



**SOUTHERN COALITION
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

2024

IMPACT REPORT

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Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, I'm filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable progress we've made together at Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) this year. It has been a testament to the power of collective action and an unwavering commitment to justice for all.

From important steps in the ongoing fight for equitable rezoning in our Environmental Justice practice to releasing our "Reframing Public Safety" series in our Justice System Reform initiative as well as continuing the fight against voting impediments and discriminatory redistricting in our Voting Rights work, we've achieved significant milestones. Additionally, our Research team provided the critical data and analysis for all three substantive areas while our Communications team produced the inaugural season of our podcast, Southern Gumption, and hosted a well-received social media

training for North Carolina advocates and partners.

These achievements are a testament to our collective efforts and determination, but we recognize that much work remains to be done. As we look ahead to 2025, we're inspired by the progress we've made and motivated by the work that still lay before us.

Our successes this year would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our partners, donors, and community members... in other words, without you. Together, we've demonstrated that change is not only possible but inevitable when we stand united in our pursuit of justice.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our mission. Let us carry this momentum forward, knowing that with each step, we are building a more just and equitable future for all.

With gratitude and determination,

R. E. Roberson

R. E. Roberson, Executive Director



WHO WE ARE

About Us

Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) is a multidisciplinary group of advocates, researchers, storytellers, and attorneys who come together to use their skills to help communities across the South dismantle systems of racism and oppression. We are currently focused on voting rights, justice system reform, and environmental justice.

Focus Areas



VOTING RIGHTS



JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



SARAH OVASKA, SOLVE SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIST

LIZ CHEN, DIGITAL CONTENT + UX DESIGNER

ANDY LI, COMMUNICATIONS ADVOCATE

MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS TEAM ATTENDING A PRIDE EVENT IN MOORE COUNTY



**SCSJ breaks
down barriers by
building bridges.**



WHO WE ARE

Our Summer Program

This year, SCSJ hosted three talented legal interns as part of its summer programming: Miranda van Dijk, a Furman Public Policy Scholar and 3rd-year law student at New York University School of Law (voting rights); Trenaj Mongo, an NAACP Legal Defense Fund Marshall-Motley Scholar and 2nd-year law student at Yale Law School (justice system reform); and Arianna Mackey, an NAACP Legal Defense Fund Marshall-Motley Scholar and 2nd-year law student at Georgetown University Law Center (environmental justice). They each talked about their experience in their own words in a [video series on our website](#).



SCSJ LEGAL INTERNS

“Getting to work with so many people who are really passionate about their work and really want to make sure that they’re doing it in a way that makes sure that the voices of community members are heard is something I’ve taken away and loved doing.”

— MIRANDA VAN DIJK



“I’ve been able to do some experiential things like showing up to courthouses on behalf of the clients that we’re representing and showing up in other spaces to support the local organizations and community activists that are doing the work that we want to be supporting. In addition, I’ve been able to learn some technical aspects of the job, like exploring North Carolina’s e-courts system, working on getting our clients’ records expunged ... Additionally, I’ve been able to help with the writing of legal memos for our teams ... and network and collaborate with the other attorneys across the other focus areas.”

— TRENAJ MONGO



“The difference here at Southern Coalition is that they are community lawyers and so we actually go into the communities and we talk to community members about what they need and about what environmental issues they’re facing, usually as a result of redlining and racism. But we are able to better address the issues because we know what they are. It’s that kind of assistance that I think is invaluable.”

— ARIANNA MACKAY



Voting Rights



Program Highlights

The Voting Rights team had a very busy general election year. Some of our work included:

RACIST VOTING LAW

The law was originally enacted in 1877 with the explicit intent to disenfranchise Black voters and remained substantially unchanged ever since. It made it a felony for a North Carolinian to vote while on parole, probation, or post-release supervision for a felony conviction, even if they mistakenly believed or were told in error by election workers or their parole officers that they were eligible to vote.

SCSJ
<https://bit.ly/412bw3Y>

- We struck down a **racist voting law** allowing felony prosecution of individuals with prior felony convictions who unknowingly or mistakenly cast a ballot without first regaining their eligibility to vote.
- We defeated both technical and substantive arguments that attempted to conceal the intent of lawmakers and voter integrity activists who passed a law

targeting the preferred form of voting for young voters in North Carolina.

- We survived appeals in the 5th and 11th Circuit federal courts in pending redistricting cases and continue to push back against racially discriminatory local and statewide maps in Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas.
- We ran our largest and most effective Non-Partisan Election Protection program yet, playing a critical role in coalitional efforts to respond to over 6,300 calls from voters and to monitor

over 100 different canvass proceedings in 80 counties across the state. This year, to capture the work that goes into answering those calls, [we filmed a documentary](#) (coming January 2025) illustrating the efforts of many of the organizations involved in Election Protection work, including in-depth interviews and explanations of the work with our team describing their work and its importance.

- We responded aggressively to unprecedented lawfare tactics meant to destabilize North Carolina's election system by seeking intervention or offering amicus support for the protection of voters in three different election-eve lawsuits in both state and federal courts.
- We published a one-of-a-kind report focusing on the state of voting rights across the South over the last decade in "[State of the South: Voting Rights Under Assault](#)." It documents how voters of color, young voters, and those with disabilities have been targeted with repressive laws and policies.
- We helped partners on the ground in South Carolina with their response to *Alexander et al. v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP et al.*, a case involving claims of partisan gerrymandering as a smokescreen for racial gerrymandering before the U.S. Supreme Court. We developed a communication strategy to raise awareness about the case. This included coordinating media briefings and interviews, organizing a rally at the Supreme Court, offering regranting support to South Carolina based advocates, and joining an amicus curiae brief to support the case.

By the Numbers

ELECTION PROTECTION HOTLINE

7,190 Election Protection Hotline calls received

170 hotline volunteers

1,179 escalated voting issues addressed

LITIGATION

14 different trial and appellate courts in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington, D.C.

POST-ELECTION MEETINGS

110 county meetings attended post-Election Day

80 counties' canvass meetings observed

SOLVE NETWORK CONVENING

>100 member representatives from the SOLVE network brought together

10 Southern states represented

SOLVE Regranting

The SOLVE Southern Spark Grant program, which is now in its fourth year, aims to empower and support grassroots organizations working tirelessly to enhance voter engagement and protect voting rights across the South. The selected recipients over the years have demonstrated exceptional commitment to these causes and use the funds to further their impactful work in their respective communities.

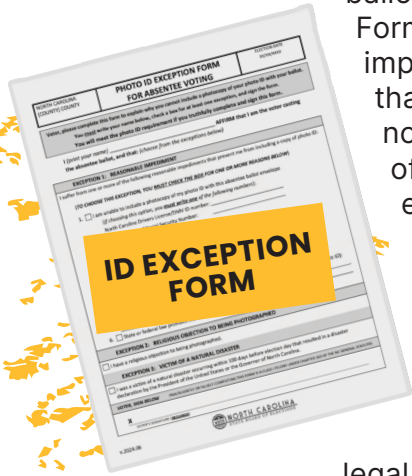
Our broad focus this regranting cycle was to support 2024 election protection work. Thirty organizations across SOLVE's 10-state footprint received \$10,000 grants this year – with projects ranging from providing education to voters about issues such as felony disenfranchisement to hosting voter empowerment events.



**MITCHELL BROWN, SENIOR COUNSEL FOR
VR + NETWORKS COORDINATOR FOR SOLVE,
SPEAKING AT THE SOLVE CONVENING**

Voter Protection in North Carolina

This election season, Southern Coalition for Social Justice worked hard to protect voters' rights and make sure every ballot was counted. We monitored key moments in the election and stepped in when voters' rights were at risk. By focusing on county canvass meetings—where officials review provisional ballots and ID Exception Forms—SCSJ played an important role in ensuring that eligible ballots were not tossed aside because of confusion around new election procedures.



SCSJ deployed our Legal Canvass Monitors in targeted counties where we anticipated it would be beneficial to have

legal professionals monitor county board of election compliance with state laws and regulations. These monitors were provided with a canvass toolkit, formal training, and real-time back-office support during canvass meetings. All told, our program, along with our coalition partners, were able to provide coverage in over 200 county board hearings in over 80 out of North Carolina's 100 counties.

A significant and representative example of our impact occurred in Alamance County. The county board of elections was reviewing around 60 ID Exception Forms for voters who were unable to present a voter ID when voting, with 19 listing 'other' as the reason for not showing an ID. At first, the board wanted to reject many of these forms, which would have put those votes at risk. That's when one of our canvass monitors stepped in. She explained the correct way to review the forms, reminding the board to follow state rules instead of guessing why voters chose 'other.' Her guidance led the board to accept all 19 forms, making sure those votes were counted in the final total.

Similarly, in Rockingham County, our monitor saw that the county board planned to reject 130 provisional ballots from voters who had been removed from the rolls. Many of these voters were taken off the rolls without being contacted, raising worries that eligible voters might be left out of the election. The monitor pushed for a review, explaining that the board could only reject ballots if there was proof the voter had moved out of the county. Though the board started the meeting planning to reject the ballots, the monitor's persistence led them to take a second look, and some were reconsidered.

These local efforts are part of a bigger effort to make sure voting rules are consistent across the state. We noticed differences in how county boards handled ID Exception Forms, especially when voters chose 'other.' In a letter to the State Board of Elections, we raised these concerns and urged the Board to set clear guidelines so that personal opinions or misinformed beliefs wouldn't decide whose votes ultimately counted.

SCSJ's efforts underscore a deep commitment to fair elections and equal voting rights. Through statewide monitoring, legal support, and clear communication with state officials, we helped ensure that every vote was counted. Our work not only protected individual voters but also set precedents for fairer election practices across North Carolina. We are proud of our role in upholding democratic principles and remain dedicated to advocating for a just electoral system.



Justice System Reform

Program Highlights

The Justice System Reform team had a very busy 2024. Some of what we did included:

ABRAMS V. FOWLER

SCSJ is challenging North Carolina's parole system in federal court on behalf of Brett Abrams, who was sentenced to life in prison in 1983 at the age of 14 for a senseless and tragic crime. Despite his impressive prison record, Abrams has been repeatedly denied parole since 1993. The lawsuit challenges the Parole Commission's process as being arbitrary and capricious, and failing to provide a meaningful opportunity for Abrams to receive parole as required under the Eighth Amendment.

SCSJ

<https://bit.ly/3V9yu5G>

- We worked closely with clients, families, and advocates in an effort to make the parole process in NC more transparent and fair, including our ongoing representation of **Brett Abrams** in a federal lawsuit against the NC Parole Commission.
- We joined a growing coalition — in North Carolina and nationally — of families, organizers, and lawyers

working to keep families together by divesting from the family regulation system, which too often forces children into foster care, terminates parental rights, and uses the criminal legal system to break families apart.

- We launched our Reframing Public Safety series, exploring second chances, reentry, school safety,

reducing prison sentences, ending the death penalty, and myths surrounding crime and safety.

- We published a report on NC's experience with bringing people home early from prison in response to COVID-19 in prisons, as well as a case study of how Durham County methodically reviewed existing prison sentences in an effort to give certain cases a "second look."
- We updated several of our useful resources, including our Umar Muhammad Clean Slate Toolkit, our First 48 Hours Toolkit, and our Racial Equity Report Cards. We also launched a first-of-its-kind tool to help students, parents, and school employees navigate local school district policies regarding filing complaints in connection with school resource officers.
- We continued to represent communities seeking to remove symbols of white supremacy from their town squares and county courthouses.



**JANKI KANERIA, COUNSEL FOR JSR;
IAN COURTS, COUNSEL FOR JSR;
TANITA HOLMES, COUNSEL FOR JSR**

By the Numbers

JUVENILE SENTENCING

3 petitions were filed with the Juvenile Sentence Review Board on behalf of clients serving extreme sentences who were 17, 14, and 13 when they were arrested

DIRECT SUPPORT

220+ people coming home after incarceration SCSJ directly supported through our Chuck Manning Reentry & Rebuild Project

EARLY REENTRY

13,400+ people safely released from NC prisons early during a 17-month period, as featured in our Safe Return report

ENGAGEMENT

>100 community events, coalition meetings, conferences, and events

State v. Jeffery Duke

Over the first two weeks of September, lawyers from SCSJ's Justice System Reform team were in Gaston County Superior Court on behalf of Jeffery Duke. Duke has served over two decades on North Carolina's death row. The evidentiary hearing in September was Duke's first opportunity since he was sentenced to death to present evidence to support his claims that his trial was marred by constitutional errors.

North Carolina has the fifth-largest death row in the United States. According to the NC Department of Adult Correction, more than 1,000 people have been sent to North Carolina's death row since the state assumed responsibility for executing people in 1910. Over the first seven years after Duke's 1999 arrest for killing Ralph Arthurs and Harold Grant during a fight, North Carolina executed 32 people.

There is little question that the death penalty, like the larger criminal legal system, is riddled with error. A landmark study in 2000 examined every capital conviction and appeal nationwide between 1973 and 1995 (nearly 5,500 judicial decisions). Nationally,

during that 23-year study period, "courts found serious, [reversible error in nearly 7 out of every 10 of the capital cases.](#)" In North Carolina, [43 people](#) have been executed since 1976, while 12 people have been fully [exonerated](#).

While Duke is white, the history of the death penalty in North Carolina is deeply connected with the South's history of racial oppression. From 1910 until the 1970s, [80% of people executed by the state of North Carolina were Black](#). Over 60% of the 136 people currently on death row are people of color. Of the 12 innocent people removed from North Carolina's death row, 11 are people of color. Those 12 people served a combined 165 years for crimes they did not commit. Notably, as discussed below, the case involving Duke was also infected by race discrimination.

Duke's case offers yet another clear example of how flawed and broken the death penalty is in North Carolina. While Duke has never disputed he was involved in a violent incident that ended in the death of Arthurs and Grant, the truth about what actually happened that

night, and why, was never presented to his jury. The hearing in September 2024 was his first opportunity to tell his side of the story.

Batson Violation

The first issue that SCSJ lawyers and co-counsel Joseph Anderson from Winston-Salem litigated during the evidentiary hearing concerned what's known as a *Batson* violation. During the jury selection process in Duke's trial, prosecutors from the

Gaston County District Attorney's Office removed an otherwise eligible Black juror from sitting on his jury. Under state law, either party may remove a certain number of

North Carolina has the fifth-largest death row in the United States.

prospective jurors using what are known as "peremptory challenges." However, under *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 79 (1986), it is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause for any party to exercise a peremptory challenge based on a prospective juror's race or sex.

After Duke was sent to death row, his defense team discovered that the prosecutors in his case had made a race-conscious comment about

the excluded juror in their notes – right before removing him from the case. Further evidence developed during post-conviction showed that the prosecutors could not offer a "race-neutral" reason for removing the juror, which violates *Batson*.

During the evidentiary hearing, Duke's lawyers presented evidence to support this claim, including the prosecution's handwritten notes from trial and calling the former lead prosecutor to testify. If Duke prevails on his *Batson* claim, he will be granted a new trial.

Ineffective Assistance of Counsel

The second issue that SCSJ and its co-counsel litigated on behalf of Duke concerned his legal representation at trial. Specifically, that Duke's trial attorneys unreasonably failed to present readily available evidence that strongly supported Duke's defense at the time.

Despite having powerful information about repeated threats made by one of the victims that he planned to "get" Duke, and despite promising the jury they would hear such information, his trial lawyers decided mid-trial – without telling Duke – that they would not present any information at all. As SCSJ's lawyers argued during the hearing, through



**JEFFERY DUKE AND JAKE SUSSMAN,
INTERIM CHIEF COUNSEL FOR JSR**

multiple witnesses and hundreds of pages of exhibits, the decision that Duke’s lawyers made lacked any reasonable justification – strategic, tactical, or otherwise – and prejudiced Duke in his defense. If Duke prevails on this claim, he will be granted a new trial.

Jury Misconduct

The third issue that SCSJ and our co-counsel presented during the evidentiary hearing involved misconduct on Duke’s jury during its deliberations. Following Duke’s trial, an investigation by his defense uncovered that a juror, who was unsure about whether to spare Duke’s life or vote for his execution, reached out to her pastor for advice about imposing the death penalty. The investigation revealed that the juror received materials from the pastor – materials like Psalm 13 (“eye for an eye”) – which she not only considered herself, but also shared with other jurors.

Subsequent to receiving the materials from her pastor, the previously undecided juror voted in favor of the death penalty. Because the law does not allow the use of “extrajudicial materials” in jury deliberations – i.e., information not presented in court – this juror’s use of extrinsic materials from her pastor during deliberations violated Duke’s rights under the Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution. If he prevails on this claim, he will be granted a new sentencing trial.

As 2024 winds down, Duke and his counsel expect a ruling on these claims sometime in early 2025.

Larger Context

SCSJ’s representation of Duke is happening within a larger context where the future of the death penalty – both in North Carolina and nationally – hangs in

the balance. Due to ongoing litigation over the method of execution, as well as [North Carolina’s Racial Justice Act](#), there has not been an execution in the state since 2006. Absent the exercise of gubernatorial clemency or a legislative change, however, it is very likely that executions could move forward quickly once the North Carolina Supreme Court weighs in on [State v. Bacote](#), a case filed under North Carolina’s Racial Justice Act. Thus, the risk that executions will resume is real and present.

In addition to representing individuals like Duke, SCSJ has been deeply involved in the statewide push to end the death penalty altogether. In late 2023, SCSJ hosted European Union diplomats and human rights advocates to meet with stakeholders about ending the death penalty in North Carolina. SCSJ has also been an active partner of NC Alternatives to the Death Penalty, urgently [demanding](#) that Governor Roy Cooper use his clemency power to [commute all of NC’s death sentences](#) before he leaves office on December 31, 2024.

The death penalty is a failed public policy that is riddled with error and inequity. SCSJ hopes that justice for Duke – and others like him who are currently condemned on North Carolina’s death row at Central Prison in Raleigh – is coming soon.



Environmental Justice

Program Highlights

In the second year of the Environmental Justice program, our team made significant strides to protect communities facing environmental injustices across the South. Here are some key actions we took:

- We filed our first legal challenges, including efforts to stop the construction of Dominion Energy’s (now Enbridge’s) Moriah Energy Center (MEC), a 25-50 million gallon liquefied methane storage facility in a rural area of Person County, North Carolina.
- We worked with community organizers to avert the City of Greensboro’s plan to dispose of toxic waste in the White Street community, which is already dealing with a high pollution burden, and we continue to push for cleanup efforts in the city’s underserved neighborhoods.
- We represented the voices of communities impacted by environmental injustices in Duke Energy’s Carbon Plan proceedings, where Duke Energy presented a plan to dramatically increase its methane gas fossil fuel dependence and infrastructure and pass those costs on to its already heavily burdened customers.
- We submitted comments to North Carolina’s government agencies to help shape their environmental justice goals. Agencies revised their environmental justice priorities in response to the feedback offered by both SCSJ and partner SELC, which was supported by about 30 other organizations.
- We founded the North Carolina Zoning Coalition, bringing together community and environmental organizations from across the state to better understand, support, and challenge potential environmental justice issues at local government levels.
- We published the NC Zoning 101 Toolkit, an entry point for everyday individuals to understand zoning policies and their potential harms and provide them tools to advocate for their own communities.

By the Numbers

NEW LAWSUITS

3 new lawsuits filed

TOXIC TOURS

4 community-led “toxic tours” to understand cumulative burdens on communities

PROCEEDINGS

9 days spent in Carbon Plan proceedings at the NCUC

ATTENDANCE

64 conferences, summits, and community meetings attended

Brookhaven Community Association

The Brookhaven community is a historically Black neighborhood in Greenville, North Carolina – and its inhabitants include a tight knit group of senior citizens who are passionate about their connection to both one another and the place they live.

In November, our Environmental Justice team began a partnership with residents of the Brookhaven Community Association. Earlier in the year, Greenville’s Board of Adjustment had dismissed residents’ concerns about a special permit granted to RaceTrac, which operates a chain of gas stations. The permit allows the construction and operation of a gas station at 3201 N. Memorial Drive—just 1,000 feet from Wellcome Middle School. This project raises significant concerns, as it could increase traffic congestion, decrease property values, and introduce air and water pollution. These factors are especially concerning for an area home to many senior citizens with health challenges, as well as several hundred students.

Our team submitted an appeal to Pitt County Superior Court on Nov. 20, 2024, on behalf of several residents of the Brookhaven Community Association, claiming the City

of Greenville’s Board of Adjustment unjustly dismissed the complaints and testimony of residents who spoke out.

“The Brookhaven Community was established in 1971,” said Dr. Garrie Moore, President of the Brookhaven Community Association and one of the appeal petitioners. “The community was populated with professional families who took pride in their homes. Today the family who first moved into the community is still living here, at age 93. There are currently 11 homes in the community. This community serves as a point of pride for the families living here and for Pitt County – especially ‘North of The River.’

“We have raised and educated our children and now grandchildren from the foundation of this community. Over the years we have seen much growth and development consisting of a four-lane highway, train changing station, new factories developed etc. And today this community is being threatened by the potential construction of a gas station/convenience store being constructed within 250 feet of our property and within 1,000 feet of a middle school.”



BROOKHAVEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

“...this community is being threatened by the potential construction of a gas station/ convenience store being constructed within 250 feet of our property and within 1,000 feet of a middle school.”

DR. GARRIE MOORE

The Brookhaven case highlights several key aspects of SCSJ’s work in the South. The decision emphasizes the importance of community advocacy in zoning and land use, where residents’ voices can lead to lasting impacts. It also underscores a trend in Eastern North Carolina: Black residents are frequently marginalized in favor of corporate interests. This pattern dates back to the 1982 PCB protests in Warren County and includes ongoing environmental injustices in Sampson, Duplin, Robeson, Columbus, and other counties. Government bodies and corporations have consistently neglected the quality of life of rural and Black communities. SCSJ’s Environmental Justice team is honored to support these historically marginalized groups.

Despite being contacted after the Board of Adjustment made their decision, our legal team was able to meet the 30-day statute of limitations for the appeal in the case, which is among the shortest filing time frame in the state.

Our Communications team also worked quickly after the initial filing to distribute a press release. They reached out to major media outlets, successfully securing coverage on the region’s highest-rated television station, which reaches homes throughout Eastern North Carolina, and in Greenville’s largest newspaper. By coordinating interviews with our Environmental Justice team and

Brookhaven community members, we made this issue a leading story in the local media market.

“We sought legal assistance from SCSJ, who agreed to take our case,” said Moore. “Without SCSJ’s professional help, the Brookhaven Community would be in a very difficult place to find legal assistance. Our difficulty would be challenged by two primary factors: one: all of us are senior citizens (the oldest is 93 and the youngest is 75); and two: all residents are living on fixed incomes. Therefore, legal guidance and assistance from SCSJ has proven to be priceless for the residents living in this community.”

This campaign is a testament to the impact of community lawyering, grassroots advocacy, media engagement, and strategic communication. The story gained significant attention, and our team’s efforts were instrumental in amplifying the voices of the Brookhaven community, bringing crucial environmental justice concerns to the forefront. Our continued commitment to these communities remains strong as we navigate future challenges and opportunities.



JAMES HUEY, COUNSEL FOR EJ, AND BROOKHAVEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Digital Momentum

In 2024, Southern Coalition for Social Justice continued to build digital momentum by using social media to amplify community voices, educate audiences about issues affecting their communities, and highlight the work of the organization and its partners. Through our digital efforts, we connected with diverse audiences, increased awareness in key program areas, and empowered individuals to take meaningful action for justice and equity.

This year, we launched our inaugural podcast, [Southern Gumption](#), which is available on all podcast platforms. At Southern Coalition for Social Justice, we believe the South is the most radical place in this country; it's why so much has been done to oppress those who call it home. In this podcast, you'll hear directly from the folks

on the frontlines; community members who are living the reality of uniquely Southern struggles, as well as advocates, lawyers, lawmakers, and others who are fighting back, creating solutions, changing the narrative, and forcefully demanding equal rights for all.

The organization has also taken seriously the need to expand communications to reach people where they are and advance the ability to reach more diverse audiences. We've added a multimedia specialist position to our team who will amplify our organization's communications efforts across multiple platforms but with a focus on video, long and short. Stay tuned in 2025 for more.



PODCAST

TOTAL EPISODES

8

podcast episodes released

TOTAL DOWNLOADS

16,846

downloads across all streaming platforms

COUNTRIES REACHED

25

different countries listened to "Southern Gumption"

MOST POPULAR

Toxic Tour

was the episode with the most listens

WEBSITE

POSTS

52

published on our website as press releases and/or statements.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

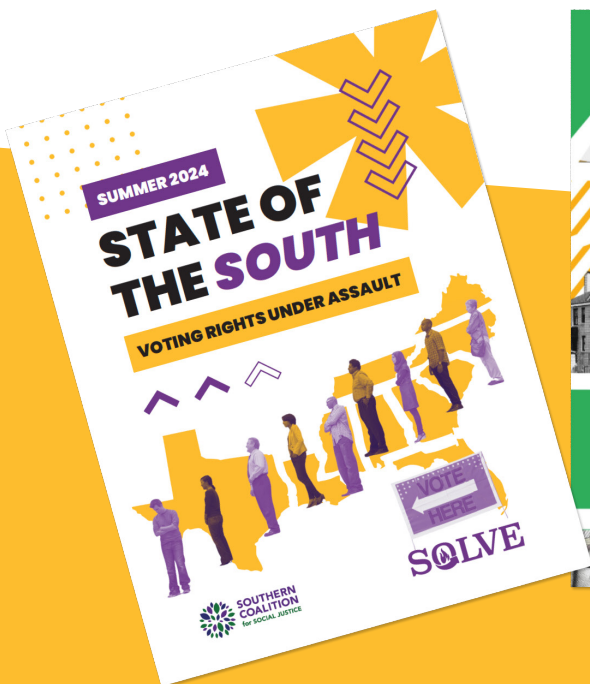
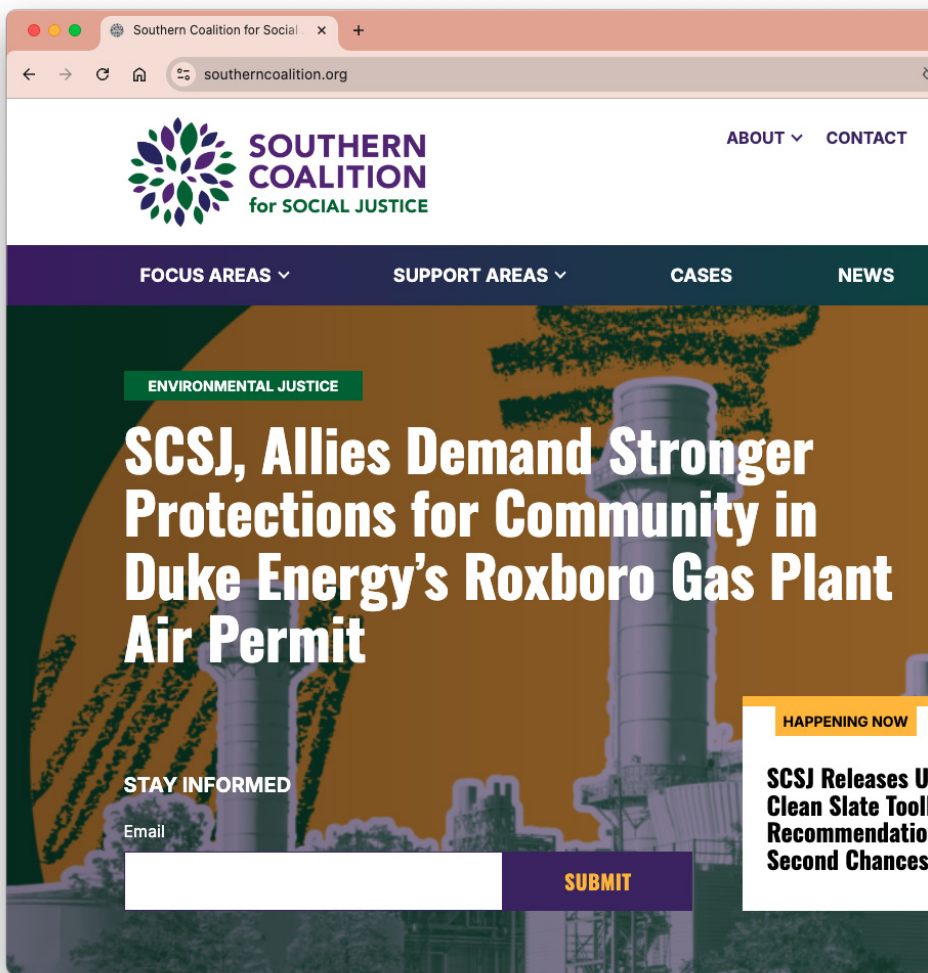
14

published on our website

CASES

50

updated or published in our online case tracker



SOCIAL MEDIA

TOTAL FOLLOWERS

15,237

on Instagram, Facebook, Threads* (10% increase in total followers)

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

243,121

across Instagram, Tiktok, LinkedIn, Facebook (21% increase)

*Impressions are the number of times content is displayed.

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS

8,792

on Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, LinkedIn

*Engagements are the total number of times users interact with content.

FOLLOWERS AND % INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR



2,924

LinkedIn (17%)



1,669

Instagram (31%)



413

Threads (57%)



625

TikTok (184%)



9,606

Facebook (0%)



On the Horizon

Voting Rights

In 2025, the Voting Rights team is looking forward to continuing its fight against discriminatory voting laws and practices throughout the South.

- We will be pushing our two most recently filed North Carolina cases (statewide redistricting and youth voting) to trial on the merits; defending our summary judgment victory against the strict liability felony prosecution suit in front of the Fourth Circuit; and continuing our efforts through our Texas litigations to keep alive the viability of coalition claims under the Voting Rights Act.
- We will use this mid-point of the 10-year redistricting cycle and the SOLVE State of the South Report to re-engage with local communities around redistricting plans in their own backyards (such as city/county/school boards) and start building awareness and education around the upcoming Census and next redistricting cycle.
- We will build off of our 2024 Non-Partisan Election Protection program to advocate for improvements in election administration at the county and state board level while continuing to work with coalition partners to ensure strong pro-democracy institutions persist under new state and federal administrations.



**VR ATTORNEYS
WORKING THE
ELECTION PROTECTION
HOTLINE**

Reflections

Our extensive experience combatting voter suppression throughout the South gives us a unique perspective for responding to the challenges brought about by new legal barriers to voting and new strains placed on electoral systems and the workers who implement them. Our robust approach using litigation, advocacy, and coalitional expertise helped over the past year to mitigate against the worst of potential outcomes and gave voters an advocate when it was needed most.

Justice System Reform

In 2025, the Justice System Reform team will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with its clients, partners, allies, and others in our collective fight for justice.

- We will continue to fight for our incarcerated clients who deserve relief. This includes our ongoing efforts to secure an evidentiary hearing in Pitt County for James Richardson, an innocent man serving a life sentence; a new trial for Jeff Duke, whose conviction and death sentence from Gaston County are unconstitutional; and parole for Brett Abrams, who is the plaintiff in our ongoing federal lawsuit against the NC Parole Commission.
- We will continue to hold the powerful to account, defend those who are most vulnerable to harm, and stand in the breach in the ongoing fight for a better future.
- We will continue to fiercely advocate for those bearing the brunt of our overly punitive criminal legal system.
- We will continue to support those who have paid their debts to society and are seeking a successful return home following incarceration.
- We will continue to help shape important conversations about public safety by lifting up policies and practices that strike the right balance between accountability and repair, and center dignity, stability, and justice for all.



**JSR COUNSEL JANKI KANERIA
SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE**

Reflections

This past year, our team fought for our clients in federal and state court; advocated before parole boards and city councils; and worked across the state and the South with other organizations, advocates, partners, and directly impacted people in our shared effort to create a less punitive, more accountable criminal legal system.

Environmental Justice

In 2025, the Environmental Justice team is looking forward to expanding – vocationally and geographically.

- We plan on publishing a Durham Heat Stress Management handbook in the spring and applying those findings and recommendations to other major metro areas across the South. The handbook aims to equip the city to preemptively deal with heat stress that could negatively impact vulnerable communities and act as a tool to help policymakers map the gaps between the

city’s heat management system already in place and potential future needs.

- We will continue to lead and expand the NC Zoning Coalition, with plans to introduce a watchdog network of zoning advocates to monitor local government actions in real time.
- We will continue litigation on behalf of overburdened communities.
- We hope to deepen our partnerships regionally, specifically in Florida, Tennessee, and South Carolina.



EJ COUNSEL JAMES HUEY AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCHER + DATA ANALYST LUCY KRUEGER ATTENDING THE NC BREATHE CONFERENCE

Reflections

Our program has successfully established itself as a resource for North Carolina communities seeking legal counsel and representation in community-led fights for a cleaner, healthier, safer, and more equitable environment. We have drawn attention to the impact of local government decisions, especially land use policies, on environmental justice, and have empowered communities and other partners to engage more fully in those proceedings. We’ve also centered environmental justice concerns in city planning efforts, zoning amendments, waste management, utilities planning, and climate resilience and recovery. Our partnerships with other nonprofits have magnified our impact, and, as we continue to build our program, we hope to reach and serve even more communities across the South.



ABOUT SCSJ

Southern Coalition for Social Justice partners with communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities in the South to defend and advance their political, social, and economic rights through the combination of legal advocacy, research, and communications.

Design by Liz Chen



**SOUTHERN
COALITION**
for SOCIAL JUSTICE

