

ACLU Ohio

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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COLUMBUS Today the ACLU of Ohio filed a lawsuit on behalf of Nick Pettit, a Columbus resident arrested on April 24, 2019, for filming abuses by a Columbus Police SWAT team that was serving a search warrant on his street. Police roughed up and arrested Mr. Pettit for recording them and calling them out on their mistreatment of his neighbors which included smacking a compliant teenager on the face. The ACLU of Ohio filed a civil rights complaint for damages for the retaliation against Mr. Pettit's exercise of his constitutional rights to record and speak to the police. Mr. Pettit had a right to not just observe, but also to record and criticize police mistreatment of his neighbors. This all occurred in a public space. When they suppressed his speech, the Columbus Police effectively said to him and his community: we have impunity; we may abuse you without consequences. Nick is standing up to correct that, said **Elizabeth Bonham, Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Ohio**. Mr. Pettit was held in jail for five days before charges were brought against him for this event. On April 29, he was charged for Misconduct at an Emergency. The Columbus City Prosecutor dropped the charges before trial based on insufficient evidence. Mr. Pettit was imprisoned for five days without charges based on the exercise of his fundamental rights. The retaliation and the needless pretrial detention initiated a cascade of traumas in his life including the loss of a job opportunity. We demand justice for our client, **concluded Bonham**. This lawsuit, *Pettit v Morrow et al*, was filed in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

[A copy of the complaint is available.](#)

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