Anthony D. Romero is the Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, the nation’s premier defender of liberty and individual freedom. He took the helm of the organization just four days before the September 11, 2001 attacks. Shortly afterward, the ACLU launched its national Safe and Free campaign to protect basic freedoms during a time of crisis. Under Romero’s leadership, the ACLU gained court victories on the Patriot Act, filed landmark litigation on the torture and abuse of detainees in U.S. custody, and filed the first successful legal challenge to the Bush administration’s illegal NSA spying program.

Romero, an attorney with a history of public-interest activism, has presided over the most successful membership growth in the ACLU’s history, more than doubling the national staff and tripling the budget of the organization since he began his tenure. This unprecedented growth has allowed the ACLU to expand its nationwide litigation, lobbying and public education efforts, including new initiatives focused on racial justice, religious freedom, privacy, reproductive freedom and LGBT rights.

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.

In 2007, Romero and co-author Dina Temple-Raston published In Defense of Our America: The Fight for Civil Liberties in the Age of Terror, which takes a critical look at civil liberties in this country at a time when constitutional freedoms are in peril. Using the stories of real Americans on the frontlines of the fight for civil liberties, In Defense of Our America takes readers behind the scenes of some of the most important civil liberties cases in America to illustrate the dangerous erosion of the Bill of Rights in the age of terror. For more information about the book, visit www.aclu.org/ouramerica.

Born in New York City to parents who hailed from Puerto Rico, Romero was the first in his family to graduate from high school. He is a graduate of Stanford University Law School and Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and International Affairs. He is a member of the New York Bar Association and has sat on numerous nonprofit boards.