end the current harms of prohibition.
2. Investigate the reasons for racial disparities in arrests.
3. Approach marijuana from a public health perspective, not as a criminal justice issue.
4. Require police departments to collect and publish comprehensive data on arrests, stops, and searches, including race and ethnicity.
5. Reinvest marijuana tax revenue in communities that have been hit hardest by unjust marijuana prohibition enforcement.





PROFILE IN LIBERTY

S. Nadia Hussain

ACLU-NJ Board Trustee and Equity Officer

It's easy for S. Nadia Hussain to remember how long her parents have been in America. It's the same as her age. When her parents moved from Bangladesh, they discovered Nadia was on the way. That sense of bridging different worlds is core to her identity. It's also a reason that Nadia — the maternal justice campaign director of MomsRising, an advocacy group that galvanizes mothers to take social action — gravitated toward organizing. As a kid, Nadia rallied her friends to clean up their neighborhood. She put Band-Aids on her teddy bears, thinking she'd be a doctor, like her dad. But she realized she didn't need an advanced degree to make an impact.



ACLU-NJ Trustee S. Nadia Hussain, pictured with her son, serves as the board's equity officer.

"I have skills that don't necessarily fit into a clean box," Nadia said. "I was in the Girl Scouts — I was president of the diversity club in high school. I interned at the United Nations."

When a cause has called, Nadia has answered. The UN made her a junior diplomat during her six months there. After earning a political science degree from Rutgers, she worked on a film about human rights in Burma. She has worked with refugees at an English-language school, counseled abuse survivors, and

organized Asian American teens around health and the environment.

She came back to New Jersey in 2014, as the "Vote Everywhere" program director at the Andrew Goodman Foundation, formed in memory of the slain civil rights worker. Before joining the ACLU-NJ board in 2016, she founded an organization to empower the women of Paterson's Bangladeshi community.

"I didn't grow up here, but it's the only place that feels like home," Nadia said of New Jersey.

She lives with her husband and baby in Bloomingdale, Passaic County. They moved from Paterson in 2016.

This year, she became the ACLU-NJ board's equity officer, a role to ensure the organization recruits the most diverse pool of job candidates possible.

"For the U.S. to be as diverse as it is, especially New Jersey — if the ACLU doesn't reflect that diversity, it's a detriment to the organization and its mission," Nadia said.

She considers the ACLU paramount at a time when the government does not seem to her to be by the people and for the people.

"If you love civil rights, who wouldn't love the ACLU?" she said. "The ACLU is part of America's civil rights history and its civil rights present."

Through her activism — and as the working mother of a two-year-old, of Bangladeshi and Salvadoran descent, whose feet will be planted in three worlds — Nadia will undoubtedly play a part in America's civil rights future. [ACLU](#)

TRIBUTES

In honor of Farrin Anello and Bob Kopp

Sue-Yun Ahn & Charles Kitcher, Susan & Edward Apuzzo, Caroline & Sean Bettinger-Lopez, Lori & Chris Borgen, David Brodsky, Robin & Steven Edwards, Juliane Gross, Susan Hall & Dan Kinburn, Nancy & Robert Kopp, Bennette Kramer & Elliot Long, David Schaefer, Edward Spiro, Anonymous (5)

In memory of Larry Ascher

Jennifer Broekman & Blair Seidler

In honor of Jacqueline Barnard and William Joseph

Kelli Comegys & James Whall

In memory of Puneet Bhandari

Dr. Narendra Bhandari

In memory of Emma Jean Bryant

Jane Johnston

In honor of Timothy D'Arduini

Eric Luongo

In honor of Joe Dorsey and Brian Samuelson

Katharine Donaldson & Karen O'Connell

In memory of Bryan D. Garruto

Susan Garruto

In memory of David Hoeh

Bill & Rosemary Finnerty

In memory of Roger Holmes, Ph.D.

Miriam Willinger

In honor of Angelina Kendra

Mary Karl

In memory of Sam Liss

Maria Grieco-Cottrell, Ellen & Bill Ward

In honor of Alex Shalom and CJ Griffin

Jay & Susan Gartman

Tributes are contributions made to honor or remember special friends, family, colleagues, and occasions. To have your tribute appear in the *Civil Liberties Reporter*, please contact the ACLU-NJ office at: 973-642-2086 or P.O. Box 32159, Newark, NJ 07102.

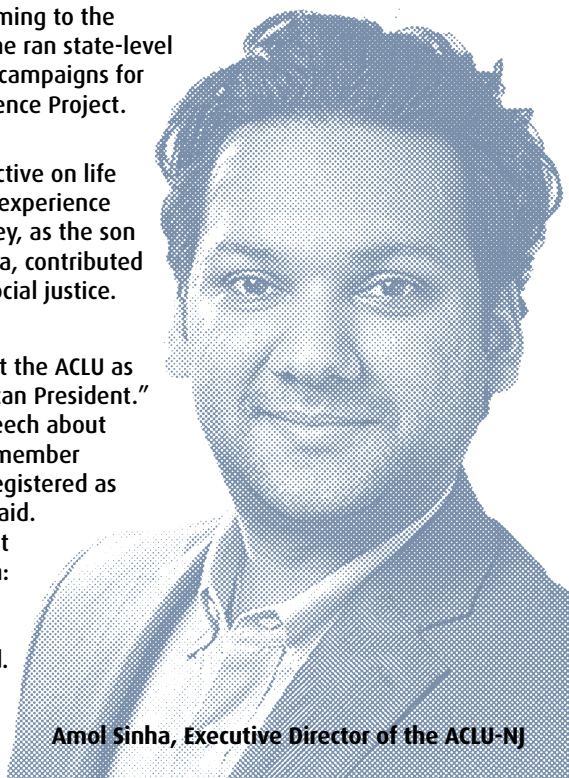
CIVIL LIBERTIES REPORTER

Published Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall by the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, P.O. Box 32159, Newark, NJ 07102  
973-642-2086 ■ [info@aclu-nj.org](mailto:info@aclu-nj.org) ■ [www.aclu-nj.org](http://www.aclu-nj.org)

ISSN: 0009-7934

Five Facts About the ACLU-NJ's New Executive Director, Amol Sinha

- 1 He's Jersey to the core. He grew up in Lawrenceville, lives in Jersey City, and has family throughout the state.
- 2 He's already a part of the ACLU family. He was director of the Suffolk County Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union for five years, and he interned for the national ACLU during law school.
- 3 Before coming to the ACLU-NJ, he ran state-level advocacy campaigns for the Innocence Project.
- 4 He describes his perspective on life as one of solidarity. His experience growing up in New Jersey, as the son of immigrants from India, contributed to his strong sense of social justice.
- 5 He recalls first hearing about the ACLU as a kid, watching "The American President." "It was fictional, but the speech about being a card-carrying ACLU member struck a chord — the ACLU registered as something important," he said. In school, the ACLU stood out to him for a different reason: in almost every major civil rights decision he read about, the ACLU was involved.



Amol Sinha, Executive Director of the ACLU-NJ

Read more about Amol on page 1.



LIGHT THE TORCH OF LIBERTY

Help the ACLU of New Jersey build a safe and free future by investing in its mission. Defend liberty by making a tax deductible gift to the ACLU-NJ Foundation. For more information on the many ways to give, call us at 973-854-1735. Visit our website to make a gift today: [www.aclu-nj.org/donate](http://www.aclu-nj.org/donate)

American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey  
P.O. Box 32159  
Newark, NJ 07102  
Address Service Requested



INSIDE:

Meet Amol Sinha—You'll Be Seeing a Lot of Him..... 1

Advocates Tell Legislature:  
Time to Legalize Marijuana and Stop Racially Disparate Arrests..... 1

Kaci Hickox Case Creates 'Bill of Rights' for Quarantined Individuals..... 1

ACLU-NJ Board of Trustees ..... 2

Victory! Supreme Court Largely Sides with Police Accountability ..... 2

Missing: 39,527 New Jersey Voters ..... 3

ACLU-NJ's Alex Shalom Wins Lawyer of the Year for Role in Criminal Justice Reform..... 3

