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## **ACLU of Massachusetts Cautions Schools on Military Recruiting in High Schools**

BOSTON – The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLUM) today announced that it is providing Massachusetts public high school principals with materials to inform students and their parents that they have a legal right to prevent student contact information from being given to military recruiters and others. By law, schools must notify parents of this right.

“Too often, school officials do not make clear to students and parents their right to privacy under the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act,” said Carol Rose, Executive Director of ACLUM. “Military recruiters with increasing frequency are contacting and pressuring students repeatedly in order to find recruits for the armed services. Parents and students who want to avoid these contacts can tell the school not to give out their names, addresses and phone numbers to recruiters. We are providing these materials to help schools give adequate notice of this right and a meaningful opportunity to opt out.”

Under the 2002 “No Child Left Behind” federal law, school districts receiving certain federal funding are required to provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers of secondary students to the United States military upon request for recruitment purposes. However, the law also requires that schools notify parents that they or their children may request that the information not be disclosed to the military or other recruiters. Students under 18 may request that their data be withheld from recruiters but parents who disagree may override their child’s decision through a written notice to the school. Parents may not reverse the decision of a student who is 18 or older.

Frequently, when schools provide students and parents with the required notice of their right to withhold student directory information, the notice is buried deep within other materials provided at the start of the school year and fails to adequately inform students and parents of the right to protect their privacy.

The ACLU of Massachusetts is sending high school principals a sample notice form that may be given to students and parents as the new school year begins and a memorandum explaining the requirements of the law.

“We urge parents and students to be aware of whether their local high schools are complying with the notice requirement and to contact school administrators if adequate notice has not been given,” said Sarah Wunsch, ACLUM staff attorney. Copies of the materials sent to the principals are available at [www.aclu-mass.org/military\\_recruitment](http://www.aclu-mass.org/military_recruitment).

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