



ACLU
Puerto Rico

Our actions in September 2026

The ACLU of Puerto Rico is the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a nonprofit organization founded in the United States in 1920. Our mission is to fight violations of the civil liberties guaranteed by the legal systems of the United States and Puerto Rico, wherever and whenever necessary.

We work to ensure that the constitutional guarantees and statutes that protect human rights and civil liberties are upheld and enforced in the Puerto Rican archipelago. We confront oppression, authoritarianism, and injustices against people.



Active in defending immigrants' rights

We continue working on the ground, in the courts, and in the legislature to halt threats and institutional violence against immigrants in Puerto Rico. We want ICE agents out of our communities!

Among other initiatives, in September we took part in the “Dialogue in defense of our people against the criminalization of migration and institutional racism stemming from current policy practices.” We also participated in two public demonstrations aimed at showing solidarity with immigrant communities and countering the presence of ICE.

Alert to threats against fundamental rights

Together with the Puerto Rico Bar Association, civil society organizations, and human rights advocacy groups, we expressed our concern regarding recent actions that threaten fundamental rights and undermine the spaces necessary for a full democracy. During a press conference, the coalition of organizations raised

concerns regarding limitations on civic participation and freedom of expression; the disproportionate use of force against people exercising their right to protest; restrictions on access to public information and freedom of the press; and threats to the independence, liberty, and safety of legal professionals.



JOIN THE FIGHT

Defending rights does not happen on its own, but through a united and active community. We invite you to stay informed, share our analysis, support our cases, and defend the civil and constitutional rights of all people in the streets, in the Legislature, and in the courts.

- Visit our bilingual website and subscribe to our updates: www.aclu-pr.org
- Follow us on social media
- Write to us at acluofpr@aclu.org

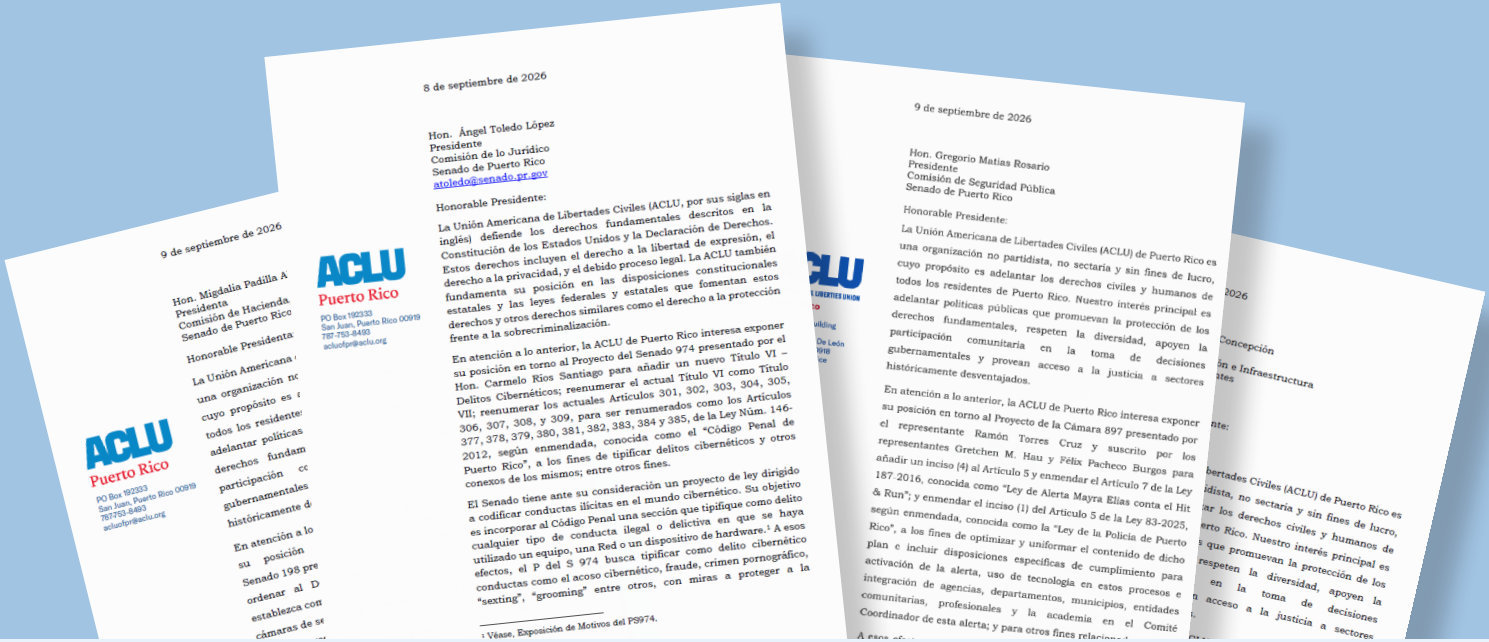
GET THE FLOCK OUT!

People have the right to move freely without being surveilled, to associate where and with whom they choose, and to be protected from unreasonable searches. That is why we must act now and demand an end to widespread government surveillance through automated license plate reader (ALPR) camera systems in our communities. From every corner of the Puerto Rican archipelago, your community can be part of this fight too.

Scan the QR
code and join
the fight in
Puerto Rico!

Focusing on the new legislative sesión

The fourth ordinary session of the 20th Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico began on August 17, 2026. Our team is constantly monitoring measures that could have a negative or positive impact on fundamental individual rights and protections. Over the past month, we have focused on several bills that foster a scenario of mass surveillance through the unregulated use of technologies and the drafting of broad definitions that could infringe upon freedom of expression, privacy, the presumption of innocence, and due process of law. In September, we presented four analyses:



Senate Joint Resolution 198

Seeks to direct the Puerto Rico Department of the Treasury to require the installation and operation of video surveillance camera systems at establishments applying for or renewing a license to sell alcoholic beverages.

In practice, the measure could foster an environment of excessive surveillance that undermines individuals’ constitutional protections, including freedom of expression, privacy, and due process of law. Without adequate safeguards, the camera installation requirement could become a tool for government surveillance and persecution.

Senate Bill 974

Seeks to criminalize certain cyber-related conduct and amend the Puerto Rico Penal Code. This legislation could conflict with freedom of expression by using categories that are ambiguous or broader than constitutional standards allow. This could have a chilling effect and lead to the criminalization of expression, including artistic expression.

In addition, legitimate activities by researchers, journalists, or activists could be classified as criminal offenses. Vague definitions could be weaponized to criminalize public discourse, online protest, or criticism of public officials on social media.

House Bill 897

Seeks to amend Act 187-2016 (the Mayra Elías Alert Against Hit-and-Run Act) and Act 83-2025 (the Puerto Rico Police Act). Public safety is a shared goal. However, a measure that contemplates the use of cameras such as automated license plate reader (ALPR) systems requires a broad discussion about potential violations of constitutional rights.

Across the United States, there are numerous examples of these cameras being misused by law enforcement officers, as well as errors in the management and operation of these systems.

House Bill 1421

We support this bill, which seeks to establish the “Act for Protection Against Mass Surveillance Systems,” because of the risks that hyper-surveillance poses to individuals’ constitutional protections and the potential for misuse by government authorities.

Mass surveillance is unconstitutional, disproportionate, and incompatible with a democratic society. The unchecked expansion of government hyper-surveillance directly threatens fundamental democratic rights. Indiscriminate surveillance erodes the presumption of innocence, turning the entire population into potential suspects.