



**PRESS RELEASE**

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For Information:

Kimberly Moa, 808.203.9945

[kmoa@acluhawaii.org](mailto:kmoa@acluhawaii.org)

**ACLU OF HAWAI'I ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOSHUA WISCH IS LEAVING TO LEAD A NEW NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION**

*HONOLULU:* After four and a half years as the Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Hawai'i, Joshua Wisch has announced he will be leaving in mid-May to lead a new Hawai'i-based nonprofit organization.

Under Wisch's leadership, the ACLU of Hawai'i saw a significant increase in its presence throughout Hawai'i while also doubling the size of its full-time staff, adding communications, development, field organizing, and policy positions that did not previously exist. During his tenure, the ACLU of Hawai'i has worked on an array of critical issues including policing reform, decriminalizing poverty, decarceration, abortion access, and education justice. This includes the recent decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to allow a class action case to proceed on behalf of female student athletes against the State Department of Education for Title IX violations at Campbell High School.

**ACLU of Hawai'i Board President Marianita "Nita" Lopez** said, "On behalf of the Board of Directors, we will miss Josh. He has expanded the capacity and reach of the ACLU in Hawai'i, including assembling an incredible staff that is doing great work for the people of Hawai'i every day. I believe that under Josh's leadership, the ACLU of Hawai'i has become a stronger and more effective advocate for the defense of civil liberties and civil rights across Hawai'i."

Deputy Executive Director Ryan Leong will serve as Interim Executive Director pending the appointment of a new Executive Director. Leong has been Deputy Executive Director of the organization since late 2020. Prior to that, he held leadership positions at the YMCA of Honolulu - Kalihi Branch for ten years, serving as Associate Executive Director for five of those years.

Outgoing ACLU of Hawai'i **Executive Director Joshua Wisch** said, "It has been my privilege to serve alongside the brilliant and hardworking people that comprise the staff and board of the ACLU of Hawai'i. Without them, as well as our passionate volunteers and supporters, none of what we do would be possible. I am proud of the tangible, positive changes we have made for the people of Hawai'i and for the important discussions we have started on critical issues. I know the impactful work we do in the courts, the legislature, and in the community is in good hands with our extraordinary team."

Wisch says he will be starting a position in early June as the President and Executive Director of Holomua Collective, a new nonprofit organization advocating for government policies to improve our economic environment, enabling all Hawai'i working families to thrive so they can realize a brighter future for themselves and their children in Hawai'i. This new organization envisions a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and improved affordability across Hawai'i.

The ACLU of Hawai'i will post a job announcement soon to solicit candidates to apply for the Executive Director position. The organization will conduct a nationwide search and expects the process to take several months.

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*The mission of the Hawai'i affiliate of the ACLU is to protect the civil liberties contained in the state and federal constitutions through litigation, legislative and public education programs statewide. The ACLU is funded primarily through private donations and offers its services at no cost to the public. The ACLU does not accept any government funds*