

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2018

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ACLU OF KANSAS CALLS ON GOV. COLYER TO PROTECT CIVIL LIBERTIES

OVERLAND PARK, KS --- Today, the ACLU of Kansas sent an open letter to Governor Colyer congratulating him on his inauguration as the 47th governor of Kansas and urging him to make preserving and strengthening the civil rights and liberties of all Kansans a top priority for his administration.

It is our hope that in setting a new tone in Topeka, Gov. Colyer will take steps to actively defend the values of freedom, justice, and equality that make Kansas the Free State. Specifically, we urge the governor to:

Continue support for smart criminal justice reform - We ask Gov. Colyer to continue support for the criminal justice reform measures signed into law by former Gov. Brownback. These measures will reduce mass incarceration, improve conditions in correctional facilities, and promote programs to assist individuals returning to communities after incarceration.

Additionally, we strongly encourage Gov. Colyer to lead on integrating formerly incarcerated individuals into the work force. Sixteen states have already taken action to preclude state agencies from asking job applicants about their criminal history, except in cases in which it is directly relevant to the job. This strengthens communities and provides individuals with another chance to be thriving members of the community.

Support increased citizen participation in Kansas elections – Kansas suffers from low levels of citizen participation due to a number of current policies that actively discourage it. We urge Gov. Colyer to support policies that will eliminate those barriers, particularly the Free State Elections Act (HB 2538 and SB 326). Introduced by a bi-partisan group of legislators, the bill expands early voting, repeals unnecessary restrictions on voting, and enacts Election Day registration, all of which would dramatically increase the level of citizen participation in Kansas. In the best interest of our state, we ask Gov. Colyer to publicly support the Free State Elections Act.

Declare Kansas a safe and welcoming home for all, including Dreamers – Kansas is home to tens of thousands of immigrants who make innumerable contributions to the state's economy, culture, and quality of life. Unfortunately, many immigrants live in fear due to government

policies that target them. We strongly encourage Gov. Colyer to support these invaluable members of our community by declaring that the Kansas Highway Patrol will not take responsibility for routine, front-line immigration enforcement and by declaring public support for the passage of a clean DREAM Act at the federal level. These policies will strengthen the Kansas economy and uphold the state's values of being a warm and welcoming home for all.

The ACLU stands prepared and ready to assist Gov. Colyer in defending freedom in Kansas.

You can read the letter to Gov. Colyer [here](#)