

American Civil Liberties Union

Barry Steinhardt

Barry Steinhardt served as Associate Director of the American Civil Liberties Union from 1992 until 2002, when he became its inaugural Director of the Program on Technology and Liberty. He has helped lead a variety of activities aimed at shedding light on relevant issues, combating flawed rules and legislation, and empowering individual activism. It was requests filed under the Freedom of Information Act, for example, that revealed the deficiencies of facial recognition systems being tested for law enforcement purposes. Court action sought to limit efforts under the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA) to build surveillance capabilities into America's communications infrastructure. In the wake of revelations that the airline jetBlue had turned vast amounts of passenger information over to the U.S. government, a Web form was developed to enable the public to automatically file requests under the Privacy Act to see what personal information the government had obtained.

Mr. Steinhardt has been a prominent advocate for privacy and other civil liberties in the face of technologically-oriented threats. In addition to testifying before the U.S. Congress, he has addressed audiences ranging from the National Conference of State Legislatures to the UNESCO Conference on Intellectual Property. As the latter suggests, his activism has not been confined to the U.S. He was a co-founder of the Global Internet Liberty Campaign-the world's first international coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with the privacy and free speech rights of Internet users-and a member of the US delegation to the G-8 Government and Private Sector Tokyo Conference on Cyber Crime. His advocacy also extends to the media. His essays have appeared in such diverse publications as USA Today, CIO magazine, and the journal of the Davos World Economic Forum and he has appeared on a variety of news and talk shows.