



THE BENCHLINE

AFJ Announces New President

After a nationwide search, Alliance for Justice (AFJ) is proud to announce **Rachel Rossi as our new President**, marking a bold and exciting new chapter in our commitment to advancing justice, equity, and democracy.

Rossi brings a track record of fearless advocacy and progressive leadership. She most recently served as Director of the Office for Access to Justice in the Biden administration, where she led efforts to expand legal access for vulnerable communities. Prior to that, she was Deputy Associate Attorney General under Vanita Gupta and served as the Justice Department's first Anti-Hate Coordinator.

AFJ Founder Nan Aron praised Rossi's appointment, saying, "Her distinguished leadership in public service, her deep understanding of the law and the legislative process, and her steadfast commitment to justice for all, make her the ideal President for AFJ at this defining moment."



The Supreme Court

Emergency “Shadow” Docket

The Supreme Court may finally be confronting a reality that lower courts have grappled with since the start of the Trump administration: government lawyers from this administration cannot be taken at their word.

Less than two weeks ago, the Court unanimously ruled that migrants must be given due process, including notice of their potential deportation and a reasonable opportunity to challenge it in court. In apparent defiance of the decision, the Trump administration allegedly attempted to deport a second group of Venezuelan migrants to El Salvador — **with little notice and no due process.**

Shortly before 1 am on Saturday, a majority of the Supreme Court issued an **emergency order** blocking the deportations. Only Justices Thomas and Alito **dissented**, appearing to be the only members of the Court willing to overlook the administration’s blatant disregard for the rule of law.

Until now, the Supreme Court has shown notable deference to Trump’s strategy of evading judicial scrutiny through procedural loopholes — tactics that conveniently allowed the conservative majority to avoid direct confrontation with him. But Saturday’s rushed post-midnight order suggests the Court may finally be recognizing that enabling Trump’s evasions only fuels his growing disregard for the federal judiciary and the rule of law.



Oral Arguments

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear oral arguments on May 15 in a case related to Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship. To clarify, the case does not involve a challenge to the constitutionality of birthright citizenship itself. Instead, the issue before the Court is whether lower courts can issue **[nationwide injunctions](#)**.

Trump is asking the justices to restrict nationwide injunctions, arguing that courts should only grant relief to those individuals who bring the initial lawsuit. Restricting nationwide injunctions would severely limit the ability of courts to block Trump's harmful policies on a broad scale, weakening protections for vulnerable communities and making it harder to ensure equal justice nationwide.

The Supreme Court heard arguments this week in two key cases: *Kennedy v. Braidwood Management and Mahmoud v. Taylor*. In *Kennedy*, Christian-owned businesses and individuals from Texas challenged the ACA's requirement to cover expert-recommended preventive care, arguing it's unconstitutional and exceeds federal agency authority. However, most justices seemed **[likely to uphold the mandate](#)**, preserving access to preventive services for millions.

In *Mahmoud*, the Court considered whether public schools' use of LGBTQ-inclusive storybooks and teachings on gender and sexuality violated the First Amendment, as Maryland parents claimed their religious rights were infringed by the lack of an opt-out option. Despite lower courts finding the record too "threadbare" to show a constitutional violation, the conservative justices appeared eager to side with the parents — a move that could invite broad censorship of inclusive curriculum and threaten safe, affirming schools for all students.

Next week, as the Supreme Court wraps up its term, it will hear *A.J.T. v. Osseo Area Schools*, a key case on disability rights in education. A.J.T., a student with severe epilepsy, sued the district for disability discrimination after it denied her request for evening instruction. If the U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of A.J.T., it could lessen the burden for holding schools accountable in disability discrimination cases.

For more details on these cases, look at our **[Supreme Court Term Preview](#)**.

HOLDING

THE BENCHLINE

This week, [Judge Loren AliKhan](#) (D.D.C.) and [Judge Charlotte Sweeney](#) (D. Colo.) are Holding the Benchline.

Judge Loren AliKhan issued a temporary restraining order [blocking Trump's executive order](#) aimed at the law firm Susman Godfrey. Judge AliKhan rejected what she described as an attempt to misuse government power to control which cases firms can take. Calling the order a “personal vendetta,” AliKhan emphasized that “the framers of our Constitution would see this as a shocking abuse of power.” She is the fourth federal judge to step in against such executive orders targeting private firms.

Judge Charlotte Sweeney is the first district court judge outside of the D.C. Circuit to rule that the Alien Enemies Act [likely does not apply](#) to Tren de Aragua. She also ruled that, at least in Colorado, Trump must provide 21 days' notice and an opportunity to file a lawsuit.

Holding Court *Environmental Law in the Age of Erosion*

Alliance for Justice invites you on **Wednesday, April 30 at 3pm ET** to a virtual conversation featuring Sam Sankar, Senior Vice President of Programs at [Earthjustice](#). The discussion will cover the evolving landscape of environmental law, including the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Chevron deference and environmental rollbacks. With Trump-appointed judges often siding with polluters and undermining the EPA's authority, this conversation will explore the challenges and opportunities for environmental justice in a rapidly changing legal environment.

Don't miss this important discussion on the future of environmental protection and climate action. [Click here to register!](#)

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