



A message from Lauren

I became a civil rights lawyer because I believe that when the police hurt someone, they should have to answer for it. In most instances of police violence, the government has the power to withhold information, refuse to speak to victims, and never explain its actions. Lawsuits can remove the shields the government hides behind and shift the power back to the people who have been harmed.

Even when a lawsuit is not successful, it forces the government to take people seriously whose suffering it would have otherwise ignored.

Over the last year, the Trump administration has expanded police power and state violence, while stripping away vital measures for accountability. As federal police terrorize immigrant communities and overtake policing operations in majority Black cities, civil rights lawyers, and NPAP lawyers in particular, have stepped in to make the government answer for its actions.

NPAP member attorneys have stopped DHS attacks on journalists in Los Angeles, challenged abusive practices in ICE detention centers, and demanded consequences from ICE when they wrongfully arrested and harmed citizens.

Thank you for helping us take back power from abusive police at all levels of government. We could not do this vital work without your support.



DOJ be damned!

When the Trump administration ended federal oversight of the police and abandoned Department of Justice (DOJ) investigations into unconstitutional policing this past Spring, many communities were left without a clear path forward to hold their police departments accountable. NPAP acted quickly to convene community advocates, former DOJ experts, and civil rights attorneys from these cities to strategize alternative ways to seek accountability. For the first time, these communities came together to share information, resources and successful tactics – and to strategize collective action in the absence of DOJ oversight. The prevailing message: **the federal government is not the end all be all for holding police accountable.**

The group requested that NPAP support their efforts with FOIA requests to compel the release of as much data as possible on their police departments to further prove egregious civil rights violations. Since then, NPAP has engaged in a two-pronged strategy to access information, seeking data from both the DOJ and the police department in multiple cities. NPAP has already helped community groups access some responsive information and is fully committed to pursuing administrative appeals and to litigating to gain access if the information is not disclosed.

Together, we will demand – and achieve – justice for our communities, with or without the DOJ.

Choosing Resistance

In just four months, President Trump has ordered federal troops to Los Angeles, Washington DC, Chicago, Memphis and Portland – and threatened several other cities with deployment – under the guise of fighting crime, quelling protests, or safeguarding ICE facilities and personnel. While it is unclear whether federal presence has reduced crime, it is clear that deployments lead to bad policing and civil rights violations.

While elected officials may not be able to stop the Trump administration from sending troops to their city, they can take action to minimize the harm of these deployments. That’s why NPAP created **Choosing Resistance: A Guide for Local Action Against Federal Law Enforcement Deployments** to inform communities on how their elected officials can protect them from federal law enforcement abuse and violence.

- Our recommendations include:
- Policy changes that would limit cooperation with the National Guard and federal law enforcement
 - Ending any voluntary law enforcement information sharing which could facilitate efforts to detain and arrest residents
 - Issuing directives against coordinating with federal troops and law enforcement officers
 - Minimizing low-level arrests which can protect residents from federal law enforcement contact and abuses – particularly immigration enforcement efforts
- The impact of federal deployment efforts largely depends on support and cooperation from state and local law enforcement. NPAP is equipping communities to press their elected officials to limit cooperation and minimize the harm of federalized presence.



From left to right:
 Lauren Bonds (NPAP)
 Jill Collen (JULIAN)
 Keisha James (NPAP)
 Devontae Torriente (NPAP)
 Tiffany Roberts (Southern Center for Human Rights)
 Devin Franklin (Southern Center for Human Rights)
 Michelle Dahl (NPAP)
 Alex Hensley (Decarcerate Memphis)
 Hunter Demster (Decarcerate Memphis)
 Amber Sherman (Decarcerate Memphis)
 Elijah Appelton (ACLU of Louisiana)

**The law matters. Accountability matters.
And so do the people behind the cases.**



On July 6, 2025, Alexis Jovany Cardenas was arrested by Houston Police officers on a misdemeanor warrant for a decade-old unpaid traffic ticket. He was in the process of being released from the Harris County Jail when he was assaulted and killed by jail officers. Alexis was just 32 years old, a father of four.

As is so often the case, his family was misled about his cause of death. They were initially told that he had “collapsed” while being released from custody, suggesting that he had suffered from a fatal medical emergency in jail. Later, a Texas Ranger called the family and provided a much different story, that Alexis had refused to leave the jail, was then tasered, and died while being restrained by officers.

Weeks later, the Sheriff’s Office released an edited version of jail surveillance video depicting Alexis’ death, edited to tell a story to justify how an unarmed man being released from jail ended up dead at the hands of officers. Alexis’ family believes his death could have been prevented and they want transparency, accountability, and justice. NPAP is suing for the release of the autopsy report, names of the officers involved, and unedited video footage of the fatal incident. Alexis’ family deserves answers. NPAP intends to get them.



legal professionals trained

Through training, supporting, mentoring and outreach to law students, NPAP works to grow the number of attorneys able to take police misconduct cases, especially in areas with few civil rights attorneys in the Midwest, the South and rural jurisdictions.

law students engaged

There is a growing number of law students interested in civil rights work and NPAP is here to encourage them! We regularly offer webinars and presentations to law students about how to plan for a career in civil rights and what the work actually looks like in practice.



Only 1% of people
harmed by the police ever file a lawsuit.
Most can’t find a lawyer to take their case.

Meeting This Moment and Those Ahead



Fleeing the persecution of queer people in Central America, Marisol Ordonez Vargas, a transgender woman, immigrated to the U.S. in 2022. Nearly a year after her arrival, and despite regularly checking in with ICE, she was detained at the Orange County Correctional Facility (OCCF). The day she was detained, she was scheduled to have surgery on her nose, which had been fractured in a recent car accident. Upon Marisol's arrival at the facility, a registered nurse examined her and noted her condition and her missed surgery. However, throughout Marisol's detention, she received no care for her injury, causing severe pain, mental distress and lasting damage to her nose. A painful example of both the harmfully inadequate healthcare provided by Wellpath and the treatment of LGBTQIA+ immigrants in ICE detention facilities. NPAP is suing both for compensation for Marisol’s suffering and to change the practices of OCCF and Wellpath to keep this type of mistreatment from happening to others.

Marisol’s case is also helping to train the next generation of civil rights attorneys. Working closely with the City University of New York (CUNY) law clinic on the case, NPAP is giving law students hands-on experience in how to litigate these critical cases, preparing them for the civil rights challenges ahead.

**Wellpath:
Not Well at All**

Private jail medical contractors have made a business out of avoiding consequences for civil rights violations. They offer local governments inexpensive, substandard medical care for their jails and then find creative ways to avoid litigation. Wellpath, the country’s largest private medical contractor, provides healthcare to hundreds of jails and prisons across the country. The company generated more than \$2 billion in revenue in 2023 – and has had thousands of lawsuits filed against it for inadequate care resulting in injury or death, including many brought by NPAP member attorneys. Now, Wellpath is evading responsibility yet again, by filing for bankruptcy.

After a company files for bankruptcy, courts generally pause all active civil lawsuits against the organization until the proceedings end. Complex bankruptcy procedures and poorly disclosed deadlines often lead to victims of the bankrupt company missing out on the opportunity to recover any compensation.

Luckily, NPAP members had Legal Fellow Devontae Torriente to guide them through the complex and often opaque bankruptcy process. He coordinated dozens of strategy sessions for member attorneys bringing cases against Wellpath and ensured they were aware of deadlines to file motions to maximize their clients’ chances of recovery. Without Devontae’s vigilant attention, the opportunity to claim millions of dollars in compensation for harms suffered might have been lost.

Privatization harms civil rights, undermines accountability, and frustrates reforms. NPAP’s guide **Reclaiming Public Safety: Ending Privatization of Jails and Policing** provides a roadmap for how community members can effectively advocate against private jails and medical service providers in their cities.