



Photo by Richard Corman

Anthony Romero

Anthony Romero became executive director in September 2001, a week before the September 11, 2001 attacks. He is the first openly gay man and the first Hispanic director of the civil liberties institution. In his time as the executive director he has nearly doubled the organization's budget and increased its staff by a similar amount.

In his capacity as ACLU head, he has been involved in opposition to several policies taken under the rubric of the Bush administration's 'War on Terror'. Referring to the August 17, 2006 federal court declaration that the "Terrorist Surveillance Program" was unconstitutional, Romero called the court's opinion "another nail in the coffin in the Bush administration's legal strategy in the War on Terror".

Anthony Romero is the author of *In Defense of Our America: The Fight for Civil Liberties in the Age of Terror*. William Morrow, 2007.

Romero, an attorney with a history of public-interest activism, has presided over the most successful membership growth in the ACLU's history and a large increase in national staff. This extraordinary growth has allowed the ACLU to expand its nationwide litigation, lobbying and public education efforts, including new initiatives focused on human rights, racial justice, religious freedom, technology and privacy, reproductive freedom and LGBT rights. In 2006, the ACLU launched the largest fundraising campaign in its history. "Leading Freedom Forward: The ACLU Campaign for the Future," along with the Strategic Affiliate Initiative, is an unprecedented effort to build the organization's infrastructure by increasing funding to key state affiliates, enhancing advocacy capabilities nationwide and securing the ACLU's financial future.

Romero is the ACLU's sixth executive director, and the first Latino and openly gay man to serve in that capacity. In 2005, Romero was named one of Time Magazine's 25 Most Influential Hispanics in America, and has received dozens of public service awards and an honorary doctorate from the City University of New York School of Law.