LIBERTY & LAW
April 2021
Volume 30 Issue 2

HOME FREE:

After Six-Year Battle, This Neighborhood Is Safe

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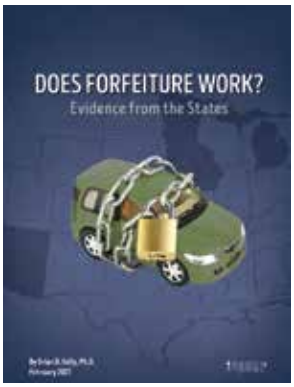

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LIBERTY & LAW

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About the publication: *Liberty & Law* is published bimonthly by the Institute for Justice, which, through strategic litigation, training, communication, activism, and research, advances a rule of law under which individuals can control their destinies as free and responsible members of society. IJ litigates to secure economic liberty, educational choice, private property rights, freedom of speech, and other vital individual liberties, and to restore constitutional limits on the power of government. In addition, IJ trains law students, lawyers, and activists in the tactics of public interest litigation. Through these activities, IJ challenges the ideology of the welfare state and illustrates and extends the benefits of freedom to those whose full enjoyment of liberty is denied by government.

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HOME FREE:

IJ Celebrates Final Victory in Six-Year Battle to Save Pleasant Ridge Neighborhood

BY ANTHONY SANDERS

"I know now that we have more than just a chance. I know that we're going to keep our homes. It's going to be a long battle, but we're up for it."

That's what Charlestown, Indiana, resident Tina Barnes said through tears when IJ joined her and her neighbors to save their homes from a mayor determined to destroy them. She was right on every count.

It was indeed a long battle. It began six years ago when the then-mayor of Charlestown devised a plan to bulldoze more than 300 World War II-era homes—including Tina's—to make way for wealthier residents. There was just one problem: Many longtime residents of this working-class community, called Pleasant Ridge, didn't want to move. And thanks to the strong post-*Kelo* eminent domain protections IJ secured in Indiana, the mayor couldn't just take their land and give it to a private developer.

So he devised a nefarious solution: Instead of taking their homes directly through eminent domain, the city would fine them into submission. City inspectors began issuing a deluge of citations for picayune property code violations, including chipped paint and torn window screens. The fines began accruing immediately, quickly leaving property owners with thousands of dollars in fines and no way to pay. That's when the city would step in and agree to forgive the fines—*if* owners would sell their homes to the mayor's hand-picked developer for a meager $10,000. And the developer didn't have to worry about the fines because the city had agreed not to enforce them once the property changed hands.

IJ's activism team spent months on the ground with Pleasant Ridge homeowners, helping them organize, teaching them to fight for their rights, and keeping their spirits up. When we filed our lawsuit, we won a preliminary injunction that

Residents of the working-class Pleasant Ridge neighborhood teamed up with IJ to challenge an illegal scheme to bulldoze their homes. Thanks to a final victory this December, their homes are safe.

This long-fought battle is a testament to the courage and fortitude of IJ's clients—and to our commitment to stand by their side no matter how long it takes to completely secure their rights.

provided immediate protection for the neighborhood—and we kept winning.

Tina was also right in predicting that, with IJ's help, she and her neighbors would keep their homes. On the eve of what was to be a five-day trial, the mayor was ousted from office, signaling the beginning of the end of his reign of greed and abuse. And finally, late last year, IJ secured a sweeping consent decree victory that ended the mayor's redevelopment effort for good, protecting the homes of our clients and forbidding the city from ever again using fines to force people into giving up their property.

This long-fought battle is a testament to the courage and fortitude of IJ's clients—and to our commitment to stand by their side no matter how long it takes to completely secure their rights. That commitment is made possible by the generous support of people like you. On behalf of the residents of Pleasant Ridge, we are deeply grateful. ◆

Anthony Sanders is an IJ attorney and director of IJ's Center for Judicial Engagement.

FLORIDA WOMAN FIGHTS **$100,000 FINE** FOR **PARKING IN HER OWN DRIVEWAY**

BY MIKE GREENBERG

We all hate getting parking tickets. Now imagine how you would feel getting a ticket not for how you parked on a public street but because an enforcement official didn't like the way your car was parked in your own driveway. And what if instead of a small amount, the government tried to fine you more than $100,000 for this infraction?

After Lantana, Florida, fined **Sandy Martinez** more than $100,000 for parking a few inches outside her driveway, she joined with IJ to fight back against the city's abusive fines.

The South Florida city of Lantana did just that, issuing local homeowner Sandy Martinez a shocking $101,750 fine for a minor parking violation in her own driveway.

Sandy is a working-class mother of three. Along with her children—two of whom are grown—she shares her home with her 81-year-old mother and her sister. Together, four of them hold full-time jobs to help make ends meet, and all four rely on their own cars to get to and from work. Parking all four cars neatly in their relatively small driveway can be tricky, and in 2019 Lantana's code enforcement department cited Sandy for having a car partially on her front lawn rather than parked perfectly on the driveway.

Even though she remedied the violation quickly, Sandy's nightmare was only beginning. That's because the Lantana code enforcement department doesn't just issue a one-time fine when issuing a citation. Instead, the citation sets an amount that accrues every day until an inspector verifies that the violation has been fixed, with the onus on the homeowner to schedule the inspection.

Sandy called to schedule an inspection, but after several unsuccessful attempts to reach someone, she simply forgot to continue to follow up amid day-to-day life. And so the fines of $250 per day—for parking on her own lawn—continued to accrue without Sandy realizing. Over a year passed before she discovered the fine was still running. She immediately started calling again and secured an inspection, but by then that single citation had snowballed to an eye-watering $101,750.

To make matters worse, this wasn't Lantana's first time hitting Sandy with a crippling fine for a minor violation. In 2015, when Sandy was stuck waiting for an insurance claim to process so she could afford to replace a storm-damaged fence, Lantana cited her with daily fines that eventually exceeded $47,000. Another time, the city fined her $16,125 for cracks in her driveway she couldn't immediately afford to fix.

For these three trivial offenses, Sandy faces a lifetime of financial ruin. All told, Lantana has fined her more than $165,000—nearly four times her annual income.

Thankfully, IJ's historic U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Timbs v. Indiana* has breathed new life into constitutional protections against excessive fines. IJ is using that victory to lead the charge against the nationwide scourge of abusive code enforcement fines.

For three trivial offenses, Sandy faces a lifetime of financial ruin. All told, Lantana has fined her more than $165,000—nearly four times her annual income.

And now Sandy, like property owners from New York to California, has teamed up with IJ to fight back. A victory will give her back her financial future while ensuring no Floridian can be sentenced to a lifetime of crushing debt because of trivial code violations. ◆

Mike Greenberg is an IJ Law & Liberty Fellow.

IN AN OASIS, THIS ARIZONA CITY SEES PROPERTY RIGHTS AS A MIRAGE

BY JOHN WRENCH

Amanda Root has lived in the Cloud 9 area of Sierra Vista, Arizona, for more than 20 years on a small lot she owns free and clear. Amanda originally lived in a mobile home but lost it to a fire in 2016, leaving her temporarily homeless. Fortunately, friends gave her a trailer that she has lived in ever since.

Like a handful of her neighbors who also live in trailer homes in Cloud 9, Amanda is grateful to have a safe, affordable option that allows her to live in peace and comfort. And Amanda takes great care of her property—it is well maintained and loved, in contrast to the many abandoned mobile homes around Cloud 9.

But Amanda's peace ended abruptly in July 2020, when she and several other Cloud 9 residents received notices from Sierra Vista ordering them to move their trailer homes within 30 days. There would be no hearing and no right to appeal. What's worse, the city did not target the mobile homes in Cloud 9 that were rundown or deserted—it targeted only the trailer homes it classified as "RVs."

Sierra Vista does not claim that these homes are unsafe for their residents or dangerous to the neighborhood. Rather, its problem is that they are simply in the wrong part of Cloud 9. RVs are zoned to be in one part of Cloud 9 but not the part that Amanda and her neighbors live in. In short, Amanda could live in her home just down the street on property she rents from someone else, but she is not allowed to live in that same home on her own property.

Amanda could live in her home just down the street on property she rents from someone else, but she is not allowed to live in that same home on her own property.

Restrictive zoning laws like Sierra Vista's threaten to drive people of modest means into homelessness and are widely recognized as one of the biggest obstacles to the creation of affordable housing. Amanda, like many other residents of Cloud 9, lives on a fixed income and cannot afford to move, let alone to buy a new home. Evicting people from the only homes they can afford simply to adhere to an arbitrary zoning provision is cruel and irrational.

Amanda Root lives in a well-maintained trailer home on land she owns in the Cloud 9 neighborhood of Sierra Vista, Arizona. Now the city is trying to kick her out of her home for a harmless zoning violation.

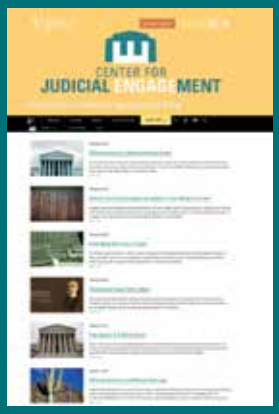
In August 2020, IJ informed Sierra Vista that its order violates the rights of property owners and residents. The city also received intense criticism from the public and media. So the Planning and Zoning Commission voted to consider an amendment to the zoning code that would have allowed Amanda and other residents to continue living in their homes. But the City Council rejected the amendment and chose to enforce its eviction notices.

Sierra Vista's zoning laws are arbitrary and lack any legitimate health and safety rationale. Under the Arizona Constitution, the government cannot enforce them. The state constitution also ensures that cities cannot order people from their homes without affording them basic due process like a judicial hearing or appeal. Property rights are especially important for people with limited financial means and political influence, like Amanda and her neighbors. They joined with IJ to fight for a victory in Sierra Vista that will vindicate those rights—and save their homes. ◆

John Wrench is an IJ Constitutional Law Fellow.

Georgia and **Grandy Montgomery** planned to spend the rest of their lives in Cloud 9, but in July 2020 Sierra Vista said they had 30 days to move. So the Montgomerys are fighting back for their rights with IJ.

Pandemic Diaries



IJ's Center for Judicial Engagement (CJE) has published pieces in a great many places over the years. In 2019, we went a step further and launched our very own blog. In these days of social media, people sometimes forget about blogs, but they remain a powerful way to reach readers, unfiltered by outside editors.

As loyal *Liberty & Law* readers know, CJE educates the public about the proper role of the courts in enforcing constitutional limits on the size and scope of government. The CJE blog highlights examples of judicial engagement in action—and its debut was perfectly timed.

When the pandemic made it impossible to reach CJE's target audience of law students and members of the bench and bar through in-person talks and conferences, we stepped up our blogging outreach, often about issues of judicial engagement and the pandemic itself. As courts wrestled with sudden, drastic COVID-19 restrictions, IJ attorneys offered rapid yet measured analysis of how courts can protect economic liberty and property rights during a public health emergency. This included an in-depth discussion of relevant case law, including the 1905 Supreme Court case *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*: We describe how *Jacobson* is misused and how it ties to the historic economic liberty decision of the same year, *Lochner v. New York*.

These discussions are not just for law students and judges, though. You, too, can participate! Visit ij.org/cje to check out our latest blog posts and to subscribe to our popular Short Circuit newsletter and podcast, which recap the most interesting and important federal appellate decisions addressing individual liberty. ◆

North Dakota home cooks like **Summer Joy Peterson** (left) and **Danielle Mickelson** (right) are free to sell their goods once again thanks to IJ's latest victory for food freedom.

IJ Serves Up a Food Freedom Victory in North Dakota

And Turns On the Heat in Wisconsin

BY TATIANA PINO

After a grim 2020, North Dakota's cottage food producers rang in the New Year with a victory for economic liberty. Thanks to an IJ lawsuit against the North Dakota Department of Health's overregulation of cottage food—that is, food made in a home kitchen for sale—a state court judge has vindicated North Dakotans' right to sell practically any foods from their home under the state's food freedom law.

Here's what happened: Back in 2017, North Dakota jumped to the front of a national movement when lawmakers passed one of the broadest cottage food laws in the country, giving entrepreneurs freedom to sell almost all types of homemade foods directly to consumers. This food freedom gave Lonnie Thompson and his wife—who cannot work outside the home for medical reasons—the chance to provide for their autistic son and two other children from home by selling popular low-acid canned vegetable mixes for stir fries. It gave Naina Agarwal—a recent immigrant from India who frequently sold out of her native Indian vegetarian street foods at her local farmers' market—a sense of belonging in her new and unfamiliar Bismarck community. And for rural residents like Summer Joy Peterson and Lydia Gessele, who envisioned selling hot meals like chicken noodle soup and tater tot dishes to their neighbors, it allowed them to expand their communities' access to fresh foods.

But the state took a giant step backward in 2020 when, despite public outcry, the Department of Health adopted administrative rules that gutted the food freedom law. The rules prohibited the sale of all meals, some perishable foods, and low-acid canned foods. They stifled the state's cottage food businesses and producers' hopes of expansion. But this regulatory overreach would not stand under IJ's watch.

In March 2020, IJ launched a pitched court battle with the Department. In December, a state trial judge ruled that the Department overreached by restricting the types of foods that the Legislative Assembly

We are going back to court to protect our 2017 victory and give Wisconsinites back the freedoms they've earned and deserve—just as we did in North Dakota.

intended to allow under the very broad 2017 Cottage Food Act. This newly restored food freedom means new opportunities for North Dakota's food entrepreneurs and reestablishes North Dakota as a leader in this nationwide movement.

This win also shows the importance not only of innovative litigation but also of tenacity in defending legislative and courtroom victories. That is why, this February, IJ launched another food freedom case in Wisconsin, our second in that state. The first case, filed in 2017, successfully challenged the state's ban on the sale of home-baked goods. But Wisconsin's stubborn regulators interpret IJ's victory narrowly. They allow home bakers, like Stacy Beduhn, to sell cake but arbitrarily prohibit them from selling equally safe fudge and chocolates.

Wisconsin's regulators are violating the 2017 court order and Wisconsinites' rights to due process and equal protection under the law. So we are going back to court to protect our 2017 victory and give Wisconsinites back the freedoms they've earned and deserve—just as we did in North Dakota. ◆

Tatiana Pino is an IJ attorney.

In 2017, IJ helped **Lisa Kivirist** and other Wisconsin home food producers strike down the state's ban on home-baked goods. But Wisconsin isn't following the court order, so IJ is back to defend and expand upon our previous victory.

Common Threads
IN THE FIGHT FOR ECONOMIC LIBERTY

BY MARIE MILLER

An IJ victory in one case can spark other projects that build on that success. That's what happened with IJ's 2015 victory in *Patel v. Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation*. The Texas Supreme Court struck down the state's licensing requirements for eyebrow threaders, putting forth a new legal standard that takes into account the reasonableness of economic regulations and the burdens those regulations impose on ordinary people. IJ brought new cases to spread the economic liberty success—and the *Patel* precedent—to other states.

As a result, threaders in Louisiana and Arizona have been freed from onerous licensing requirements. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has adopted *Patel*'s reasoning, applying it to short-term property managers. And the Georgia Supreme Court has similarly held that the state constitution protects economic liberty. But IJ hasn't stopped there.

In February, we joined two small-business owners in Oklahoma—Shazia Ittiq and Seema Panjwani—to challenge that state's onerous licensing requirements for eyebrow threaders, who face government demands like those struck down in Texas. The Oklahoma Board of Cosmetology requires threaders to complete at least 600 hours of cosmetology schooling, not a minute of which addresses threading. Threaders must also pass two exams that test only practices that threaders never use.

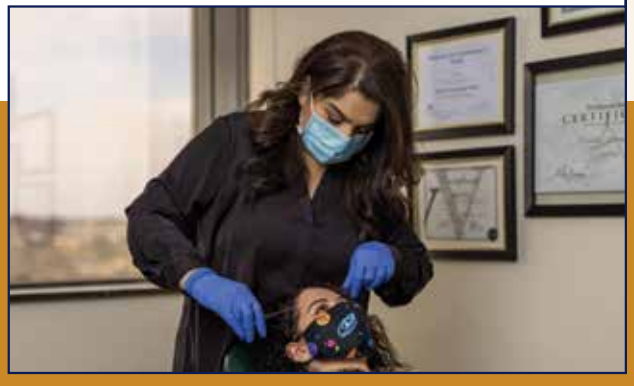
Most threaders can't afford to stop working and complete the required irrelevant schooling—which costs thousands of dollars—and threading business owners can't keep their doors open without the help of their unlicensed employees who know how to thread well. After all, licensed estheticians and cosmetologists in Oklahoma are not taught how to thread in school.

Oklahoma's licensing requirements for threaders are not only senseless; they're unconstitutional. Like the Texas Constitution, the Oklahoma Constitution protects the right of state residents to earn an honest living free from unreasonable government interference. What's more, the Oklahoma Constitution explicitly recognizes an inherent right to the enjoyment of the gains of one's own industry.

Shazia and Seema, like their employees, have been practicing threading since they were teenagers, becoming experts in the safe but delicate technique. They have spent years developing their threading businesses from the ground up, and they deserve to enjoy the benefits of what they have worked so hard to build. We are going to court to ensure they have that opportunity and to continue our nationwide effort to secure the economic liberty of all Americans. ◆

Marie Miller is an IJ attorney.

Oklahoma eyebrow threaders **Seema Panjwani** (left) and **Shazia Ittiq** (center and right) have joined with IJ to challenge the state's onerous and unnecessary licensing requirements and vindicate their right to make an honest living.



In January, a court struck down Charlottesville, Virginia's vague and arbitrary tax on writers—good news for authors **John Hart** (left) and **Corban Addison Klug** (right), who had challenged the law.

CHARLOTTESVILLE AUTHOR **TURNS THE PAGE** ON A **VILLAINOUS WRITER TAX**

BY RENÉE FLAHERTY

Being an entrepreneur is hard enough these days without the government taking ever more hard-earned nickels and dimes. That is especially true when it is trying to tax you just for the privilege of sitting at your desk and writing stories. This past January, thanks to IJ, a chapter ended for one unnecessary license that did just that.

IJ client Corban Addison Klug is a successful author who has lived in Charlottesville, Virginia, for years. But in 2018 the city decided to require a business license to write novels and then assessed thousands of dollars in back taxes against writers for not having acquired the license. As a former lawyer, Corban recognized that something was amiss and partnered with fellow author John Hart and IJ to bring a constitutional challenge.

Charlottesville's rules have two problems: First, they are so vague that tax collectors can go after anyone they want. And they do. Tax officials exploit the vague language of the law in pursuit of more sources of revenue.

Second, not all writers have to get the business license or pay the tax. Virginia exempts many businesses that produce speech: newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Like these businesses, Corban speaks for a living, but he has been targeted to the tune of thousands of dollars. The U.S. Supreme Court has been clear that the First Amendment doesn't permit the government to discriminate based on who is speaking. The Court has also cautioned against laws that favor the traditional press over other speakers. The traditional press, while vitally important, is not entitled to special government favors that are denied to freelancers and other creative entrepreneurs.

This past January, Charlottesville's circuit court struck down the city's tax. The court agreed that the tax was unconstitutionally vague but ruled against Corban on the First Amendment claim. The city plans to appeal this decision, which means that IJ can defend our victory and also make a cutting-edge free speech argument at the Supreme Court of Virginia. Stay tuned for the next chapter in this First Amendment story. ◆

Renée Flaherty is an IJ attorney.

James King's Fight For Accountability Continues

BY PATRICK JAICOMO

On February 25, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Brownback v. King*, the first case in IJ's Project on Immunity and Accountability to reach the high court. While the Justices sided with the government on an obscure issue of jurisdiction, handing it a technical win, they declined the government's request to end James King's fight for accountability. The case—and the most central issue for the purposes of our Project—will now continue in the lower courts.

James' story began in 2014, when members of a state-federal task force misidentified James—an innocent college student—as a petty thief wanted for stealing liquor and empty soda cans. The plainclothes officers choked and beat James. After realizing he was not the man they were looking for, to cover their tracks, police charged James with several serious felonies, and a prosecutor took those charges to trial. A jury exonerated James on all counts.

James' story began in 2014, when members of a state-federal task force misidentified James—an innocent college student—as a petty thief wanted for stealing liquor and empty soda cans. The plainclothes officers choked and beat James.

In 2016, James sued the officers and their employer, the United States. In the years since, James has fought to overcome a variety of special protections like qualified immunity. He succeeded, but before the accountability case could go to a jury, the government escalated its response. It asked the Supreme Court to create a new protection for the officers, arguing that any time someone sues the United States and its employees, the claims against one cancel out the claims against the other. With this opinion, the Supreme Court declined to adopt that new protection.

Instead, the Court focused its analysis on an abstract jurisdictional issue, on which it handed the government a technical victory. But, through a footnote, the opinion denied the government the substance of what it wanted: an end to the case. Instead, the Court cleared away the complicated issues of jurisdiction and remanded the case to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to address the central issue in this case: whether you can sue the United States and its employees in the same lawsuit without one claim cancelling out the other.

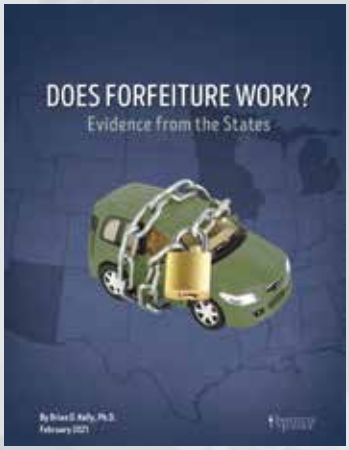
In a powerful concurrence, Justice Sotomayor highlighted the importance of the issue and supported many of the arguments IJ made, noting that "King raises a number of reasons to doubt [the government's] reading" of the law, especially because the government's reading of the statute goes against centuries of common law practice in this country.

The bottom line is that James' case continues and so does the fight for accountability. We will now return to the 6th Circuit with an opportunity to set straight a crucial area of constitutional law—and to hand a victory to James and others seeking only to vindicate their constitutional rights. ◆

Patrick Jaicomo is an IJ attorney.

Justice Sotomayor noted that "King raises a number of reasons to doubt [the government's] reading" of the law, especially because the government's reading of the statute goes against centuries of common law practice in this country.

Mounting Evidence Makes Clear: FORFEITURE DOESN'T WORK



Read the report:
ij.org/report/does-forfeiture-work

Critics, including IJ, have long argued that giving forfeiture proceeds to law enforcement creates improper incentives and a conflict of interest.

BY MINDY MENJOU

As IJ's cases have demonstrated time and again, civil forfeiture is a fundamental threat to the property and due process rights of all Americans. More than that, mounting evidence shows those threats come without any real payoff: Forfeiture simply doesn't work.

The latest evidence comes from a new IJ strategic research report by Seattle University economist Dr. Brian Kelly. Titled *Does Forfeiture Work? Evidence from the States*, the report explores whether forfeiture is an effective crime-fighting tool using data from Arizona, Hawaii, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota. These five states use forfeiture extensively and return all or nearly all of the proceeds to law enforcement coffers, creating a strong financial incentive to forfeit property—and a test of whether forfeiture revenue improves law enforcement's ability to fight crime.

This question lies at the heart of the policy debate over forfeiture. Critics, including IJ, have long argued that giving forfeiture proceeds to law enforcement creates improper incentives and a conflict of interest. Law enforcement counters that this is precisely the point: Forfeiture turns criminals' cash into greater resources to fight crime.

Dr. Kelly's new study shows the critics have the better of the argument. More forfeiture proceeds do not help police solve more crimes and may, perversely, make

police less effective at solving violent crimes. Nor does more forfeiture money appear to thwart the illicit drug trade, as Dr. Kelly found greater proceeds do not equate to less drug use.

On the contrary, the report finds evidence that police really do use forfeiture to police for profit, ramping up forfeiture activity when economic times are tight. A one percentage point increase in unemployment, a common measure of economic health, is associated with an 11% to 12% increase in forfeiture activity.

These findings are consistent with an earlier IJ study by Dr. Kelly, which examined the Department of Justice's equitable sharing program. They are also in line with our recent research showing that New Mexico's reforms ending civil forfeiture and the financial incentive failed to produce even a ripple of crime, let alone the tidal wave foretold by opponents.

That forfeiture doesn't work but police do use it for revenue would be concerning enough at the best of times. But it is particularly troubling now as local governments face pandemic-related budget shortfalls as well as calls to defund police, which could increase police reliance on forfeiture proceeds.

Results are clear: We can end civil forfeiture and the financial incentive without jeopardizing public safety. IJ is working tirelessly to get this message out to legislatures, the courts, and the court of public opinion. Police don't need forfeiture to do their jobs—and allowing them to supplement their budgets using forfeiture is no way to improve police accountability. ◆

Mindy Menjou is IJ's research publications manager.

IJ Court Victory Helps Shine a Light on Forfeiture

As *Liberty & Law* readers know, when it comes to civil forfeiture, transparency is both vitally important and too often lacking. IJ client Carter Walker, a reporter, has been working for years to increase that transparency in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In February, IJ won a total victory for Carter at Pennsylvania's intermediate appellate court—a victory that will prevent Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies from shielding forfeiture records from public scrutiny.

In 2018, Carter submitted requests under Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law to find out what the local district attorney's office does with forfeited property and how it spends the proceeds. The district attorney resisted. Over the course of a lengthy battle in court, IJ won most of the requested records. The Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court finally put an end to the DA's recalcitrance and handed Carter and IJ a complete victory. The court held that the DA's office must release the names of bidders on forfeited property at public auctions, important information that can expose corrupt self-dealing.

IJ's own research shows just how badly such scrutiny is needed in Pennsylvania. Our latest edition of *Policing for Profit* reveals that Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies have brought in at least $459 million in forfeiture revenue over the past 20 years. And thanks to *Does Forfeiture Work?*, we know that such extensive use of forfeiture does not actually help combat crime. IJ's victory will enable Carter, and other Pennsylvania reporters, to continue the vital work of shining a light on civil forfeiture. ◆

Reporter **Carter Walker** sought government records to investigate civil forfeiture practices in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but the local district attorney resisted. So Carter and IJ appealed and together we won a victory for forfeiture transparency.

How Jerusalem Demsas Made Her Gift to IJ Go Viral

BY CAITLYN HEALY

Last summer, Jerusalem Demsas made a donation to support IJ's fight to end qualified immunity. Jerusalem's passion for justice and her commitment to sharing it with the world spurred 220 other donations and more than $22,000 in gifts. This multiplying magic shows the power of crowdfunding: using social media to magnify support for an organization or a cause. We reached out to ask Jerusalem how and why she launched her campaign—and how others can do the same.

IJ: What prompted you to support IJ?

Jerusalem Demsas: After I watched the killing of George Floyd, I felt really helpless. I have found it easy when confronted with systemic problems to lose myself in how big the problem is and how small one person can be in the face of that.

I started thinking tangibly about how I could help, reflecting on a quote by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr: "With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope." One of the clearest ways that [the criminal justice] system is corrupted is the corrosive doctrine of qualified immunity, which allows police officers and other government officials to get away with heinous behavior that no regular American citizen would be able to get away with.

The organization with the greatest impact in this space was the Institute for Justice.

IJ: Why did you share your donation through social media?

JD: There's good research showing that being public about your donations can cause others in your network to give, too. Many people were feeling similarly to me about wanting to go beyond their immediate feelings of anger and grief but were unsure of how to direct their resources and I'm glad I was able to help.

IJ: Any advice for readers who also want to turn their gift into a wave of support for IJ?

JD: You know your community best. Use what inspires you and your friends and families to bring people into the fold. And don't be shy about sharing what you're doing and asking people to join you.

There has never been a better time to follow in Jerusalem's footsteps. As we announced last fall, two longtime IJ donors have agreed to match gifts from new supporters dollar for dollar—up to $1 million. That means that the support of every friend or colleague you inspire to donate will be doubled.

We are happy to set up a custom crowdfunding webpage that you can share however you like and with whomever you choose. To learn more and get started, visit ij.org/crowdfunding. ◆

Caitlyn Healy is IJ's senior development writer.

IJ MAKES HEADLINES

Read the articles at iam.ij.org/april-2021-headlines

These articles and editorials are just a sample of recent favorable local and national pieces IJ has secured. By getting our message out in print, radio, broadcast, and online media, we show the real-world consequences of government restrictions on individual liberty—and make the case for change to judges, legislators and regulators, and the general public.

AMERICAN BANKER

Lenders Embrace Property-Mapping Tech, Defying Critics

February 3, 2021

bon appétit

In Some States, Selling Homemade Food Is Illegal. This Home Cook Fought The Law—And Won.

February 22, 2021

THE TENNESSEAN
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School Voucher Supporters Ask Tennessee Supreme Court To OK Prepping Program For Fall Semester

February 9, 2021

Greenville News
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

SC Justices Considering Civil Forfeiture Accuse [Government] Attorney Of Avoiding Truth

January 14, 2021

Tampa Bay Times

Pasco Law Enforcement Needs More Oversight, Community Groups Say

January 19, 2021

El Paso Times
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Veteran Attacked By Federal Officers Appeals Case To The US Supreme Court

February 6, 2021

LNP
LancasterOnline

3 Matters Of Transparency: The Good, The Bad And The Ugly

February 11, 2021

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Charlestown Settles Land-Grab Lawsuit With Residents Of Low-Income Neighborhood

December 22, 2020

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- Episode 24: Security Guards Assault Innocent Vet at the VA—and Claim Immunity

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- Episode 163: The Law of Johnny 5 Is Still Alive
  - How should the law treat robots?
- Episode 162: I Will Get Credit When I Crush You
  - What happened when a state paid itself money owed to a prisoner?

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Bound By Oath, IJ's legal history podcast, currently exploring why it is so hard to sue officials who violate the Constitution.

- Season 2, Ep. 4: Outrage Legislation
  - How post-Civil War violence led to one of the most important civil rights laws
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