

# Civil Rights and Human Liberties under Threat

By [Prof. Mickey Huff](#), [Peter Phillips](#), and [Andy Roth](#)

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Project Censored

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Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)



Eighteen college and universities worldwide have researched and validated 233 independent news stories for the annual Project Censored review cycle. These independent news stories have seen little if any coverage by the corporate media. The Project Censored network is currently voting on the top 25 most important stories for inclusion in Censored 2014: Fearless Speech in Fateful Times, the latest edition of our annual yearbook, scheduled for release by Seven Stories Press in October 2013.

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Sincerely,

Mickey Huff—Director of Project Censored

Andy Roth—Associate Director of Project Censored

Peter Phillips—President, Media Freedom Foundation/Project Censored

## **Civil Liberties and Human Rights Under Threat**

[“Culture of Cruelty” Along US-Mexico Border](#) Migrants crossing the Mexico-US border face not only the dangers of dehydration, starvation, exhaustion, but also abuse at the hands of the US Border Patrol. In “A Culture of Cruelty,” the organization No More Deaths reveals human rights violations by the US Border Patrol including limiting or denying migrants water and food, verbal and physical abuse, and failing to provide necessary medical attention. Erika Sánchez reports, “dehumanization of immigrants is actually part of the Border Patrol’s institutional culture.”

[Nina Rosenwald: “Sugar Mama of Anti-Muslim Hate”](#) Since 2000, Nina Rosenwald and her sister Elizabeth Varet have donated more than \$2.8 million to anti-Muslim groups and organizations, making her, in Max Blumenthal’s words, “the sugar mama of anti-Muslim hate.” In addition to donating millions of dollars to these organizations, Rosenwald serves on the board of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), America’s largest pro-Israel lobby, and she currently holds additional positions in other pro-Israel organizations.

[Pennsylvania Law Gags Doctors to Protect Oil Company Profits](#) In communities affected by fracking, people understand the environment and their health is at risk. In Pennsylvania, a new state law requires drilling companies to tell doctors what chemicals they are pumping into the ground in order to extract natural gas. Doctors need to identify the chemicals so they can diagnose and treat patients who have been exposed. However, because the companies deem the chemical ingredients they are injecting into people’s backyards “proprietary secrets,” the law imposes a gag on doctors, forbidding them from telling anyone, including their own patients or other health professionals, what chemicals are causing the sickness.

[Double Standards Plague New York Police Civilian Complaint Review Board](#) New York City’s Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) has been operating under double standards. Designed to operate as a fact-finding organization, the CCRB reviews complaints and is supposed to refer “substantiated” cases to the NYPD’s Advocate’s Office, which internally investigates officers accused of wrongdoing. Officially any case that involved a “preponderance of evidence” ought to be forwarded to the Advocate’s Office for investigation, but in practice CCRB reviewers used a higher standard, closer to the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard used in criminal courts. As a result, fewer officers face official investigation for misconduct charges.

[The Unfortunate Reality of Government Whistleblowing](#) A suit has been brought against the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by fired whistleblowers that were concerned over harmful levels of radiation in medical imaging devices for colonoscopies and mammograms. These disapproving scientists were targeted and secretly surveilled as they reached out to journalists, members of Congress and President Obama about the danger. The whistleblowers are now suing the agency for violation of privacy and unjust termination.

[Koch Brothers Stifle Workplace Political Speech](#) In These Times reports that, in early October 2012, Koch Industries sent a pro-Romney mailer to 45,000 of its Georgia Pacific employees, while at the same time imposing dramatic restrictions on those employees’ freedom of expression as individuals. The new freedom of speech for corporations under the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision, coupled with weak labor laws, leaves workers vulnerable to coercive tactics employed by corporations like Georgia Pacific.

[US Readies Five Million Watt Cattle Prod for Crowd Control](#) Following Occupy demonstrations, weapon manufactures are jumping at the expanding government market for non-lethal crowd control tools. A five million watt tactical cattle prod has been developed just for that purpose. Stunning Developments, Inc. showcased the new BattleProd as the world’s first weapon-mountable pain compliance-inducing stun baton, designed for “crowd control applications.” “This thing is just too much fun. I mean, what’s not to like?” a company spokesman told the audience at the 2012 Special Operations Forces Industry Conference, an event sponsored by Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman.

### [High School Students in Texas Forced to Wear Electronic ID Tags](#)

In October 2012 Texas schools went live with a program to use radio frequency identification tracker chips to track students’ exact locations. Students refusing the chips were reportedly threatened with suspension, fines, or involuntary transfers to other schools. Unlike chips used by retailers to track inventory, which activate when scanned by a reader, these chips contain batteries and actively broadcast a continuous signal, allowing anyone with a reader to track individual students and posing a threat to their rights to privacy.

### [1970 Kent State Shootings Investigation Remains Closed Despite New Evidence](#)

Questions have once again been raised regarding the events of the infamous 1970 Kent State shootings upon a 2010 analysis of an audio recording taken during the shootings. At the request of Cleveland’s Plain Dealer, New Jersey-based audio experts Stuart Allen and Tom Owen enhanced and evaluated the tape made by Terry Strubbe, a Kent alumnus who recorded the events with a microphone from his dormitory window. The recording suggests that someone may have ordered National Guardsmen to fire on the student protestors, though officers denied giving such a command.

### [Public Buses Adding Microphones to Record Passenger Conversations](#)

Transit authorities in cities across the country are quietly installing microphone-enabled surveillance systems on public buses that would give them the ability to record private conversations. San Francisco, Baltimore, and other cities are installing the listening devices with funding from the Department of Homeland Security.

### [The Miserable Plight of Immigrants in For-Profit Detention Centers](#)

Big corporations are making billions by incarcerating illegal immigrants. More than two-thirds of immigrants currently detained in the US are held in so-called contract facilities owned by private companies.

[The right to vote? A candid history of voter suppression in the United States](#) Though voter suppression featured prominently in US news during the last election, the issue of who has the right to vote is “a long-running class battle between the wealthy elite and the workers,” reports Christina López. “The biggest form of voter suppression,” she writes, “is that workers and the poor have nobody to vote for who represents their interests.”

[US candidates silent on minimum wage](#) From presidential candidates to the local races, the critical issue of raising the minimum wage was a non-issue in the United States’ 2012 elections. Yet a minimum-wage job means nothing if that wage cannot support a family of three. There are no states in the US where the minimum wage will pay for a two-bedroom apartment. Instead of focusing on these systemic issues, corporate media continue to castigate the Affordable Care Act for its claimed costs to small businesses, and coverage of the insufficient minimum wage tends to be left to the op-ed page, if it’s present at all.

[Nonviolent Protester of Drone Wars Sentenced to Federal Prison](#) Catholic Worker Brian Terrell of Maloy, Iowa has been sentenced to serve six months in a federal prison for his witness against the use of drone warfare. Terrell was expressing his freedom of speech and was participating in a non-violent protest.

[Digital records could expose details and personality traits of millions](#) Research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences shows that surprisingly accurate estimates of Facebook users’ race, age, IQ, sexuality, personality, substance use and political views can be inferred from automated analysis of only their Facebook Likes – information that is currently publicly available by default.

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