

SPLC REPORT

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SEEKING JUSTICE

Lawsuit ends abuse in Mississippi lock-up

For children and teens confined at a juvenile detention center in Meridian, Miss., the settlement of a federal lawsuit filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center will bring dramatic reforms that will ensure the facility helps put young lives back on track rather than pushing them further off course.

Youths confined at the Lauderdale County Juvenile Detention Facility can no longer be locked in unsanitary cells for 23 hours each day. They can no longer be punished with Mace or pepper spray, or by being strapped into a mechanical "restraint chair."

Youths will get help

They will no longer sit idle in their cells with no meaningful rehabilitative, educational and recreational programs. And they will receive upgraded screening

and treatment for their physical and mental health problems.

Officials in Lauderdale County, which operates the facility, also have agreed to consider alternatives to sending youths to the detention center — an approach that promises to better serve court-involved youths without tearing them from their families and communities. The settlement agreement, filed in late April, awaits approval in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, Eastern Division.

Sheila Bedi, SPLC deputy legal director, credited Lauderdale officials with taking action to improve conditions at the facility long before the settlement agreement was reached.

"This agreement and the improvements already made demonstrate Lauderdale County's strong commitment to protect-

ing its detained youths," Bedi said. "We're looking forward to working with the county to ensure compliance with this settlement."

'Shockingly inhumane' conditions

Accounts of nightmarish conditions have dogged the 30-bed detention center for years. In an earlier assessment, a county grand jury wondered if the dilapidated facility was better suited to house animals instead of children.

Filed by the SPLC in November 2009, the federal class action lawsuit alleged that children and teens confined at the facility were subjected to "shockingly inhumane" treatment. They

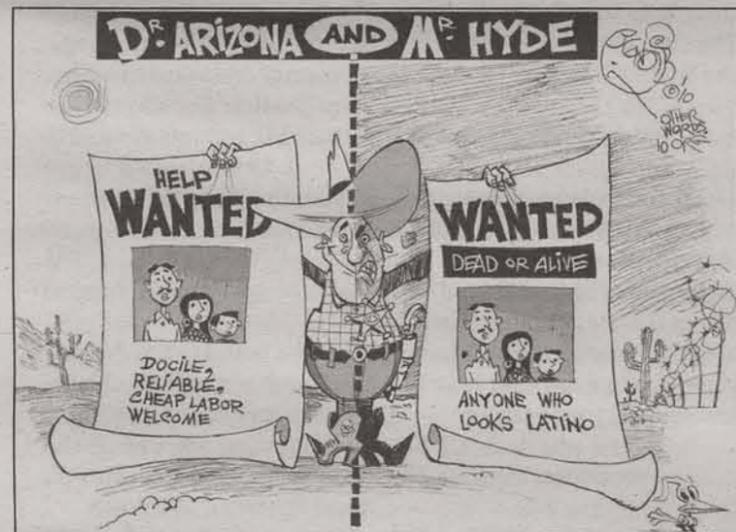


Children in a Meridian, Miss., detention facility will be protected from abuse and neglect under an agreement won by the SPLC.

were crammed into small, filthy cells and tormented with the arbitrary use of Mace as a punishment for even the most minor

infractions — such as "talking too much" or failing to sit in the "back of their cells."

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FIGHTING HATE

SPLC exposes racist origins of new Arizona law

As Arizona reignited the national immigration debate by enacting a law that will result in the racial profiling of Latinos, the SPLC exposed the racist roots of an organization that helped author the controversial measure.

The anti-immigrant law was written by a lawyer affiliated with the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which the SPLC has listed as an anti-immigrant hate group since 2007. The SPLC's research on FAIR has been cited in news reports concerning the Arizona law, which was signed by the governor in April.

The Arizona law gives police broad new powers to arrest people they suspect of being in the country illegally and makes the failure to carry immigration documents a crime. The SPLC and other critics of the law say it will lead to the racial profiling of Latinos in Arizona — concerns heightened by more than a decade of SPLC research documenting the history of FAIR and its founder, a man who has been at the heart of the white nationalist movement for decades.

"Arizona's newly adopted immigration law is brazenly unconstitutional and will undoubtedly

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FIGHTING HATE

Pentagon tightens ban on supremacist activity after prodding by SPLC

Since the SPLC warned the U.S. military about extremist activity among active-duty personnel in 2006, the Pentagon brass has steadfastly denied that a problem existed and insisted that its "zero-tolerance" policy was sufficient to keep racist extremists out of its ranks.

That changed this past November, when the Pentagon quietly tightened its policy on extremist activity.

Previously, the policy only banned "active participation" in extremist groups but did not define what that meant. Now, personnel "must not actively advocate supremacist doctrine, ideology or causes" or "otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights." The new rules specifically forbid recruiting, fundraising, demonstrating or rallying, training, organizing and distributing supremacist material, including online posts.

The revision should give commanders ample new tools to root out racial extremists in their midst. The previous policy, in effect since the mid-1990s, was frequently interpreted to mean that

military personnel were allowed to be "mere members" of hate groups or that they could engage in unaffiliated extremist activities — such as posting racist and anti-Semitic messages to social networking websites or maintaining online profiles filled with racist materials. As the SPLC has repeatedly pointed out, the policy allowed numerous active-duty members to engage in a range of supremacist activities.

Change reported in April

The policy change was first reported in April by Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek*. In a blog post, Isikoff examined the military backgrounds of two members of the Hutaree Militia, the radical Michigan group whose members were indicted in March for plotting to murder a law enforcement officer and then attack the funeral procession with homemade bombs and missiles.

The SPLC has been urging the Pentagon to revise the regulations since 2006, when it revealed that large numbers of neo-Nazi skinheads and other white supremacists were

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SPLC REPORT

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the Center works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. The Center also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which honors the memory of individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement.

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A MESSAGE FROM SPLC PRESIDENT RICHARD COHEN

Immigrant youths due a place at society's table

Jessica Colotl has a dream — an American Dream

She wants to be a lawyer. She graduated from high school in Georgia as an A-student and is now attending Kennesaw State University, where she's two semesters short of graduation. She works at night to pay for college.

There's just one problem. When she was just 11, Jessica's parents brought her to the United States from Mexico. Like so many other Latinos living here, she is undocumented.

Student faces 'trumped up' charge

In March, the 22-year-old student was arrested after being pulled over for "impeding traffic." The local sheriff turned her over to federal immigration authorities. After Jessica spent about a month in detention, the government decided to defer deportation proceedings against her for a year, giving her time to complete her studies. But, apparently unable to abide by that decision, the sheriff took matters into his own hands, charging Jessica with

a trumped-up felony charge of giving a false address.

Jessica's case has now become a flashpoint in our country's fierce debate over immigration policy. Hardliners in Georgia insist that Jessica be deported immediately to a country that is, to her, a foreign land. And they're angry that she was able to attend a state university. At a press conference, we and her other supporters argued that it would be unfair and inhumane to deport her to Mexico — and that she's just the kind of bright young person that our country needs.

For now, she exists in a sort of legal purgatory, her future wildly uncertain.

Many thousands of young Latinos across America stare into a similar abyss — living in fear, hiding in the shadows, knowing that even the most minor transgression can mean separation not only from their

families but from their culture and their country.

Each year, some 65,000 children of immigrant parents graduate from high school without legal status in the United States. These children did not ask to become unauthorized immigrants.



Richard Cohen

They had no choice.

But under U.S. law, there is no way for Jessica or anyone else in her position to become a citizen or permanent legal resident. Federal law also makes it difficult for these young people to attend college by prevent-

ing states from charging them in-state tuition unless out-of-state students are also allowed to pay the lower rate.

Jessica's personal crisis is but one small piece of a broader immigration debate that has raged on for years now and is again reaching a fever pitch. It's an enormously complex subject, a policy quagmire with no easy or simple solutions.

But we should be able to agree on one thing: In Jessica's case, the equities are all on her side — as they are with other young people in her situation.

We can fix this situation. Sitting in Congress right now is bipartisan legislation called the DREAM Act. Under this bill, high school graduates who entered the country under the age of 16 could earn the right to become permanent legal residents and eventually U.S. citizens, provided they have no criminal record, by either going to college or serving in the armed forces. The bill also would remove federal restrictions on their eligibility for in-state tuition.

This is a commonsense step we can take right now to welcome these young people, who are already Americans, into our society as full-fledged, taxpaying members. The other choice is to keep them uneducated and living in a shadow economy that benefits no one except perhaps unscrupulous employers who want to exploit them. Morally and economically, it's the right thing to do.

MAILBOX

My wife and I believe you are doing some of the very most important work for our society. We congratulate you and greatly admire all your efforts. We were raised and went to school in Alabama, but couldn't take the racism, politics, fundamentalist religious fervor and general Ludditism. Guess what? We moved to Arizona! Now, what the hell are we going to do? One thing is we're sending you \$50 each month from this moment on. Wish it could be more. Keep up the good work; you have a big following among our friends.

W. T.

Tubac, Arizona

I teach 8th grade, and we are studying the Holocaust and the American civil rights movement. Your Rosa Parks and One Survivor Remembers teaching materials are outstanding. My students responded very well to the quality of the videos and the message they contain. We had discussions about the importance of speaking up for yourself and others when people act in hateful ways, and I saw many light bulbs turn on as we rehearsed things to say when confronted. I truly felt like I was making a difference with my students in changing their attitudes. Thanks you so much, and keep up the good work.

K. T.

Kennesaw, Georgia

[Intelligence Project Director] Mark Potok presents factual information in a calm and collected manner. I have been disgusted at the amount of feverish spew that has occurred after passage of health care reform. I am always so proud to be a Friend of the Center.

As right-wing fever grows, I am proud to be a part of the calm within the storm. Thank you, Mark, for your work and how well you represent the Center and those of us in the country who do INDEED love our country, our fellow citizens and the support of that which is right and just!

M. B.

Grantsburg, Illinois

I am very proud of the work of the Center. I am a Holocaust survivor, and what I see in Arizona is all too reminiscent of the beginning of another huge tragedy.

M. W.

Valencia, California

I am a professor and a retired ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) senior special agent. I assure you that the Arizona law is against Mexicans and is not going to be enforced against the illegal Irish, Italians or Germans. Please be at the forefront on this issue. The police should not enforce immigration law because it will make victims of crimes afraid to report those

crimes to the police. We need their help to enforce the law. The Gestapo is not required in the United States.

G. R.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Thank you for your compassion and all that you do. The latest identification and arrests of those planning to kill a police officer (I am a police chaplain) is very disturbing [see story page 3]. I applaud your efforts and support your passion.

T. B.

Vancleave, Mississippi

The message from the SPLC is desperately needed in the public discourse right now. Thank you for educating the public, for restoring proper perspective regarding the extremists among us and for doing such great work.

Teaching the concept of tolerance has never been more important. Those consistently in the public should not be using such inflammatory, violent language. Nothing positive can come from that.

Thank you to those in the organization working to achieve justice and a fair hearing of the facts.

S. C.

Peoria, Illinois

A friend walked out of the downtown branch of the Phoenix library on Monday and into the adjacent park.

There she was approached by a Phoenix police officer who told her she looked like an illegal immigrant and asked to see her identification. She showed her picture I.D. and was allowed to proceed. I am ashamed to live in a state where this harassment occurs legally.

J. V.

Phoenix, Arizona

With the country's very ominous lurch to the right, the extremist menace is bound to increase. You are one of the few organizations focusing on it and fighting it effectively.

M. G.

San Francisco, California

I would like to request one of your new teaching kits [*Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History*] when it becomes available. It's no secret that here in south Orange County, Calif., there is a general lack of tolerance and acceptance of LGBT of all ages. However, I worry most about LGBT youths in this area who may have little support from their schools or community. When my children were still in San Clemente public schools, they witnessed numerous homophobic insults directed to such youths by their classmates while their teachers remained silent. Thank you for taking on this project.

M. A.

San Clemente, California

FIGHTING HATE

Antigovernment extremism mirrors dangerous era before Oklahoma City bombing

Since the SPLC issued its recent report on the resurgence of the so-called "Patriot" movement, there's been a rash of violence committed by these anti-government extremists.

In March, nine members of a militia group listed in the SPLC's "Rage on the Right" report were indicted in a plot to kill law enforcement officers. The leader of another Patriot group named in the report made headlines

us toward any kind of calming down," SPLC Intelligence Project Director Mark Potok said. Potok's remarks came at an April 16 symposium held by the Center for American Progress Action Fund and the Democratic Leadership Council.

Clinton urged responsibility amid spirited debate, warning that words "go across space and they fall on the serious and the delirious alike; they fall

of Patriot groups — from 149 in 2008 to 512 in 2009. Patriot groups, including militias, see the federal government as their primary enemy.

The plot concocted by the Hutaree Militia illustrates the dangers of these groups. The self-described group of "Christian" warriors hoped to ignite a revolution by murdering a police officer and then attacking the police funeral procession with homemade bombs and missiles. Two Hutaree chapters were included on the SPLC's list of militia groups.

A few days before those arrests, Mike Vanderboegh, a longtime Alabama militiaman and a current leader of the Patriot group Three Percenters, called on followers to smash windows at Democratic Party offices as a protest against health care reform. In the next 48 hours, a rash of window-breaking occurred across America.

The resurgence of the Patriot movement has been fueled by a growing resentment over the economy, bank and auto industry bailouts, racial changes in the population and an array of initiatives by the Obama administration that have been branded as "socialist" or even "fascist."

While these extremist groups are not the same as racist hate groups, their rise is noteworthy given the violence the movement has produced in the past, including the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. That attack was the worst act of domestic terrorism in U.S. history, killing 168 men, women and children.

on the connected and the unhinged alike."

"[T]here is a difference between criticizing a policy or a politician and demonizing the government that guarantees our freedom and the public servants who implement them," he said. "And the more prominence you have in politics or media or some other pillar of life, the more you have to keep that in mind."

Comments echo SPLC report

Clinton's words are especially significant in light of the SPLC report, which documented a 244 percent increase in the number



SPLC's Mark Potok (center) describes the nation's dangerous mood during an April panel discussion that featured a keynote address by former President Bill Clinton. Also speaking were Michael Waldman (left), executive director of the Brennan Center for Justice, and U. S. Rep. Kendrick Meek (D-Fla.).

after his call to protest health care reform was followed by reports of smashed windows at Democratic Party offices across the country.

And in late May, two police officers in Arkansas were shot dead when they stopped a man and his son who traveled around the country teaching seminars based on bizarre, "sovereign citizen" tenets common within the Patriot movement. The pair wounded two other officers before they were killed by police.

The violence reflected an atmosphere that is remarkably similar to the period before the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, an SPLC expert told an audience in Washington, D.C., at a panel discussion about the bombing and a keynote address by former President Bill Clinton.

Six months before Timothy McVeigh bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City, the SPLC wrote then-Attorney General Janet Reno to warn about extremists in the militia movement, saying that the "mixture of armed groups and those who hate" was "a recipe for disaster."

Pundits pour fuel on fire

Today, unlike the 1990s, mainstream commentators and politicians are pouring fuel on the fire with heated antigovernment rhetoric and outrageous conspiracy theories.

"It just stokes the fire, and I don't see anything that's moving

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS

Last year deadly for law enforcement officers

More law enforcement officers were killed last year by right-wing extremists than in any year since 1995. In that year, six officers were killed by extremists — five of them in the Oklahoma City bombing.

In 2009, the first year of President Obama's administration, six officers also died at the hands of those subscribing to far-right views. They include three Pittsburgh police officers killed by a racist, anti-Semitic gunman; two Florida sheriff's deputies who were shot by a man with militia interests; and a security guard who was murdered by a white supremacist at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Since 1990, law enforcement officers have comprised nearly 15 percent of the victims of far-right killings — or 49 out of more than 400 fatalities, according to a report published in April by the University of Maryland. Local and state officers have accounted for more than 70 percent of these law enforcement deaths.

Oregon town turns away hate

JOHN DAY, Ore. — When self-described Aryan Nations national director Paul Mullet went looking in February for a place to establish a new headquarters, he headed west to Grants County, Ore. Rugged, rural and about 95 percent white, it must have seemed an ideal place to resuscitate the remnants of a once-leading neo-Nazi group.

Mullet, 36, showed up in the town of 1,850 wearing a shirt with a swastika patch and accompanied by three other men. They spent the night at a local motel, where they displayed a swastika banner for the benefit of a black and a Hispanic motel worker. Then they toured the town a second day.

"John Day is the perfect place for us," Mullet told a reporter.

Local residents vehemently disagreed. They turned out in large numbers for two community meetings organized by the local newspaper. Dozens took to the streets, carrying signs with slogans like "No room 4 hate." Everybody from the mayor and the police chief to ranchers and business owners voiced their opposition to the racist group. Mullet left, spewing threats to sue the town for discrimination.

Unlike Mullet's organization — one of several purporting to be its rightful heir — the original Aryan Nations was once a leading white supremacist group that hosted major annual gatherings of the radical right on a compound near Hayden Lake, Idaho. That group was decimated after its leader was ordered to pay \$4.8 million of a \$6.3 million judgment in a civil case brought by the SPLC on behalf of a woman and her son who were attacked by the group's security guards.

Extremists believed to target California police for death

HEMET, Calif. — Authorities are investigating whether white supremacists orchestrated several potentially fatal attacks on police officers here. Some 200 federal, state and local police searched three dozen locations and arrested 23 people in an April 20 raid aimed at identifying the crimes' perpetrators. Those in police custody have been charged with various felonies and misdemeanors, many of them related to weapons, drugs and stolen property. As of press time, none of the charges were directly connected to the attempted murders of the police officers, though authorities say they're hopeful that the mass arrests will help them find those responsible.

The Hemet-San Jacinto Gang Task Force was first targeted in December, when someone redirected a rooftop gas line into the task force building, filling it with natural gas that could have caused a major explosion. In February, a bullet fired from a booby trap device narrowly missed an officer as he opened the security gate at the task force building.

In March, a task force officer who had pulled into a convenience store parking lot discovered what he suspected was a "dangerous device" attached to his police vehicle. Investigators determined that the device had been attached to the vehicle before the officer stopped at the convenience store and that it would have injured or killed the officer if it had functioned as intended.

Hemet is located in the region of California known as the Inland Empire, which, as the *Intelligence Report* documented in 2005, became a hotbed of white supremacist activity as large numbers of minorities moved into an area once dominated by whites.



Members of Congress visit Civil Rights Memorial

U.S. Rep. John Lewis explains an exhibit in the SPLC's Civil Rights Memorial Center to fellow Congressman Mike Pence of Indiana. In early March, Lewis led a Congressional delegation on a three-day tour of Southern sites important to the civil rights movement.

LOWELL HANDLER



A settlement has been approved in a lawsuit filed on behalf of migrant workers who said they were not paid the wages they were owed.

SEEKING JUSTICE

Del Monte settlement benefits migrant workers

A settlement agreement has been approved in a lawsuit filed by the SPLC on behalf of migrant farmworkers who said they were not paid the wages they were owed for planting, harvesting and packaging vegetables for subsidiaries of Del Monte Fresh Produce Inc.

The confidential settlement with 63 workers was approved by a federal judge on April 15, resolving the 2006 suit. The defendants did not admit liability. Additional details of the agreement cannot be released under terms of the settlement. The SPLC alleged in the suit that the workers were underpaid while working for Del Monte Fresh Produce (Southeast) Inc. (DMSE) in south Georgia from 2003 to 2006.

"This settlement agreement resolves this case to everyone's satisfaction," said Kristi Graunke, an SPLC attorney who worked on the case. "The workers we represented are pleased they can now put this matter behind them."

According to the lawsuit, the workers were consistently underpaid for their work. Many of the plaintiffs, who are indigent, left their homes and families and spent considerable sums of money to travel to Georgia's

Wheeler and Telfair counties for work.

Some of the plaintiffs were agricultural guestworkers who were brought into the United States from other countries on special H-2A visas that permit them to work only for the employer who requests them. The workers were promised, and entitled to receive under federal law, wage rates set by the U.S. Department of Labor to ensure that foreign workers do not negatively impact the wages of other farmworkers.

Guestworkers have little recourse

Guestworkers, whose visas do not allow them to change jobs, typically have little recourse if they are exploited. During this lawsuit, a federal judge issued a ruling that offers an encouraging precedent for guestworkers in similar cases. That ruling found DMSE could be held responsible for any proven wage violations. It was an important ruling because companies often use labor contractors as middlemen to avoid responsibility for wage violations.

"That leaves someone with little or no assets holding the bag for wage violations. This decision can help stop that trend," Graunke said.

SEEKING JUSTICE

SPLC sues to boost mental health services for Mississippi children

The SPLC and other civil rights and mental health advocates sued the state of Mississippi in March in an effort to improve the state's mental health system for children, which fails to invest in community-based services and instead pumps the bulk of its resources into ineffective, expensive institutions.

The federal lawsuit alleges that the state fails children in two fundamental ways. First, the state discriminates against children with mental illness by unlawfully separating them from their families and communities and by forcing them to cycle through psychiatric institutions that fail to provide adequate services. Second, the state ignores the ongoing needs of children with mental illness by failing to provide federally mandated and medically necessary home- and community-based mental health services.

The suit was filed on behalf of thousands of children in the state of Mississippi who have been denied access to necessary mental health services in their homes and communities, and children who have been subjected to unnecessary institutionalization. It was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, Jackson Division.

"Tragically, the state of Mississippi has created a situation where many parents must choose between hospitalizing their children or foregoing mental health services altogether," said SPLC staff attorney Vanessa Carroll, lead attorney in the case. "We are hopeful that the Department of Mental Health will recognize that immediate action is necessary to save this generation of Mississippi's children from needless institutionalization."

Mississippi's mental health system is defined by an over-reliance on institutions where

hundreds of children with behavioral and emotional disorders cycle repeatedly through hospitals, emergency rooms, acute care facilities and residential centers. When children leave these facilities, they rarely receive necessary follow-up treatment. They can wait months for an appointment at a community health center, and too often the services are inadequate, the lawsuit says.

"It is absolutely possible for Mississippi to have a mental health system built on the strengths and needs of children and families, rather than large, segregated institutions," said Ira Burnim, legal director for The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C. "The state must move to a home- and community-based system of care where children receive more effective treatment and services without being forced to endure the trauma, disruption and isolation of prolonged institutionalization."

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and civil rights attorney Rob McDuff are serving as co-counsel with the SPLC.

Most states keep children with families

Most states have taken steps to ensure children from low-income households receive mental health services without separating them from their families. The lawsuit cites a 2008 report by a state legislative committee that found Mississippi is one of the few states that has yet to follow a national trend, established more than 15 years ago, favoring treatment outside of institutions.

Mississippi, in fact, ranks second nationally in per-capita spending for institution-based mental health care, according to a 2008 report by the Joint Legislative Committee on

Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review. While other states, on average, devote 70 percent of their mental health expenditures to community-based care, Mississippi devotes just 44 percent.

The lawsuit describes the case of J.B., a 17-year-old boy from Grenada County with a history of trauma and abuse. He was placed in the custody of the Department of Human Services at a young age and grew up in a variety of hospitals and institutions in Mississippi. In 13 years in the foster care system, J.B. has been hospitalized at least five times and placed in five different residential treatment facilities and more than 10 group homes and shelters. He has also been locked in a secure detention facility at least a dozen times when his mental health needs and behavior became unmanageable.

J.B. has never received intensive home- and community-based services or therapeutic foster care — services he needs and is entitled to receive under federal law. He has spent the past nine months in a residential treatment facility and remains there for the purpose of beginning a job-training program — an activity that could easily be accommodated in a community-based setting. However, J.B.'s community mental health center does not offer any intensive home- or community-based services. Consequently, when J.B. is discharged, he will once again be forced to go without the services he needs.

"The lack of adequate and appropriate services and follow-up after discharge in the current system all but guarantees that youth will return to the system as adults," said Mary Troupe, director of the Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities. "We are failing our children."

SPLC attorney honored for juvenile justice work

An SPLC attorney whose work has helped bring profound changes to the juvenile justice system in Mississippi has been recognized for her remarkable public interest achievements.

Sheila Bedi, who serves as deputy legal director responsible for juvenile justice and education work in Mississippi and Louisiana, is a 2010 recipient of American University Washington College of Law's Peter M. Cicchino Award. She received the honor at a ceremony at the Washington, D.C., law school on April 13.

Bedi, a 2001 graduate of the school, has extensive experience in civil rights litigation, community-based advocacy campaigns and legislative advocacy. As a former co-director of the SPLC's Mississippi Youth Justice Project, she played a key role in permanently closing the state's notoriously abusive girls' prison. She also spearheaded advocacy for reforms that significantly reduced the number of children imprisoned in Mississippi's training schools and led efforts to establish community-based alternatives to incarceration.

"We're really fortunate to have someone of Sheila's commitment and talent working with us to make a difference in the lives of children," said SPLC President Richard Cohen. "She's a true visionary whose leadership is changing the landscape for children in the South."

Recent SPLC lawsuits against juvenile detention centers in Harrison and Lauderdale counties have resulted in settlement agreements that are transforming



Sheila Bedi (right) smiles at the award ceremony. Also present were Brenda Smith, the professor who nominated her, and Bedi's father, Gurminder Bedi.

two of the worst facilities in Mississippi and protecting the well being of detained children.

The law school named her the Cicchino Award recipient in its Alumni Winner, Domestic Focus category. The winner in the Alumni Winner, International Focus category was Cathleen Caron, who was an SPLC summer legal intern in 1999. Last year's Domestic Focus winner was Will Harrell, who joined the SPLC in January as policy director for Louisiana and Mississippi. He previously worked on juvenile justice issues in Texas.

TEACHING TOLERANCE

Youth's triumph over bullying is subject of new SPLC film

Jamie Nabozny had to plan his every move at school.

The anti-gay bullying by his classmates in Ashland, Wis., was relentless. What started as verbal abuse had become kicks and punches by the seventh grade.

Even before the first class bell sounded, Nabozny was already mapping out his day: He would get to school early to miss the rush of classmates, use hall

door locked, crying. I wouldn't come out to eat. It was hell."

Nabozny's story will be the subject of the Southern Poverty Law Center's eighth Teaching Tolerance documentary and teaching kit — a project aimed at ending anti-gay bullying in schools. The film, titled "Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History," will show how Nabozny stood up to his tormentors and filed

are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and more prone to behaviors such as smoking and abusing drugs and alcohol.

The 40-minute film will offer a powerful lesson for students and educators that anti-gay bullying is wrong. It will help youths recognize the harm caused by bullying and prompt educators to understand their responsibility to help stop it.

"Schools that address anti-gay bullying and harassment are safer for all students," said Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello. "But tragically, anti-gay bullying often goes unchecked on school campuses. This film will be an important tool in putting a stop to it."

The kit will include information for school administrators explaining that, by law, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students must be included in a school's anti-bullying policy.

Nabozny's harassment grew worse over time. Once, a group of boys surrounded him and performed a mock rape in front of a class. Another time he was shoved into a urinal and urinated on. He was once kicked so hard he required abdominal surgery.

"The harassment was daily," Nabozny said.

And the response by school officials was discouraging. One middle school official told Nabozny to expect harassment if he planned on being gay. In high school, a school official asked Nabozny what he did to provoke the harassment. Nabozny's federal lawsuit accused the school

a federal lawsuit against the school district. His suit led to a landmark court decision finding that school officials could be held accountable for not stopping anti-gay abuse. The SPLC expects to begin distributing 25,000 teaching kits to educators in the fall.

Abuse has devastating consequences Anti-gay abuse has devastating consequences. Research has found that gay students feel unsafe at school, are more likely to skip class, have lower grade-point averages and are less likely to express interest in college than other students. They



Today, Jamie Nabozny works in the banking industry. He also travels across the country to speak to students about his experience with anti-gay bullying.

passes to avoid harassment and scope out restrooms where he wouldn't be accosted by fellow students. After his classmates left school, Nabozny would finally make his way home.

"I spent a lot of time thinking defensively, which is a strange thing to have to do at school," said Nabozny, now 34. "Looking back, I feel like I tried to be numb as much as possible to not feel what was happening."

Once he got home, Nabozny was no longer numb.

"The moment that I got home, I was allowed to feel what was happening," he said. "I spent most nights in my bedroom with the

RAPID-RESPONSE NETWORK ADDRESSES LGBT ISSUES

Anti-gay attitudes are a pervasive problem in U.S. schools. But what can be done about them?

A coalition of civil rights groups, including the Southern Poverty Law Center, has formed a rapid response network designed to identify and combat instances of anti-gay bias in schools.

The coalition includes the American Civil Liberties Union, the Anti-Defamation League, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and the Human Rights Campaign. The rapid response network that these and other groups have created will bring their combined resources to bear on school-related controversies that involve LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) students.

"One of the main goals behind the network is to provide information and assistance to any educators dealing with a crisis tied to LGBT issues," said Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello. "But the network would also be there to help parents and students as well."

Recently, LGBT high school students have faced great hostility when they tried to stand up for their rights. In Fulton, Miss., for example,

senior Constance McMillen tried to bring a female date to her prom. After what appeared to be a legal settlement between McMillen and the school, she was tricked into attending a phony prom. And in Wesson, Miss., Ceara Sturgis tried to wear a tuxedo in her senior picture for the yearbook. The school responded by expunging all mention of her from the annual.

These and similar stories have triggered nationwide media coverage of LGBT student issues. The rapid-response network would help create coordinated messages and strategies for dealing with anti-LGBT flare-ups. It would also try to frame the national dialogue in a way that is positive for LGBT students and schools trying to help them.

"These kinds of controversies are only going to become more common," Costello said. "LGBT students are coming out of the closet more frequently and at a younger age than in the past. This is forcing many school districts to deal with sensitive issues. The rapid-response network is designed in part to make sure that they help these kids, not just ignore them or trample on their rights."

district and several administrators of failing to protect him from years of abuse.

"It was my mom who was the one who told me that doing this wasn't just to stand up for myself but that this is happening to other kids," he said. "Nobody was standing up for them, and this was a chance that I had to make a difference."

Winning the lawsuit brought both a sense of vindication and accomplishment.

"To actually win the case and set that precedent meant so much to me," he said. "Both personally — to feel vindicated for everything that had happened — but also to feel like it was really going to make a difference or change things in schools and make schools a safer place for all kids."

Nabozny said he hopes the documentary will empower the students and educators with the ability to make schools safer.

SPLC exposes racist origins of new Arizona law

Continued from page 1

trample upon the civil rights of residents caught in its path," said SPLC Legal Director Mary Bauer. "Quite simply, this law is a civil rights disaster and an insult to American values. No one in our country should be required to produce their 'papers' on demand to prove their innocence."

The law threatens to turn nearly one-third of Arizona's population — those who are Latino — into second-class citizens, making anyone with brown skin a suspect even if their families have called Arizona home for generations, Bauer said. In addition, the law unconstitutionally usurps federal

authority by attempting to enforce immigration law.

The SPLC's Teaching Tolerance program responded by offering teachers a lesson plan exploring the issue of racial profiling.

The principal sponsor of the Arizona law was state Sen. Russell Pearce, a man who in 2006 e-mailed an article to his supporters from the neo-Nazi National Alliance. The article criticized the media for promoting multiculturalism and racial equality, and for presenting the Holocaust as fact. More recently, Pearce has been photographed hugging J.T. Ready,

a Phoenix-area resident who is a member of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement.

Kris Kobach, a lawyer with the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), helped draft the law. IRLI is the legal arm of FAIR, which has a 20-year track record of bigotry and extremism.

FAIR, for example, has accepted \$1.2 million from the Pioneer Fund, a racist foundation devoted to eugenics and to proving a connection between race and intelligence. FAIR President Dan Stein has warned that immigrants are engaged in "competitive breeding" aimed at diminishing white power.

FAIR's founder, John Tanton, has a long personal history of associating with white nationalists. In a 1993 letter to Garrett Hardin, a committed eugenicist who promoted pseudo-scientific ideas of racial purity, Tanton wrote: "I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that." Tanton still sits on FAIR's board of directors. Tanton also operates The Social Contract Press, listed as a hate group for many years by the SPLC because of its anti-Latino and white supremacist writings.

MSNBC's Rachel Maddow cited SPLC research during an April 29 television interview with FAIR's Stein. A combative Stein attempted to dismiss as irrelevant Maddow's questions about Tanton. Rather than address the issues, he resorted to attacking the SPLC.

"I'm trying to get to the bottom of what FAIR is," Maddow told Stein. She added: "These are facts that you can address independent of where you think I've sourced them from."

Stein offered little to refute the SPLC's assessment of FAIR's dubious history during the 15-minute interview.

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Mary Morrow Ravlin: A life of generosity

Mary Morrow Ravlin's life embodied the benevolent goodwill she felt for her community and her country, and she served both well. She further demonstrated a deep commitment to the fight against poverty and discrimination when she made her final bequest to the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Ravlin followed closely the work of anti-poverty and anti-discrimination efforts in

could think of to tell. Somewhere in that anthology of my activity was reference to the SPLC, which she never forgot."

The SPLC's roots in Appalachia reach back to 1984, when its lawyers represented impoverished residents of Kentucky who were fighting an unfair tax system that exempted the coal industry. The suit changed the financial landscape and ensured that schools would receive more than \$1 million annually in additional revenue.

Ravlin proudly called her time in the Navy during World War II a time of service, and she worked hard to raise her children with a servant's heart. Mark remembers the holidays would include his mother buying, wrapping and delivering gifts to The Salvation Army and area churches.

Supporter helped children

In her later years, she returned to school to earn a master's degree in education so she could make a difference in the lives of children. Ravlin devoted her teaching career to mentoring and educating disadvantaged students.

She also became one of the SPLC's Partners for the Future. Partners are special donors who include the SPLC in their estate plans, thereby extending their support for the SPLC's work beyond their lifetimes.

Toward the end of her life, she literally clapped her hands with glee that she could give so generously to SPLC, which she considered a worthy partner in her very personal struggle to achieve justice.



Mary Morrow Ravlin

Appalachia, the South and California's farm fields, and it was her support of those efforts that first led her to the SPLC, whose work she learned about from her son, Mark, a former community organizer in Appalachia.

"Whenever Mother and I talked — by phone, letter or in person — she was deeply interested in my organizing work," he said. "She soaked up every war story I

Scroll of Remembrance

The Southern Poverty Law Center pays tribute to the memory of deceased supporters who included the Center in their wills or other planned gifts. The Center gratefully acknowledges their bequests, received from February 1, 2009, through February 28, 2010.

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Civil Rights Memorial

A Look Back

Historic SPLC lawsuit ended barbaric prison practice

When Michael Austin was sent to an Alabama prison in 1995, he was subjected to a brutal practice from a bygone era — the prison chain gang.

Shackled at the ankles with leg irons, he was bound to four other inmates as they worked outdoors, reviving a dangerous and demeaning practice that had disappeared from the South three decades earlier.

Across the state, chain gangs had been reinstated. Inmates cleared trash and brush along

grade,” said Austin, who was serving time for a drug charge. “Just because a person is in prison, he’s still a human being. A human being needs to be treated like a human being, not like an animal. If you continue, you’ll eventually bring the animal out in them.”

Acting as his own attorney, Austin filed a lawsuit claiming the practice was cruel and unusual punishment. The Southern Poverty Law Center then took up the case, filing a federal class action lawsuit on

crime and everything to do with generating attention for politicians who wanted to prove they were tough on crime.”

Images of the Old South

The chain gangs returned to Alabama in 1995 under then-Gov. Fob James, who suggested reinstating the practice during the final weeks of his gubernatorial campaign. Newspapers across the country and the world wrote about the practice that evoked stark images of the state’s past, a history stained by racial violence and injustice.

A year after chain gangs returned to Alabama, an inmate was shot and killed by an officer after a fight broke out with another chain gang member. Faced with the SPLC’s federal lawsuit, the death of an inmate, mounting reports of injuries and fights, and other security concerns, the state Department of Corrections signed a legal agreement in 1996 to permanently ban chain gangs.

More than a decade later, Austin is out of prison and enjoying life. The role he played in ending the Alabama chain gangs showed him the power of change. He continued his education while in prison and focused on turning his life around.

“I wasn’t going to serve time (in prison),” said Austin, 44. “This time was going to serve me.”

Today, he owns a small business in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and enjoys family life.

“Life is just a bundle of joy to me.”

behalf of Austin and all other inmates who were subject to being assigned to the chain gangs. The SPLC lawsuit not only ended the chain gangs but other degrading practices discovered in Alabama’s prison system.

“These chain gangs were nothing more than photo opportunities for political gain,” said Morris Dees, SPLC founder and chief trial counsel. “The practice had nothing to do with deterring



Michael Austin and the SPLC ended Alabama chain gangs.

highways as chains chafed their legs and drew blood. They endured the sweltering Alabama heat and sometimes the hot temper of the inmate chained to them. And they worried about the unthinkable: a shackled inmate stumbling into the roadway and pulling several men into oncoming traffic, or a fight where chained bystanders are injured or killed.

“It wasn’t designed for any purpose but to humiliate and de-

SPLC lawsuit ends abuses of children in lock-up

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Youths like J.A., a 17-year-old girl identified in the suit by her initials, languished in small cells for 23 to 24 hours a day. Like the other children, J.A. spent her days without reading or writing materials and without mental health or rehabilitative services.

There were no regular classes or recreation.

According to the lawsuit and Lauderdale County’s own grand jury reports, the cells contained nothing but a toilet, sink and bunk bed, and were kept dark most of the time. The toilets and walls were stained with mold, rust and human waste. Children often slept on mats that smelled of urine. The children were not allowed to have soap in their cells to wash their hands or even an extra pair of underwear.

The county’s grand jury has perennially drawn attention to the conditions. A newspaper

quoted a 2002 grand jury report: “We, the grand jury, thought that the juveniles appeared to be in ‘kennels.’”

In addition to its many other reforms, the agreement establishes a Juvenile Justice Community Advisory Board. Composed of community members, the advisory board will seek input about court and facility operations from youths currently or formerly imprisoned. The board also will be responsible for touring the facility regularly, providing feedback to county officials and securing resources for court-involved youth.

A longstanding commitment

The SPLC has a longstanding commitment to protecting children trapped in the juvenile justice system from abusive conditions and ensuring they receive treatment and rehabilitative services in their own homes whenever possible.

Despite widespread misconceptions, very few of the approximately 100,000 children confined in juvenile detention facilities across the country are alleged to have committed serious offenses. Almost all come from poor households. About two-thirds are African American or Latino.

Since 2005, the SPLC has worked with grassroots organizations and local government leaders to achieve systemic reforms for Mississippi’s children. Legislation passed in 2005 and 2006 is now transforming the state’s system to one that relies less on incarceration and more on community-based interventions that involve the entire family. In 2009, the SPLC also supported the successful passage of legislation that will ensure juvenile detention centers across the state are closely monitored and that officials are regularly informed about the conditions at these facilities.

Pentagon tightens ban

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joining the armed forces to acquire combat and weapons training — skills that could be used to commit terrorist acts in the U.S.

The report cited the case of Matt Buschbacher, a Navy SEAL who attended the 2002 leadership conference of the neo-Nazi National Alliance while on active duty. The SPLC alerted military officials to the fact that Buschbacher was producing neo-Nazi recruitment fliers via his Racialpride.com website, but he was allowed to complete his tour of duty in Iraq and even given an honorable discharge.

SPLC urged zero-tolerance policy

In a letter to then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, SPLC President Richard Cohen urged the military to adopt a zero-tolerance policy with regard to extremists. Forty members of Congress wrote a similar letter, as did Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby. But in his reply and in subsequent letters, Under Secretary of Defense David S. C. Chu dismissed the concerns as being unnecessarily alarmist.

Two years later, in 2008, the SPLC reported that 46 members of the white supremacist social networking website New Saxon had identified themselves as active-duty military personnel. The report quoted a racist skinhead who wrote that he had requested an assignment where he could learn how to make an explosive device. “I have my own reasons for wanting this training but in fear of the government tracing me and me loosing [sic] my clearance I can’t share them here,” he wrote.

After that report, Cohen reiterated his request to the Pentagon that the rules be tightened. Once again, the Pentagon said no action was needed.

Meanwhile, an unclassified FBI Intelligence Assessment

in Fall 2008 detailed more than a dozen investigative findings and criminal cases involving Iraq and Afghanistan veterans as well as other active-duty personnel engaging in extremist activity in recent years. “The military training veterans bring to the [white supremacist] movement and their potential to pass this training on to others can increase the ability of lone offenders to carry out violence from the movement’s fringes,” the FBI report warned.

In February 2009, the threat became even harder to ignore. A Marine stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina was arrested and later charged with threatening the president after investigators found white supremacist materials and a journal containing a plot to assassinate President Obama.

Then, in April 2009, a Department of Homeland Security report on the threat of domestic terrorism from right-wing extremists stated that the department “assesses that right-wing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to exploit their skills and knowledge derived from military training and combat.”

With no apparent action being taken by the Pentagon, in July 2009 the SPLC appealed to Congress to investigate the problem. The SPLC presented dozens of additional profiles of active-duty military personnel on the New Saxon website. Those profiles included an individual who wrote that he was about to be deployed with the Air Force overseas and was looking forward to “killing all the bloody sand niggers!”

In September, SPLC officials were invited to brief staff members of Sen. Joe Lieberman’s Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. The Pentagon rewrote its regulations two months later.



Artist’s widow visits SPLC

Peggy Shivers of Colorado Springs, Colo., touches a bust of Morris Dees, created by her late husband, Clarence, and presented to the SPLC after the dedication of the Civil Rights Memorial. Clarence Shivers was a Tuskegee Airman before beginning a successful career as an artist. Peggy Shivers, a longtime SPLC supporter, visited the SPLC in early May.