

# Opinion Page

## The ACLU is a Positive Force

Vicki Scott

I'm one of the believers that the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) is needed now more than ever. I'm so glad they are around for the rights of individuals in the United States, whether they are immigrants or U.S. born. Some might argue that our tax dollars used to oppose the ACLU are being spent on petty or inconsequential subject matters. Some disagree with the ACLU even being here and shudder when they hear anything to do with it. This really seems to come about when the cases have to do with religion. That's just an observation on my part. All of these things don't dissuade me, though, from feeling that the ACLU is a positive force in the United States. If for no other reason than to bring awareness out that we all have rights, and we are all individuals. We are not all the same when it comes to just about anything, nor should we be, and nor should we think that others should think and believe what we do.

As far as the tax dollars that are being spent, I think it's worth it. There are many other, more valid, reasons to worry about how our tax dollars are being spent. Here are a few examples I found from the year 2000: Boll Weevil Eradication Program (\$16.2 million), Rural Electrification (\$1.5 billion), and Peanut Program (\$500 million/year) to name a few. There is this cool website that tells what our tax dollars are being used for or have been used for. Check it out: [www.progress.org/tcs21.htm](http://www.progress.org/tcs21.htm).

The following are but a few reasons why I believe the ACLU is helpful: criminal justice, disability rights, free speech, immigrants rights, national security, privacy, racial equality, religious liberty, students rights, women's rights, and many more. The ACLU is also working to stop censorship at some levels. A good example of this is with books, such as the Harry Potter series. Parents are capable of overseeing their children's reading. The public, though, shouldn't have a parent (censor) telling them what they should not read. We are adults and individuals who can make up our own minds. Thank you very much. For more information on the ACLU you can go to their website at [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org).

## For the Sake of Our Children

The Anonymous Professor

Lately, thank the good Lord, we as a society have been paying more attention to the media to which our children are exposed. We have expanded Hollywood's film ratings to include PG-13 to more exactly warn parents; we have added small descriptions of the refuse rated R: "due to violence, language, nudity and sexual content";

we've added similar ratings to television shows, using the MA rating to effectively warn everyone away from *Southpark*, obviously the worst show on TV, and from Dennis Franz's buttocks on *NYPD Blue*; we've posted ratings or warnings on music CDs and video games. Despite those ignorant souls who argue that these ratings merely make it easier for our children to shift through the bombardment of media offers and find these horrible shows, CDs and video games -- as if our children would possibly desire to see a movie with an R rating, or *Southpark*, heaven forbid -- we know these ratings work, especially with new technologies like the V-chip giving us creative control over the world. But did you notice that in this ratings shuffle we've missed the books?

That's right. Except for local libraries like the Wilkes County Library where Christian Literature is clearly placed in its own section to make it easy for us to find quality writing -- and, let me point out, no obtuse ancient writings such as Danté's *Inferno*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or St. Augustine's *Confessions* or the liberal new authors such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or C. S. Lewis finds its way into this protected section -- we have no clear ratings of our written media products to help us, as a conscientious society, protect our children from misleading books. Do let me say that I strongly support our public libraries in their endeavors to protect our children from the rubbish that gets published every year. It makes my heart warm to consider what a step the Concord, Mass. Public Library took 110 years ago when it banned that backwards and incompetent text *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (I still can't stomach Mark Twain making an admittedly immoral river rat the hero of a children's novel), and it makes me proud to think that our own public library is following in those footsteps of long tradition. But the libraries alone can't defeat the evil that is daily put before our children in the form of books.

Since we can't solely depend on the libraries, and since the majority of bookstores do not have Walmart's clear moral character and will not refuse to carry offense material, we must act. We must strive to root out evil books and destroy them. Our children are at stake. Thank goodness, some of us are already acting to save the little ones. In New Mexico, for instance, a group of respectable Christian adults took it upon themselves to bring attention to the harm caused by a new series of books: the Harry Potter series. To show how strongly they oppose the evil inherent in these books, these socially conscious citizens exercised their Constitutional rights to Free Assembly and Free Speech and burned Harry Potter for the good of our children. Did the liberal