

January 12, 2026

Senator Charles Grassley
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

Senator Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin,

We, the undersigned national and state organizations advocating for civil rights, gender equality, reproductive justice, and democratic accountability, oppose the nomination of Justin Olson for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana. Olson has repeatedly led efforts to dehumanize and exclude transgender athletes from participating in college athletics. These attacks on transgender rights, coupled with his perspectives on fetal personhood, and ties to far-right, extremist organizations raise serious concerns that Olson would not be an independent and fair judge fit for a lifetime appointment. If confirmed, Olson may further entrench and uplift hateful ideology, deny basic human rights, and undermine principles of impartiality in the federal judiciary.

Olson also describes himself as a “specialist” in litigation designed to keep transgender students, specifically women, out of college athletics and facilities. Olson consistently misgenders trans athletes and makes meritless arguments based on broad generalizations about women's athleticism, inferring cisgender women are categorically weaker and inferior athletes. The cases brought by Olson seek to distort and weaponize Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the U.S. Constitution's Equal Protection Guarantee in order to attack transgender students, perpetuate harmful stereotypes about women and girls, and ignore the *actual* inequities women and girls endure in sports.

He also demonstrates an alarming disregard for the lives of pregnant people, promoting anti-abortion laws that establish fetal personhood, but hiding such views behind the veneer of secularism to cover religious motivations. Mr. Olson's arguments lack any consideration of how codifying prenatal personhood in the law is dangerous for any person with the capacity for pregnancy seeking healthcare, as it chills the availability of care. For example, patients of reproductive age are being denied medications incompatible with pregnancy, taken to manage chronic or life-threatening conditions. Thus, these patients are discriminated against and denied their medication based on their capacity to become pregnant.

Assigning personhood status to fetuses also puts the lives of pregnant people at risk. Physicians fear providing lifesaving or requested abortion care for fear of prosecution under a state's anti-abortion laws. The impacts of prenatal personhood extend beyond healthcare. In the two years

after *Dobbs*, prosecutors across the country initiated at least 412 criminal cases against pregnant people in relation to their pregnancy-related conduct, pregnancy losses, or live births, and more than three quarters of the defendants were low-income individuals. Olson's legal arguments reflect a gross disregard for the lives and wellbeing of pregnant people.

Finally, Olson has consistently aligned himself with far-right movements. He has been an active member of the Federalist Society and Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). Labeled as a [hate group](#) by the Southern Poverty Law Center, ADF is a far-right, Christian nationalist legal advocacy group that has pushed to redefine religious freedom, making it a weapon to attack LGBTQ+ rights and abortion access. They have led the charge to legalize discrimination against LGBTQ people and defended the dangerous practice of conversion therapy. A lifetime appointed federal judge with such alliances could enshrine these beliefs into binding precedents, harming everyday people for decades to come.

For these reasons, we oppose the nomination of Justin Olson to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana and urge you to do the same. The public deserves a judge who has exhibited a commitment to equality, rights preservation, and basic humanity towards the people he will serve. Olson's record proves he does not meet that mark.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Trans Equality (A4TE)

Advocates for Youth

Alliance for Justice

American Atheists

CenterLink

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Equal Rights Advocates

Equality California

Faith in Place Action Fund

Feminist Majority

FFRF Action Fund

Good Trouble Coalition of Indiana

Human Rights Campaign

Just Solutions

Know Your IX

Lawyers for Good Government

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

National Abortion Federation

National Council of Jewish Women

National Education Association
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Political Caucus
Oasis Legal Services
People For the American Way
PFLAG National
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Reproductive Freedom for All