



Media Release

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ACLU of Montana hires Legal Director Jim Taylor

Taylor brings extensive background in public defense and civil liberties law

MISSOULA, MT — Attorney Jim Taylor is taking the helm as the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana Legal Director.

Taylor, a graduate of Carroll College and the University of Montana School of Law, was most recently in private practice in Missoula, but has also worked overseas for the Ministry of Agriculture in Kabul, Afghanistan, served as the training director for International Bridges to Justice in Beijing, China, and was the managing attorney in the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Tribal Defenders Office. He was named to the roster of Fulbright Specialists in 2008, and completed a Fulbright Specialist placement at the University of Pecs in Hungary in 2011. His international work has also taken him to India, Georgia, UAE, Japan, and Vietnam.

Taylor served on the Montana Public Defender Commission from 2005-2011, and was the first Chairman of the Commission. He has served as the Coordinator of International Opportunities for the University of Montana School of Law, and currently serves as the Director of the Mansfield Legal Reform Initiative at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center at the University of Montana. He has written numerous articles about criminal justice and international responses to terrorism.

"Jim brings ACLU a breadth of experience as a manager and as an attorney having worked for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, in private practice, and for the Mansfield Center," said ACLU of Montana Executive Director Scott Crichton. "He also served as the first commissioner for the Montana Office of the Public Defender. We are fortunate to have him on board working in tandem with Staff Attorney Anna Conley."

Under a transition plan recently approved by the Board of Directors. Jon Ellingson will remain as the Outgoing Legal Director for the next few months, while Jim Taylor works as the Incoming Legal Director.

"I'm excited about the prospects going forward and thank former legal director Jon Ellingson for his service," Crichton said.

Taylor said he has long respected the ACLU's work on racial justice, rights of immigrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality, reproductive freedom, national security, and individual rights.

"I have to believe in the work that I do. Getting a chance to litigate important constitutional issues is a great opportunity," he said. "I'm interested in doing litigation that matters. Working with the legal team at the ACLU of Montana gives me the chance to do just that. I have great respect for the work that Jon Ellingson and Anna Conley have done, with the support of Krystel Pickens, and the rest of the group. We have an exceptional legal team, and there is much we hope to accomplish in the defense of civil liberties."

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