For the first time in 25 years, Americans United welcomed a new president and chief executive officer. Rachel Laser was appointed to the top slot at AU in February and became the first woman and the first non-Christian (she’s Jewish) to lead the organization. She’s an attorney with a long career in nonprofit activism, including women’s health issues, LGBTQ equality, church-state separation and dismantling racism and uncovering its connection to white privilege.

Rachel had a busy but productive 2018 traveling on behalf of AU, visiting chapters and allied organizations, speaking to the public and to the press, meeting members of Congress, hiring new staff and developing a new strategic roadmap for the organization.

“The Washington Post

“We need to awaken that awareness, we need to awaken the notion that religious liberty undergirds the separation of church and state. The two can not only coexist but are tied at the waist.”

—Rachel Laser, Feb. 21, 2018
In recent years, disputes over access to birth control have erupted all over the country. Americans United continues to be at the forefront of this fight to protect women’s access to reproductive health care. In 2018, AU challenged the Trump administration’s new rules that would allow employers and universities to deny workers and students access to birth control. AU filed Irish 4 Reproductive Health v. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with the National Women’s Law Center and Center for Reproductive Rights, representing University of Notre Dame students who are at risk of losing vital health care.

THE BIRTH CONTROL BATTLE

Americans United worked tirelessly to make it clear that the U.S. Supreme Court’s Masterpiece Cakeshop ruling did not give all businesses a license to use religion as a basis for discrimination against LGBTQ people, religious minorities and others. AU filed amicus briefs in three similar cases to prevent businesses from slamming their doors shut on customers who don’t live by the owners’ religious beliefs:

- **Brush & Nib Studio v. City of Phoenix** in Arizona
- **Telescope Media Group v. Lindsey** in Minnesota
- **Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission v. Hands On Originals** in Kentucky

AU is also protesting the weaponization of religious freedom against the LGBTQ community in two other cases:

- **Fulton v. City of Philadelphia** in support of the city’s decision not to contract with faith-based foster care agencies that discriminate against prospective parents.
- **Doe v. Boyertown Area School District** in support of a Pennsylvania school district’s inclusive policy for transgender students.

MASTERPIECE CAKESHOP AND DENIAL OF SERVICES
After Justice Anthony M. Kennedy retired from the U.S. Supreme Court, President Donald Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh to fill the seat. During the confirmation process, Americans United went to work to call attention to the judge’s hostile stance toward church-state separation and fight his nomination:

- Executed “What’s at Stake” social media campaign
- Organized faith leader op-ed campaign across the country
- Briefed Senators on Kavanaugh’s record
- Led opposition efforts with the education and religious freedom communities
- Mobilized members to urge their Senators to oppose nomination
- Spoke at rallies to raise awareness of his record

Unfortunately, Kavanaugh was confirmed by a narrow Senate vote on Oct. 6.

AU demanded the Trump administration shut down the Evangelical Advisory Board until it complied with federal transparency and open meetings laws; and demanded more information about the board’s role in developing public policy.

AU demanded transparency from the Department of Justice’s secretive Religious Liberty Task Force launched by then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions, which was established to use religion to discriminate against women, the LGBTQ community and religious minorities.

"Judge Kavanaugh fails to understand that only the separation of church and state can guarantee religious freedom for all Americans. Instead, Judge Kavanaugh appears to be intent on eviscerating this fundamental American value. That fact alone should disqualify him for a seat on the Supreme Court."

—Rachel Laser, July 10, 2018
The Muslim Ban

Americans United was an outspoken critic of President Donald Trump’s Muslim ban at rallies and in the media, calling it cruel and capricious and a violation of religious freedom for all. AU challenged the ban head on in court in IAAB v. Trump and filed amicus briefs supporting others who challenged the ban. Although AU and its allies scored many victories when multiple federal courts agreed with us that the Muslim ban was likely unconstitutional, the U.S. Supreme Court ultimately allowed the ban to go into effect, putting the future of AU’s case in doubt. But Americans United continues to fight against this religious discrimination.

Action on the Hill

JOHNSON AMENDMENT
Led efforts with faith leaders, nonprofits and members of Congress to ensure houses of worship and charitable nonprofits don’t endorse political candidates.

THE DO NO HARM ACT
Led efforts to urge members of Congress to co-sponsor this critical legislation that protects the true meaning of religious freedom and ensures it is used as a shield to protect, not as a sword to harm.

PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS
Led the national coalition that defeated Congress and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ efforts to create a federally funded voucher program for private religious schools.
PROJECT BLITZ

Project Blitz is the state legislative arm of a nationwide political movement by the Religious Right to codify the U.S. as a Christian nation and weaponize religious freedom in order to roll back positive social change. Their strategy is clear: pass an increasingly ambitious set of state laws meant to incrementally redefine religious freedom and undermine the separation of religion and government.

In 2018, Project Blitz’s 116-page playbook, replete with 20 model bills, strategy and messaging guidance, was distributed to more than 750 state legislators across America. But AU is fighting back, working tirelessly in the media, on social platforms, with national organizations and in state legislatures to expose the movement, highlight legislation and reveal the threat of Project Blitz.

2018 PROJECT BLITZ BILLS PROPOSED:

- **In God We Trust:** encourage the display of “In God We Trust” in public schools and buildings
  26 bills introduced in 13 states; signed into law in 6 states - Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina and Tennessee

- **Bible Class:** establish Bible literacy classes in public schools
  8 bills introduced in 4 states

- **Foster Care:** allow faith-based, taxpayer-funded foster care agencies to turn away prospective parents or even children because they are the “wrong” religion or LGBTQ
  10 bills introduced in 6 states; signed into law in 3 states - Kansas, Oklahoma and South Carolina.
In Louisiana, Bossier Parish Schools’ 23,000 students experienced blatant, widespread violations of their religious freedom on a regular basis – school events were held at churches or involved prayers; teachers punished students for not participating in class prayers; religion was promoted during sporting events; teachers proselytized in classrooms; and religious displays were in classrooms and offices. Americans United stepped in to protect students from religious coercion, suing the school district on Feb. 7 to stop this egregious behavior and ensure all schools are inclusive for all students.

LEGAL VICTORIES

**Fields v. Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives:**
A federal court in Pennsylvania ruled in August that a policy of barring nontheists from offering invocations during House sessions is discriminatory and unconstitutional.

**Caplan v. Town of Acton:**
On March 9 the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court stopped Acton town officials from using taxpayer dollars to repair a house of worship.

**Freedom From Religion Foundation v. Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders:**
The New Jersey Supreme Court on April 18 ruled that county officials were violating residents’ religious freedom and the state constitution by using $4.5 million in taxpayer money to restore houses of worship.

“We know that America’s public schools – including the ones in Bossier Parish and in every other community around the nation – serve students from a wide array of backgrounds and faiths. To honor our core American values and respect the deeply personal and sacred nature of our religious beliefs, we must ensure that faith is taught in our houses of worship and by parents – not in our public schools. It’s the right thing to do to protect our students and religious freedom, and it’s what our Constitution requires.”

—Rachel Laser op-ed, Feb. 22, 2018
43 LETTERS TO STATE LEGISLATORS
15 NATIONAL COALITION LETTERS
773 STATE AND FEDERAL BILLS TRACKED
11,542 ADVOCACY ACTIONS TAKEN
4,622 PEOPLE WHO TOOK ACTION
26 ACTIVE LAWSUITS & AMICUS BRIEFS FILED
150+ NATIONWIDE EVENTS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS
361 MEDIA MENTIONS
12,340 NEW SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS
275 NATIONAL ORGANIZATION PARTNERS
570 CHURCH-STATE VIOLATIONS INVESTIGATED

Our country is strongest when we are all free to practice our religion, or no religion, as we choose — without hurting others.

Rachel Laser
AU President & CEO
Financials

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

ASSETS

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<th>Assets</th>
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<td>Property and Equipment</td>
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

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Net Assets

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<td>Unrestricted, Board designated</td>
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Total Liabilities and Net Assets

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

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EXPENSES

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Change in Net Assets before other items

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Change in Net Assets

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Net Assets at Beginning of Year

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Net Assets at End of Year

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<td>$9,064,075</td>
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GUARDIANS OF FREEDOM ARE GENEROUS DONORS WHO CONTRIBUTED $1,000 OR MORE.

$100,000 OR MORE
Deer Creek Foundation
Adam R. Rose
Albert Schneider & Catherine Heron
Fred & Alice Stanback
Lawrence C. Stanback
Eddie Tabash
I wishes to remain anonymous

$50,000 TO $99,999
David Beck & Debra Robins
Borgenicht Foundation
craigslist Charitable Fund
Marvin & Cookie Friedman
Sam Weisman & Nancy Crown
I wishes to remain anonymous

$20,000 TO $49,999
The William C. Bullitt Foundation
Murray Garnick & Teresa Blaxton
The Jana Foundation
Barbara J. Meislin, the Purple Lady
H. van Ameringen Foundation
The William B. Wiener, Jr. Foundation
I wishes to remain anonymous

$10,000 TO $19,999
Tom Barron
Drs. Clifford Beck & Hearee Chung
Dr. Lawrence I. Bonchek
Karen Susan Brown
Charter Charitable Foundation
Scott & Molly Forstall
Richard & Beverly Hermsen
Dennis Hollenbeck & Betty Wright
Walter & Ruth MacGinitie
Clark & Jane Moeller
Drew D. Perkins
Rifkind Family Foundation
Johanna Ross
Joel Shukovsky
Jill S. Slater
Dr. Robert K. Stoelting
David & Sara Weston
I wishes to remain anonymous

FOUNDATIONS, FUNDS & TRUSTS
The following foundations, funds and trusts also provided Americans United with financial support:
Lou Allstadt & Melinda Hardin
Artist's Endowment of Coastal Community Foundation
The B & L Foundation
Judith & Edwin Cohen Foundation
Crowell Family Foundation
Susan Fliscop & Christopher Hill Fuller/Kelly Foundation
Emanuel & Judith Klein Family Foundation
The MJK Family Foundation
Mosaic Foundation (of R. & P. Heydon)
David & Inez Myers Foundation of Cleveland, Ohio
The Next Culture Initiative
Alicia & Peter Pond Reynolds Family Foundation
The Max & Tillie Rosen Foundation
Lloyd S. Rubin
John M. Tubbs Trust
Charles Weyerhaeuser Memorial Foundation
I wishes to remain anonymous

MADISON SOCIETY
1,883 households supported AU through our monthly giving program. We thank them for their generous ongoing support.

IN MEMORY
We honor the following dedicated members who remembered AU in their estate plans. We extend our condolences to the families and loved ones they left behind:
Evelyn B. Baker
Jean A. Barrett
Anne Behler
Hugo Borresen
Morton & Jane Celler
David Charney
The Rev. Dr. Michael Doren
Prof. Norman Dorsen
Susan Farque
Morton L. Gage

Viola Harris
William & Karen Krueger
Zachary Levy
Diane McCall
Helen Mildner
Lucie Minsk
Don Morris
Seymour Nordenberg
Joseph Padula
Michael F. Schinagel
Matilde & James Taguchi
Eleanor B. Tate
Lee Tempfin
Barbara Walker Gordon
M. Paul Zimmerman

JEFFERSON CIRCLE
The following dedicated members have joined AU’s planned giving program by setting up charitable gift annuities, creating bequests or by making other planned gifts:
Phil & Shirley Arndt
George W. Bauer
Eric Bause
Emile Castanchoa
Esther D. Curtwright
Nancy & Dick Eales
Gabriel & Monica Fried
Donald & Natalie Golden
Sam Gould
F. C. Hoffman
L. Lyle & Marjorie Hylen
Dirk & Karen Iwema
Jeffrey & Sara King
Joel & Patricia Marx
Barbara J. Meislin, the Purple Lady
Maurice F. Meysenburg
Andrew W. Mitchell
Lawrence E. Moore
The Hon. Marvin & Betty Morse
Sidney & Sylvia Rose
Robert Shelton
Richard & Sadie Sky
Wallace White
I wishes to remain anonymous
Thank you to all our supporters. Our work would not be possible without your generous investments.

For more information, please visit our website at au.org