

# Executive Summary

#### As Long as It Takes

Injustice, in one form or another, is the subject of nearly every ProPublica story. Exposing inequities, corruption and breaches of the public trust is at the heart of our mission, and our hope is that a sustained spotlight on our findings will spur impact.

For some of our work published this spring and summer, that impact has been immediate.

In early June, ProPublica and The Press of Atlantic City published a comprehensive look at the New Jersey Legislature's decision last year to cut taxes for Atlantic City's casinos. Despite being on the rebound from the pandemic slump, with record profits, casino operators pleaded poverty to convince the state to slash their tax burden. Three months after the story was published, a Superior Court struck down the law that granted tax breaks to casinos.

Throughout the pandemic, ProPublica has reported on issues with testing. Along with the Nevada Independent and Block Club Chicago, in May we revealed that tests produced by Northshore Clinical Labs, a COVID-19 testing laboratory hired by officials across Nevada, didn't work. Public health officials found that Northshore's PCR tests missed a shocking 96% of positive cases. Northshore declined to comment on their record. One day after our investigation was published,

the Inspector General's Office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <u>expanded an investigation into Northshore</u>, vowing to subpoena documents from Nevada health officials.

In other instances, ProPublica stories dating back several years yielded significant recent impact.

In 2013, ProPublica reported that tax prep companies, such as Intuit, the maker of TurboTax, had successfully lobbied to stop the IRS from creating an easy way for taxpayers to file online for free (a service that many other countries provide). Instead, the IRS struck a deal with the companies to offer their products for free to qualifying taxpayers, while the government pledged not to create its own system. In 2019, ProPublica dug further to expose how TurboTax used deceptive design and misleading ads to get people to pay to file their taxes, even when they were eligible to file for free. In August of 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law a domestic policy bill that includes an unprecedented mandate for the IRS to study options for free tax filing.

Our 2018 series with the South Bend Tribune exposed <u>abuses of power in the criminal justice system in Elkhart, Indiana</u>, including video showing two police officers beating a handcuffed man. Nearly four

**Cover:** Rhonda Fratzke lived near a chemical plant in Calvert City, Kentucky, that was fined a million dollars last year for polluting the air with a potent carcinogen. Soon after, she was diagnosed with a rare cancer. (Joseph Ross, special to ProPublica)

**Table of Contents:** Barbara Weckesser stands in her backyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. She told regulators that industrial air pollution was making her sick, but her concerns went unheeded. (Kathleen Flynn, special to ProPublica)



A mural and growing memorial honor Vanessa Guillén, an Army specialist who was sexually harassed by a supervisor and then allegedly killed by another soldier at Fort Hood, Texas. (Briana Vargas/The Texas Tribune)

Ginger Munro was hospitalized with COVID-19, placed on life support and delivered her stillborn daughter at 27 weeks. (Maddie McGarvey for ProPublica)

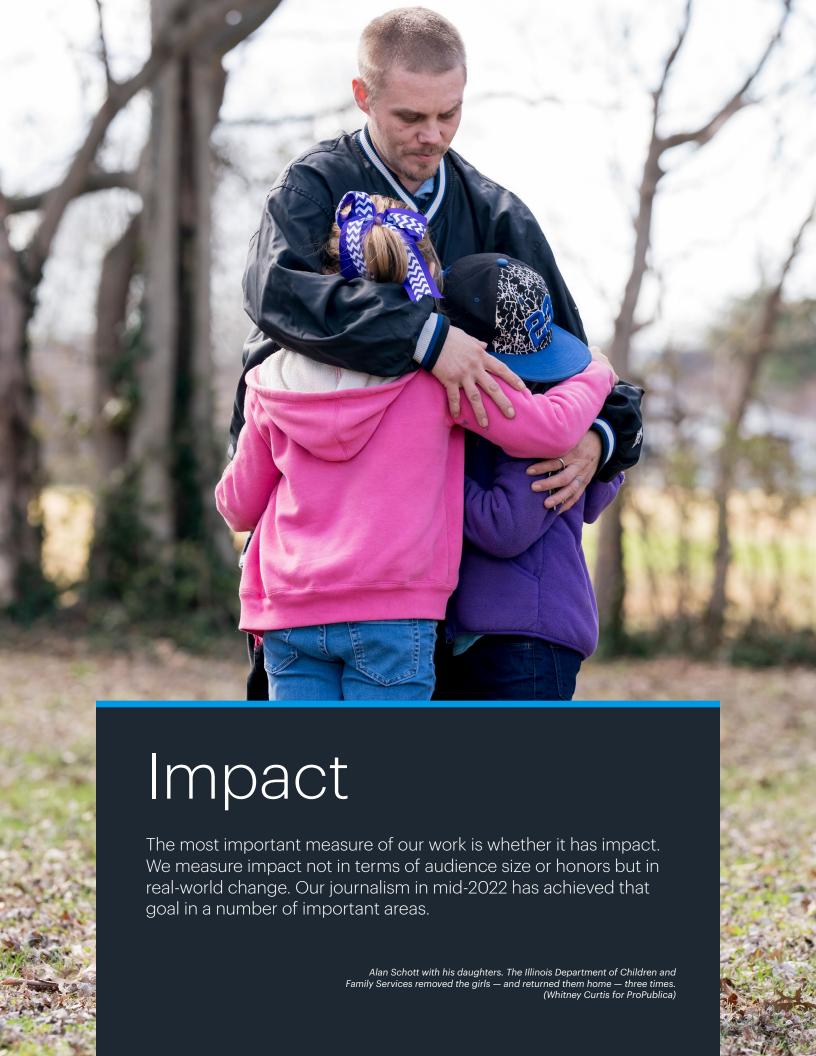
years later, in September of 2022, one of the officers <u>pleaded guilty</u>. The plea deal calls for a 15-month prison sentence and the payment of restitution.

ProPublica first reported in 2016 on discriminatory advertising practices at Facebook (now Meta) that allowed advertisers to buy credit, housing and employment ads that excluded African Americans, Asian Americans and Latinos. Our 2017 follow-up found that the social network had not remedied the problem — and it spurred a lawsuit by the Department of Justice. In June, six years after our initial investigation, the DOJ announced a settlement. Meta agreed to overhaul its ad algorithm system and eliminate features that allow discrimination against groups of people protected by federal civil rights laws.

Over the past four months, our journalists have also written about the <u>devastating toll COVID-19 had on pregnant people and their babies</u>; a <u>Black educator in Georgia</u> who was forced out of her job by anti-critical race theory activists (and similarly chased out of her next job in a neighboring county); an ultrasecretive billionaire who has <u>poured a fortune intoright-wing causes</u>, including a group run by a man who helped guide Trump's Supreme Court picks; how the first woman to lead Barbados is fighting <u>the inter-</u>

section of climate change and rising sovereign debt; and how Army soldiers are more likely to be locked up ahead of trial for drug offenses than for sexual assault under a military justice system that gives commanders control.







#### Government

Mike Kahikina served on the Hawaiian Homes Commission from 2011 to 2019. He was stunned to learn that the federal government was selling ancestral lands to other parties. (Cindy Ellen Russell/Honolulu Star-Advertiser)

# Federal Law Requires the IRS to Study Free Tax Filing Options

Since 2013, a series of ProPublica articles have shown how the maker of TurboTax and other companies that make tax prep software have long blocked efforts to create free online tax filing for all. Not only did the companies successfully lobby against allowing the government to create a free, easy way for taxpayers to file online, as is offered in many other countries, in 2019 we revealed that some even tricked customers into paying for services that they should have gotten for free. Those articles led to investigations by federal agencies and states, as well as a barrage of consumer fraud lawsuits. In August of 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act, a sweeping domestic policy bill that includes a mandate for the IRS to study options for free tax filing.

# Lawmakers Approve \$600 Million to Fix Housing Program for Native Hawaiians

In 2020, The Honolulu Star-Advertiser and ProPublica investigated the failure of the Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to return Native Hawaiians to ancestral lands, as required by a 1921 federal law. Under the program, beneficiaries — those at least 50% Hawaiian — would get a lease from a 200,000-acre land trust and could either build or purchase a home on the parcel. But the department had focused on sprawling homes that are too expensive for many beneficiaries. As a result, the state had awarded just 8,400 residential leases, with a waitlist of 23,000 people. In May of 2022, lawmakers passed legislation to put \$600 million toward fixing the program. The funds will be used to develop homestead lots, acquire land and offer programs like down-payment assistance and rent relief.



Nikki Dougherty White came forward to say Alaska's acting attorney general had an inappropriate relationship with her when she was a teen. (Yoon Byun, special to ProPublica)

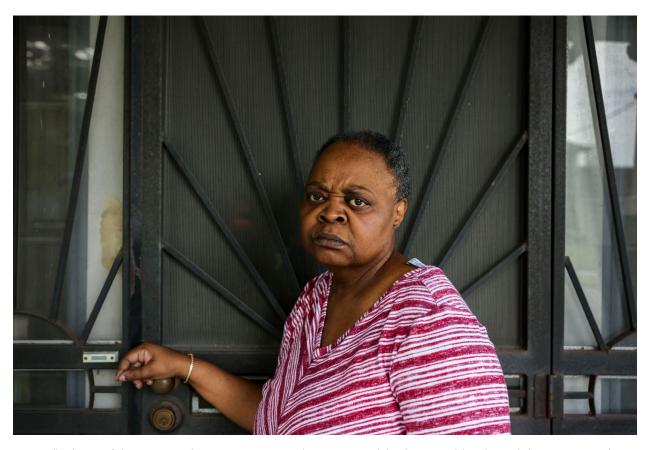
#### Former Alaska Attorney General Charged With Sexual Abuse

In January of 2021, ProPublica and the Anchorage Daily News began asking questions about sexual misconduct allegations against acting Alaska Attorney General Ed Sniffen three decades ago that involved a 17-year-old girl. Sniffen resigned before our story was published, and the state launched an investigation into the allegations. In May of 2022, a special prosecutor charged Sniffen with three counts of sexual abuse of a minor for having sex with a 17-year-old girl he coached on a high school mock trial team. Sniffen disputes any allegation of wrongdoing and has filed a motion to have the charges dismissed.

#### **READER FEEDBACK**

"ProPublica is the best source for honest information available. There is no bias, no agenda; just investigative journalism that hits to the core of the issues."

-Mark in Missouri



Donna Hilliard is one of about 3,500 Road Home grant recipients who Louisiana sued. (Sophia Germer/The Advocate | The Times-Picayune) Celeste Matthews, below, received notice that she was being sued by the state days after her home was damaged again by Hurricane Ida. (Sophia Germer/The Advocate | The Times-Picayune)

#### Louisiana Halts Lawsuits Against Hurricane Katrina Survivors

After Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana gave money to 32,000 homeowners to raise their storm-damaged homes as a way to prevent future flooding. Representatives from the federally funded Road Home program told people they could use the money to repair, rather than elevate, their homes, recipients of the funds said, even though the government later claimed this violated their grant agreements. In May, ProPublica and The Advocate | The Times-Picayune examined how the relief program has inadvertently punished the communities it intended to help. The joint investigation revealed that, more than a decade later, thousands of struggling homeowners are now being sued by the state for using the grant money to rebuild their homes. The lawsuits seek \$103 million from recipients of Road Home elevation grants, the majority of which were given to people in lower-income neighborhoods and

communities of color. Days after the story was published, <u>Louisiana paused its collection efforts against hurricane survivors</u>. Officials also said they are urging the federal government to approve a settlement that will allow the state to drop the lawsuits entirely.







#### Illinois Lawmakers Call for Action on Child Welfare Failures

In Southern Illinois, many families suspected of neglect cycle through the child welfare system, often without getting the help they need to stabilize their lives. ProPublica and The Southern Illinoisan investigated in April how the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services repeatedly sends child welfare workers to the same homes to investigate families for failing to provide adequate food, shelter or supervision, yet it fails to provide adequate assistance. The investigation revealed that there were too few DCFS resources for families in Southern Illinois, and existing resources in the region were more difficult to access — a sign that the system is failing to live up to its mission not only to protect children, but to "increase their families' capacity to safely care for them." Following our reporting, Illinois lawmakers called on Gov. J.B. Pritzker to improve access to services, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment.



Peggy Schott, top left, became a foster parent to her greatgranddaughters after the state took them from their parents. (Whitney Curtis for ProPublica)

Alan Schott, top right, brushes his younger daughter's hair. (Whitney Curtis for ProPublica)

Alan Schott with his children. (Whitney Curtis for ProPublica)





#### Technology

At least hundreds of people were clients of a scheme to get improperly verified as musicians on Instagram. (Lisa Larson-Walker)

## Meta Finally Eliminates Tool That Allowed Discriminatory Advertising

In 2016, ProPublica reported that <u>Facebook (now Meta)</u> allowed advertisers to buy credit, housing and employment ads that excluded African Americans, <u>Asian Americans or Latinos</u> from seeing them. Our story prompted a lawsuit by the Department of Justice alleging that Meta's ad targeting system violated the Fair Housing Act. In June, six years after our initial investigation, the DOJ announced a settlement. Meta agreed to <u>eliminate features that allow landlords</u>, <u>employers and credit agencies to discriminate</u> against groups of people protected by federal civil rights laws.

## Meta Removes Over 300 Fraudulent Blue Checks From Instagram

In August, ProPublica uncovered the largest known Instagram verification scheme. Customers including OnlyFans models, crypto entrepreneurs and plastic surgeons paid five figures to get blue checks on their profiles, duping platforms like Meta, Spotify, Google and Apple Music. This underscored how easily major social, search and music platforms can be exploited to create fake personas. After ProPublica started asking questions, Meta stripped more than 300 accounts of their blue checks, and Spotify deplatformed over 100 fake musicians.



#### Business and Labor

Rolling carts outside Bally's Casino, whose parent company has spent billions since 2020 to build out its online gaming business. The success of online gaming has injected hundreds of millions into the industry. (Kriston Jae Bethel, special to ProPublica)

#### **Court Strikes Down Law That Gave Tax Breaks to Casinos**

In June, The Press of Atlantic City and ProPublica reported how, despite growing profits, casino operators used predictions of "grave danger" to convince the New Jersey Legislature to cut their taxes in 2021. As they pushed for tax relief — denying millions of dollars to Atlantic City, its school district and the county — the casinos' parent companies were also spending billions to purchase online gaming companies, acquisitions that assured even more revenue. In August, a Superior Court judge in New Jersey struck down the law granting tax breaks to casinos, saying that the measure was passed on dubious grounds and violated the state Constitution.

# Clean Energy Lender Stops Making High-Interest Loans in Missouri

A home-loan program in Missouri called Property Assessed Clean Energy, or PACE, lets borrowers finance energy-efficient home improvements, like solar panels, by repaying their loans through their annual property tax bills. In April of 2021, we reported on the program's lack of effective oversight, which allowed private companies to charge high interest rates and put dozens of borrowers at risk of losing their homes. Soon after, the state added consumer protections and oversight to programs that make PACE loans. In August 2022, one of Missouri's biggest clean energy lenders cited these reforms as a factor in its decision to stop making PACE loans in the state.



#### **Company Ordered to Study Possible Harm to Black Heritage Sites**

We published a story in May about how the proposed development of a massive agricultural operation in Wallace, Louisiana — a \$400 million industrial grain transfer facility by the agricultural company Greenfield — could disrupt historic sites, including the unmarked graves of enslaved African Americans and a restored plantation that serves as a museum about slavery. When a historian at the consulting firm hired by Greenfield flagged the potential harms, the firm caved to pressure and deleted her findings from its report. After our story ran, the agency that oversees federal preservation law wrote a strongly worded letter to the Army Corps of Engineers demanding action. Days later, the Army Corps concluded that the report commissioned by Greenfield was "insufficient" and took the rare step of forcing the company to produce a new survey of its impacts on historic sites. Greenfield has said that its project will not harm any cultural sites.



Clementine Grows, top, at Willow Grove Cemetery, where many of her relatives are buried. It is among the historic sites facing potential harm from Greenfield's plans to build a grain elevator. (Akasha Rabut, special to ProPublica)

The field where the agricultural company Greenfield plans to build. (Akasha Rabut, special to ProPublica)

Sisters Jo and Joy Banner, bottom right, with a rendering of how the grain elevator will look behind their community. (Akasha Rabut, special to ProPublica)







Portable generators are among the deadliest consumer products. (Laila Milevski/ProPublica)

#### **Congress Demands Probe Into Right-Wing Think Tank's Church Status**

The Family Research Council, a Washington, D.C.based nonprofit that advocates for Christian-right policies, successfully petitioned the IRS to change its classification from a tax-exempt charity to a church, ProPublica reported in July. The organization, which in recent years advocated to overturn Roe v. Wade and pushed for anti-LGBTQ legislation, joins a growing number of activist groups changing their tax status as a way to evade financial scrutiny. The Research Council is no longer required to file a public tax return, which would disclose the names of board members, large payments to independent contractors and grants the organization has made. Unlike with other charities, IRS investigators can't initiate an audit on a church unless a high-level Treasury Department official has approved the investigation. Citing Pro-Publica's investigation, 40 members of Congress sent a letter to the IRS and Treasury urging swift review of the designation and urging the IRS to improve its review process to find abuses of the tax code.

# Congress Investigates Portable Generator Manufacturers After Carbon Monoxide Deaths

When a deadly winter storm hit Texas in February 2021, leaving millions of residents without electricity in freezing weather, a series by ProPublica, The Texas

Tribune and NBC News showed how it unleashed a carbon monoxide poisoning catastrophe. At least 17 people died from inhaling the odorless gas after residents fired up generators, grills, fireplaces and car engines to keep their families warm. One story in the series detailed how portable generators are among the deadliest consumer products, with people left vulnerable by a government that fails to enforce safety rules and an industry that's allowed to regulate itself. Citing ProPublica's reporting, in June of 2022 the House Committee on Oversight and Reform opened an investigation into why many generators have not received potentially lifesaving safety upgrades.

#### **READER FEEDBACK**

"I am impressed with the number of times an official inquiry and real change follow a ProPublica investigative report."

#### -Sylvia in Illinois





#### **Environment**

Students at Julia Bird Jones Muller Elementary School in Laredo, Texas, could be at high risk for cancer because of ethylene oxide emissions from a nearby plant. (Kathleen Flynn for ProPublica and The Texas Tribune)

Yaneli Ortiz, below, seen at her quinceañera, was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia, a cancer that's been linked to ethylene oxide exposure. (Kathleen Flynn, special to ProPublica)

#### **Laredo, Texas, Moves to Monitor Toxic Air Pollution**

Across the country, at least 160 industrial facilities emit ethylene oxide, a carcinogenic chemical found in common household products and used for sterilizing medical equipment. As ProPublica and The Texas Tribune reported in 2021, the cancer risk from the pollutant is particularly acute in Laredo, Texas, home to a factory that emits far more ethylene oxide than any other facility in the country. In August, the Laredo City Council approved \$105,360 for a new air monitoring program. The Webb County Commissioners Court also gave \$35,000 to an environmental coalition as part of a larger effort to conduct air monitoring at the five schools that are closest to the polluting plant.





#### Criminal Justice

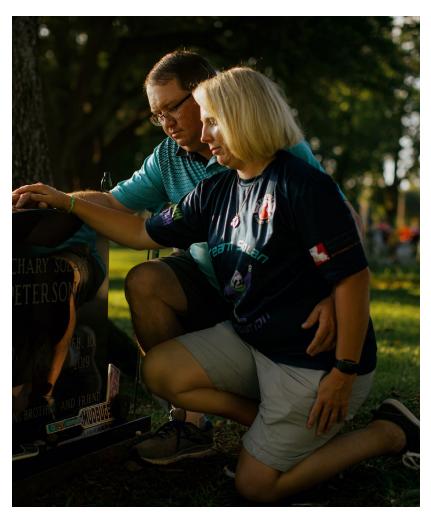
Jacorious Brinkley was incarcerated as a child at the Rutherford County juvenile detention center after being deemed a "true threat." (Stacy Kranitz, special to ProPublica)

#### Police Officer Pleads Guilty to Beating Handcuffed Man

A 2018 series with the South Bend Tribune in Indiana uncovered shocking misconduct by members of the Elkhart County Police Department, including an incident in which two police officers repeatedly punched a man who was handcuffed to a chair. The officers were merely reprimanded by the police chief for going "a little overboard," and the incident only became public after ProPublica and the Tribune began investigating and obtained a video. In late August of 2022, one of the police officers pleaded guilty in a federal civil rights case. The plea agreement calls for officer Cory Newland to be sentenced to 15 months in prison and to pay a yet-to-be-determined amount in restitution.

#### **Detention Center That Illegally Jailed Kids Gets Oversight Board**

The juvenile justice system in Rutherford County, Tennessee, illegally arrested and jailed children for years, locking up kids in nearly half the cases referred to juvenile court, ProPublica and Nashville Public Radio found in a 2021 investigation. Children in Rutherford County were often jailed for vague "crimes" that did not exist, and many were held in solitary confinement. The county was also jailing a disproportionately high percentage of Black children. After calls for more oversight and accountability, in June of 2022 the Rutherford County Juvenile Detention Center announced that it will be overseen by a five-member board rather than the county's juvenile court judge.





#### **Louisiana Limits Solitary Confinement** for Teens

In a March investigation co-reported with The Marshall Project and NBC News, we exposed deplorable conditions at the Acadiana Center for Youth at St. Martinville, Louisiana, a high-security lockup for teenagers. Teens at the center were kept in solitary confinement around the clock and shackled when they were allowed to leave their cells. They did not receive court-ordered counseling, nor any education, in violation of state and federal law. In June, Louisiana's governor signed a law placing strict limits on the use of solitary confinement for youth in the state. The new law limits young people to no more than eight hours in isolation unless they continue to pose a physical threat to themselves or others. The state juvenile justice agency is also required to, within the first hours of placing children in solitary confinement, check on their mental health and to notify their parents or guardians.



Ronnie and Bridget Peterson, top, at the grave of their 13-yearold son, Solan Peterson, who died by suicide while in solitary confinement in Louisiana's Ware Youth Center in 2019. (Bryan Tarnowski for ProPublica, NBC News and The Marshall Project)

Rebecca McDonald, middle, in her son's bedroom in Glenmora, Louisiana. The 16-year-old boy is being held at the Acadiana Center for Youth at St. Martinville. (Bryan Tarnowski for NBC News, The Marshall Project and ProPublica)

The Acadiana Center for Youth at St. Martinville (Bryan Tarnowski for NBC News, The Marshall Project and ProPublica)



Twilight in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, where at least 300 people were arrested for violating COVID-19 orders in the first six weeks of the pandemic. (Miguel Gutierrez Jr./The Texas Tribune)

#### Michigan Proposes 32 Juvenile Justice Reforms

In July of 2020, ProPublica partnered with the Detroit Free Press and Bridge, a nonprofit newsroom in Michigan, to report on Grace, a 15-year-old who was sent to juvenile detention for not doing her online coursework during the pandemic. Our story brought national attention to her plight, leading to her release that same month and the creation of the Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform to review Michigan's juvenile justice system. In July of 2022, the task force made 32 recommendations that aim to transform what happens when young people get in trouble with the law, including keeping low-level offenses out of the courts, limiting when children can be detained and ensuring juveniles have access to attorneys trained in juvenile matters. Other proposed changes would eliminate most fines and fees charged by juvenile courts and provide more oversight of residential facilities.

#### **Civil Rights Lawsuit Filed Over Teen's Arrest in Early Days of Pandemic**

As the pandemic roared across the country in 2020, governments along the Texas-Mexico border took a hard line to limit COVID-19's spread. A December 2020 investigation with The Texas Tribune found that police were often deployed to enforce emergency stayhome orders, resulting in hundreds jailed and nearly 2,000 people ticketed. Our investigation featured Socrates Shawn, a high school student arrested for driving between his parents' houses as part of a joint-custody agreement. Citing our investigation, in June of 2022 the Texas Civil Rights Project filed a federal lawsuit against the city of Progreso and two police officers on behalf of Socrates, alleging that the police had no reasonable suspicion to stop him and lacked probable cause for arrest. Attorneys representing Progreso have disputed the claims.



None of the four candidates for Revere, Massachusetts, police chief scored "excellent" or "very good" on an assessment for the job. (Jesse Costa/WBUR) Youness Elalam, below, says he was disciplined more harshly than other officers because he is Muslim. (Jesse Costa/WBUR)

#### Federal Officials Criticize City's Ban on Hiring Outsiders for Police Chief

When the mayor of Revere, Massachusetts, began looking for a new police chief in 2017, he wanted a leader to clean up what he described as a "toxic culture" within the department. An investigation by WBUR and ProPublica in August, however, showed that a city ordinance forced him to promote from within, despite none of the internal candidates passing an assessment for the job. With no outside candidates allowed for consideration, the mayor promoted David Callahan, who as a lieutenant had been accused of bullying and sexually harassing a patrolman and creating "an atmosphere of fear" in the department. Callahan disputes the allegations. Days after the story was published, both U.S. senators from Massachusetts criticized the city's ban on hiring outsiders as police chiefs, while the state's top federal law enforcement official said that the restriction may violate civil rights law by making it harder for women and people of color to attain leadership positions.





#### **Immigration**

Concertina wire recently installed in Eagle Pass, Texas, by the National Guard as part of Operation Lone Star. (Verónica G. Cárdenas for ProPublica/The Texas Tribune)

Texas Department of Public Safety special agents, below, apprehend five undocumented immigrants from Honduras who were caught on private property in Kinney County as part of Operation Lone Star. (Verónica G. Cárdenas for ProPublica/The Texas Tribune)

#### Justice Department Investigates Texas Border Initiative for Civil Rights Violations

In March, ProPublica, The Texas Tribune and The Marshall Project published a joint investigation into Operation Lone Star, a multibillion-dollar border security initiative launched by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott that deploys thousands of Department of Public Safety troopers and National Guard members. As state officials touted the operation's accomplishments — thousands of arrests, multiple drug seizures and numerous referrals of unauthorized immigrants for deportation — we found that these numbers included crimes with no connection to the border. And while Abbott claimed that Operation Lone Star was aimed at Mexican cartels and smugglers, prosecutions of

lone immigrant men on criminal trespassing charges make up the largest share of the initiative's arrests. In July, we reported that the <u>Department of Justice</u> is investigating Operation Lone Star for alleged civil rights violations.





#### Education

After 16-year-old Christian, center, was ticketed for possession of an electronic smoking device at school, he and his mother, Ashlee Dennison, far right, were called to a hearing where they faced a police lieutenant and two adjudication officials. (Armando L. Sanchez/Chicago Tribune)

Jennifer Fee, below, and her 17-year-old child, Blake, in the kitchen of their home. Blake received a ticket for having a vaping device at school. (Armando L. Sanchez/Chicago Tribune)

#### Illinois Investigates Possible Civil Rights Violations in Student Ticketing

Across Illinois, police ticket thousands of students a year for vaping, disorderly conduct, truancy and other violations that would have previously only landed them in the principal's office. In April, an investigation by ProPublica and the Chicago Tribune found that, despite a state law banning schools from fining students for disciplinary reasons, officials are referring students to the police and throwing children as young as 10 into a legal system designed for adults. Since our reporting, several schools halted or are reevaluating their student ticketing policies, while the Illinois comptroller's office barred local governments from using a state program to collect debt from students who have been ticketed for truancy. In May, the

<u>Illinois</u> attorney general's office opened an investigation to determine if a suburban Chicago school district violated students' civil rights when police ticketed them for minor misbehavior.





#### Healthcare

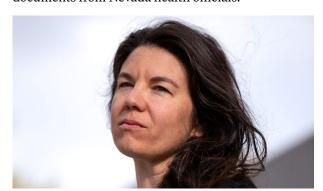
Daniel Fishel for ProPublica

Heather Kerwin, below, epidemiology program manager for the Washoe County Health District in Nevada, who investigated Northshore Clinical Labs' discordant test results. (Emily Najera for ProPublica)

## **Investigators Expand Probe of COVID Testing Company with 96% Error Rate**

In May, our reporting with the Nevada Independent and Block Club Chicago revealed that tests produced by Northshore Clinical Labs, a COVID-19 testing laboratory hired by state and local officials across Nevada, didn't work. As evidence mounted that Northshore was telling infected people that they had tested negative for the virus, government managers in Nevada ignored their own scientists' warnings and expanded the lab's testing beyond its initial schools to the general public. Run by three men with no apparent clinical laboratory experience and a history of fraud allegations, Northshore used political connections to fast-track its state laboratory license application and secure testing agreements. Northshore declined to comment on their record. Within days of our in-

vestigation, <u>federal authorities expanded an ongoing investigation into Northshore to include its operations in Nevada</u>. Citing our reporting, the Inspector General's Office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicated it planned to subpoena documents from Nevada health officials.





# Recognition for Our Work

This year ProPublica was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for feature writing and local reporting, our 14th and 15th Pulitzer finalist designations in 14 years of publishing. Other awards this spring and summer included the following:

> Sheri and Steven Moniz Jr. stand in front of their home, which they bought with the help of a federal grant for Native Hawaiians but came with serious construction problems. (Cindy Ellen Russell/Honolulu Star-Advertiser



South Bay, Florida, Mayor Joe Kyles watches a sugar cane burn in the distance. (Thomas Cordy / The Palm Beach Post)

Our collaboration with Nashville Public Radio's WPLN News on the **juvenile justice system in Rutherford County, Tennessee**, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing. It won the Society of Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi Award for feature reporting.

"Black Snow: Big Sugar's Burning Problem," a project by The Palm Beach Post and ProPublica, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for local reporting. It won the National Association of Black Journalists' Salute to Excellence Award for news speciality and received honorable mentions in the Society of Environmental Journalists Award for explanatory reporting and the National Press Club's Joan M. Friedenberg Award.

"Birth Rights," a ProPublica Local Reporting Network project by the Miami Herald, won the RFK Book and Journalism Awards' grand prize and the contest's domestic print category, in addition to winning the National Press Club's Consumer Journalism Award in the newspaper category.

"Postcard From Thermal: Surviving the Climate Gap in Eastern Coachella Valley," a collaboration with Time, Truly CA and Univision Noticias, is nominated for three News & Documentary Emmy Awards in the categories of Outstanding Science, Technology or Environmental Coverage; Outstanding Video Journalism: News; and Outstanding Editing: News. It won the John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism and received an honorable mention in the Society of Environmental Journalists Award for outstanding feature story.

"American Insurrection," a documentary by ProPublica, PBS FRONTLINE and the University of California, Berkeley's Investigative Journalism Program, is nominated for two News & Documentary Emmy Awards for Best Documentary and Outstanding Current Affairs Documentary. It won the Edward R. Murrow Award for feature documentary and, as part of ProPublica's broader package on extremism, the Edward R. Murrow Award for continuing coverage.

"The Secret IRS Files" is nominated for a News & Documentary Emmy Award for Outstanding Graphic Design and Art Direction: News. It won the Scripps Howard Award for excellence in business/financial reporting and the Society of Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi Award for investigative reporting.

"Sacrifice Zones: Mapping Cancer-Causing Industrial Air Pollution," a collaboration with The Texas Tribune and Mountain State Spotlight, won the Scripps Howard Award for excellence in environmental reporting, the Edward R. Murrow Award for excellence in innovation and the Society of Environmental Journalists' Kevin Carmody Award for Outstanding Investigative Reporting, plus it was a finalist for the Scripps Howard Impact Award and the National Association of Black Journalists' Salute to Excellence Award for digital media.

"The Liberty Way: How Liberty University Discourages and Dismisses Students' Reports of Sexual Assaults" won a National Award for Education Reporting for investigative reporting.

"Unchecked: America's Broken Food Safety System" won the National Press Club's Consumer Journalism Award in the periodical category.

"Massacre in El Salvador," a documentary by ProPublica, PBS FRONTLINE and Retro Report, won the National Press Club's Edwin M. Hood Award.

"Lost Inside America's Shadow Foster System" won the Society of Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi Award for magazine writing.

A series with The New York Times on **how China spreads propaganda** won the Society of Publishers in Asia's Award for Editorial Excellence in the category of journalistic innovation.

"White Parents Rallied to Chase a Black Educator Out of Town. Then, They Followed Her to the Next One" won the Sidney Hillman Foundation's Sidney Award for July 2022.

A collaboration between ProPublica and WBUR about **civil asset forfeiture in Massachusetts** won the Asian American Journalists Association's Journalism Excellence Award for investigative reporting.

"**Promised Land**" by ProPublica and the Honolulu Star-Advertiser won the Asian American Journalists Association's Journalism Excellence Award in the investigative reporting and the Pacific Islander reporting categories.







Brittany Madison, top, gives her 3-year-old niece, K'ryah, an asthma treatment, which K'ryah takes twice a day. (Kathleen Flynn for ProPublica)

The short film "Massacre in El Salvador" showed the ongoing fight for justice for victims of the 1981 attack on the village of El Mozote and surrounding areas. (FRONTLINE (PBS)/Retro Report)

Marlena Brown-Clemente holds a portrait of her father, Arthur Brown Sr., who died in 2016. She inherited his rights to land in Kauluokahai, Hawaii. (Cindy Ellen Russell/Honolulu Star-Advertiser)



Tammy Blackwell, director of the Marshall County Public Library in Calvert City, Kentucky. The town has air monitors, but the pollution is only growing. (Kathleen Flynn for ProPublica)

Reporting on **COVID-19's hidden toll on Black and Latino Americans** won the Chicago Headline Club's Peter Lisagor Award for best online health or science reporting on COVID-19.

A collaboration with The Maine Monitor on **how Maine handles legal services for poor people** won the National Newspaper Association Foundation's Better Newspaper Editorial Contest in the category of best investigative or in-depth story or series.

"Gilded Badges: How New Jersey Cops Profit From Police Unions and Avoid Accountability" by the Asbury Park Press and ProPublica won the Deadline Club Award in the newspaper or digital beat reporting category.

"Invisible Threat: Carbon Monoxide's Unchecked Toll," a collaboration between ProPublica, The Texas Tribune and NBC News, won the Headliners Foundation of Texas' Charles Green Award for Investigative Report of the Year.

"People Over 75 Are First in Line to Be Vaccinated Against COVID-19. The Average Black Person Here Doesn't Live That Long," a ProPublica Local Reporting Network project by MLK50: Justice Through Journalism, is a finalist for the National Association of Black Journalists' Salute to Excellence Award for Single Story: News.

ProPublica reporter Lisa Song was honored with the **SEAL Environmental Journalism Award**.

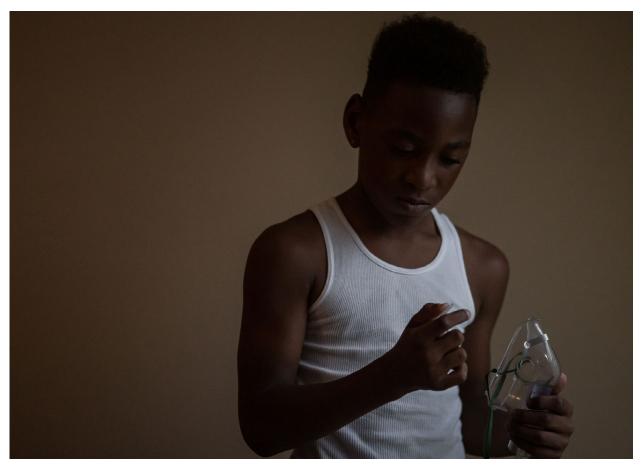




Colville tribal member Shelly Boyd looks over the waters covering the historical fishing grounds of Kettle Falls, Washington. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff/OPB)

#### Partner Spotlight

- In the Pacific Northwest, the government promised Native Americans in the Columbia River Basin that their tribes' access to salmon, and their way of life, would be preserved. **Oregon Public Radio**'s Tony Schick found that the government failed to sustain fish populations at healthy levels, and that nowhere near enough salmon were surviving. ProPublica data reporter Irena Hwang backed up those findings by analyzing publicly available data, which she brought to life with her own (anatomically accurate and factchecked) original watercolor illustrations of disappearing fish breeds.
- ProPublica partnered with **The Texas Tribune** and **The Marshall Project** for an investigation into the border initiative Operation Lone Star. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott boasted that the multibillion-dollar initiative had resulted in thousands of arrests, multiple drug seizures and numerous referrals of unauthorized
- immigrants for deportation. Yet, after collecting and combing through data from state agencies, the joint reporting team revealed that the numbers used to demonstrate the program's "success" included crimes with no connection to the border and work conducted by troopers stationed in the area before the operation began.
- The police department in Vallejo, California, has held tightly to its power over the town for decades. For his ProPublica Local Reporting Network project, **Open Vallejo**'s Laurence Du Sault looked into killings by the police department and the investigations of those killings. The reporting team's first-of-its-kind review of the Vallejo Police Department found a pattern of delayed and incomplete investigations with dire consequences: six fatal shootings between 2011 and 2020 involved an officer using deadly force while still under investigation for a prior killing.



A child prepares a nebulizer treatment for his mother at their home in Pahokee, Florida, a region affected by sugar cane burning. (Thomas Cordy / The Palm Beach Post)

#### All Partners, May-August 2022

- Advocate
- Anchorage Daily News
- ARD German TV
- Chicago Tribune
- THE CITY
- Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- The Kansas City Beacon
- KPCC
- LAist
- **■** The Lever
- The Marshall Project
- Mountain State Spotlight
- Nashville Public Radio
- NBC News
- The New Bedford Light

- Open Vallejo
- Oregon Public Broadcasting
- Outlier Media
- Press of Atlantic City
- Rocky Mountain PBS
- South Bend Tribune
- The Southern Illinoisan
- Sun Herald
- The Texas Tribune
- WBEZ
- WBUR
- WWL-TV (New Orleans)
- WTTW/Chicago PBS

New partners marked in **bold**.