



**505 Fifth Ave. Suite 901, Des Moines, Iowa 50309**  
**[www.aclu-ia.org](http://www.aclu-ia.org)**

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Contacts:

Rita Bettis, Legal Director  
515-243-3988 ext. 15; [rita.bettis@aclu-ia.org](mailto:rita.bettis@aclu-ia.org)

Veronica Lorson Fowler, Communications Director  
515-451-1777; [veronica.fowler@aclu-ia.org](mailto:veronica.fowler@aclu-ia.org)

## **Victory for Voting Rights: State Drops Voter Purge Appeal**

Des Moines, Iowa — Today the Iowa Supreme Court granted a request from the Iowa Secretary of State's office to dismiss the state's appeal in the case *ACLU of Iowa and LULAC of Iowa v. Matt Schultz*.

In a March 2014 district court ruling, the ACLU and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) won their voting rights case against the former Secretary of State's office. That decision invalidated a series of regulations the Secretary of State adopted to identify, challenge, and remove suspected non-citizens from Iowa's registered voter rolls. The scheme was similar to voter purges in other states like Florida and Colorado, where thousands of voters were wrongfully disenfranchised.

The district court decided that the actions of the former Secretary of State, Matt Schultz, were unlawful. The state appealed, and the parties have been litigating the case in the Iowa Supreme Court for approximately a year. The case was set for final submission later this month.

The state dropping its appeal means that the permanent injunction stopping Schultz's unlawful attempts at a voter purge will remain in place.

"This is an important victory for the protection of voters' rights in Iowa," said Rita Bettis, legal director of the ACLU of Iowa. "It means that Iowans will not have to worry about the voter purges we've seen take effect in other states with a disastrous impact, especially for new U.S. citizens and Latinos."

Joe Glazebrook, an ACLU cooperating attorney in the case, said, "Iowans can now rest assured that their right to vote will not be infringed by the Secretary of State. We are pleased that because of this action, the court order declaring these rules illegal will be allowed to stand, and the unfortunate wounds caused by these rules will begin to heal. We certainly hope that in the future, government officials will keep this lesson in mind and will work towards expanding and protecting the right to vote as opposed to curtailing it."

The case attracted attention and support from important voting rights organizations nationally. Several organizations filed friend-of-the-court briefs in the case in opposition to the voter removal efforts: Project Vote, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP), and Latino Justice PRLDEF had filed briefs in the case.

Bettis said, "We are incredibly thankful to our client, LULAC of Iowa, for its work to advance and protect the rights of Latino voters, and to Joseph Glazebrook, who argued the case so well at the district court level."

Because the ACLU and LULAC secured a temporary injunction early in the case, the

voter purge initiated by emergency administrative rule-making shortly before the 2012 general election was never allowed to take effect.

Jeremy Rosen, ACLU of Iowa executive director, said "This case is part of a broader effort nationally to push back on unfair voting restrictions by politicians that make it harder for people to vote, who are more likely to be minorities, poor people, the elderly, students, and people with disabilities."

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*The ACLU of Iowa is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties for all. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone's civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. We work to assure the rights of all Iowans – from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more – to make sure the constitutional rights of all are preserved. For more information, please go to [www.aclu-ia.org](http://www.aclu-ia.org)*

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