

AFJ INSIDER



Dear Friend,

Earlier this month, AFJ released our annual [SCOTUS preview](#) as the Court began its term October 7, holding the distinction of being the least trusted Supreme Court in history. This important resource offers a review and analysis of the critical cases that will be heard by the Court this term and those to which AFJ is paying special attention. On the docket are cases related to some of our most dearly held personal and communal rights, including:

- ***U.S. v. Skrametti***, a challenge to state bans on gender-affirming care for transgender young people. Read more at my October [Democracy Docket](#) piece.
- ***Bouarfa v. Mayorkas***, a case that threatens to separate families made of up immigrants and citizens.
- ***Stanley v. City of Sanford, Fla.***, in which the disability benefits of millions of workers are on the line.
- ***Seven County Infrastructure v. Eagle County, Colo.***, an attempt to circumvent the National Environmental Protection Act with broad implications for environmental and administrative law.
- ***Garland v. VanDerStock***, a case about the regulation of “ghost guns” that could make it even harder to curb gun violence.

In addition to the cases we’ve previewed, the Court may also hear cases involving free speech and capital punishment this term. We will update you on that when we know more.

When we say the “least trusted Supreme Court in history” we are not being hyperbolic. According to the [latest polling](#) by Annenberg Public Policy Center, conducted over the summer and released a few weeks ago, support for the Court stands at 44%, with only 8% expressing a 'great deal of trust' in the court. This is the lowest level of trust since Annenberg began surveying the public on this issue in 2005 when 75% of the American public trusted the court.

Trust dropped precipitously after the 2022 Dobbs decision, but over the past two to three years the exposure of well-documented ethics violations has accelerated calls for substantive structural and ethical reforms. Even President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris came out in support of reform. AFJ has long been a leader advocating for an ambitious court reform agenda, working with allies on the Hill and in coalition to hone specific proposals. Check out the new [Supreme Court Reform](#) section of our website. While we recognize the very real political challenges to enacting reforms, the conversation around the need to check the power of the Court has rarely been this robust. Join us.

In solidarity,

Keith Thirion

Interim Co-President



Our Impact

Federal Courts

The Supreme Court's 2024 term kicked off on October 7 with *Garland v. VanDerStok*, a challenge to a lifesaving Biden policy to regulate "ghost guns." Yet again, the conservative-dominated Court will hear several blockbuster cases which will touch upon our fundamental freedoms, public safety, and the condition of our democracy – spanning from transgender Americans' ability to access health care ([Skrametti](#)), the vitality of the Clean Water Act ([San Francisco v. EPA](#)), and employment discrimination protections for disabled persons ([Stanley](#)). To learn more about these critical cases, check out AFJ's [2024-2025 Supreme Court Preview](#).

Meanwhile, before recess began on September 25, the Senate confirmed eight more lifetime federal judges, bringing Biden's total number to 213. While AFJ is pleased with this progress, time is of the essence to confirm Biden's pending nominees and fulfill this administration's historic legacy. The Senate must confirm all of Biden's pending nominees by the end of the year. AFJ urges our members to keep up the momentum by [contacting your senators](#) and asking them to prioritize confirming these outstanding and diverse nominees when Congress resumes in November:

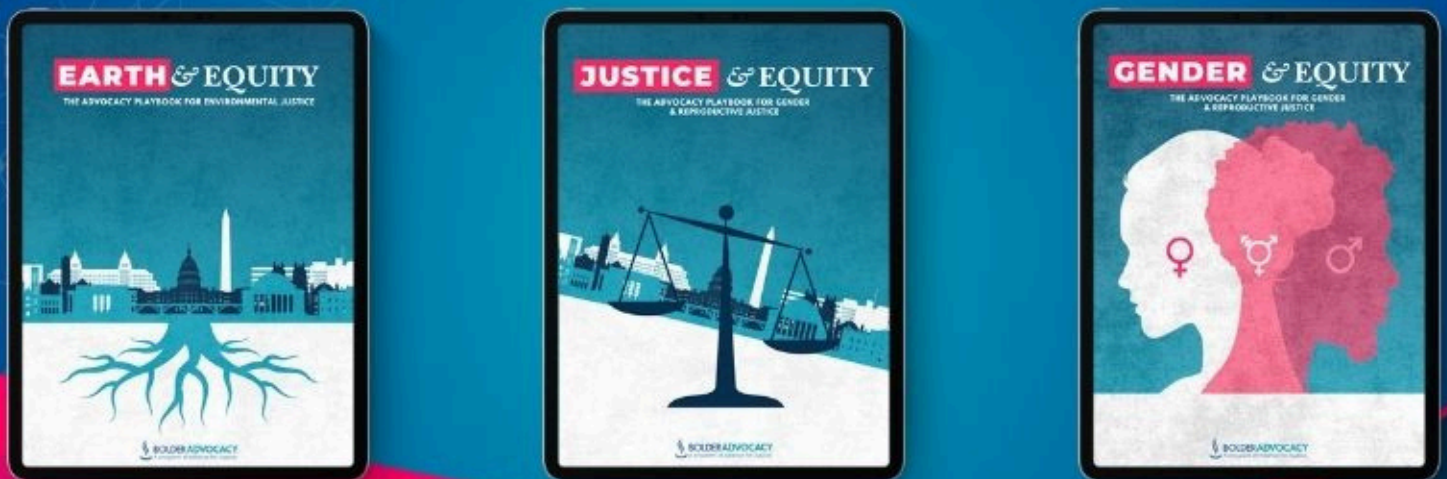
- [Adeel Mangi](#) (3rd Cir.)
- [Karla Campbell](#) (6th Cir.)
- [Mustafa Kasubhai](#) (D. OR)
- [Sarah Russell](#) (D. CT)
- [Amir Ali](#) (D. D.C.)
- [Rebecca Pennell](#) (E.D. WA)
- [Anne Hwang](#) (C.D. CA)
- [Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon](#) (C.D. CA)
- [Catherine Henry](#) (E.D. PA)
- [Jonathan Hawley](#) (C.D. IL)

State Courts

In state courts updates we're watching, the Nebraska Judicial Nominating Commission approved four finalists from which the governor will choose the next chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, a nominee to fill a vacancy to the New Jersey Supreme Court has been confirmed by the New Jersey Senate Judiciary Committee, and new chief justices have been chosen for the Kentucky and South Carolina supreme courts. And with the November 5 general election exactly three weeks away, AFJ's State Courts team is closely watching upcoming state supreme court elections around the nation. This year, over 80 seats are up for election across 33 states. Do you know if your state is holding an election for your state supreme court? Find out [here!](#)

Bolder Advocacy

We are excited to announce the launch of The Advocacy Playbook social justice series. Designed for social justice organizations, these playbooks offer a concise guide to the laws and regulations governing 501(c)(3) public charities as they engage in advocacy, including during election seasons. So far, we've released four critical publications: [Earth & Equity: Environmental Justice](#), [Justice & Equity: Criminal Legal Reform](#), [Gender & Equity: Gender and Reproductive Justice](#), and [Power & Equity: Labor and Economic Justice](#). Stay tuned for more resources to help you navigate advocacy rules with confidence!



With the presidential election quickly approaching, it's crucial for nonprofits to be prepared to advocate effectively and empower their communities. Bolder Advocacy is here to help with our new [on-demand nonprofit advocacy trainings](#), available 24/7 to fit your schedule. Whether you're organizing Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts or navigating nonpartisan election advocacy, these expert-led sessions, available in both English and Spanish, will equip your organization with the tools to make an impact when it matters most.



Membership & Outreach



We have two exciting events coming up that you won't want to miss! Join us on Tuesday, October 22, for a special [Holding Court session featuring Renee Bracey Sherman](#), reproductive justice activist, founder and executive director of *We Testify*, and co-author of *Liberating Abortion: Claiming Our History, Sharing Our Stories*, and *Building the Reproductive Future We Deserve*. This virtual event promises to be an afternoon of powerful insights and discussion about the future of reproductive justice. [Secure your spot today!](#)

For those in the D.C. area, later that evening, we're hosting a [Justice Trivia Night](#) on **Tuesday, October 22, from 6:30–8:30 pm** at Stoney's on P Street NW. Test your knowledge of the courts, from the Supreme Court to pop culture legal trivia, all while enjoying free food and drinks! Whether you're a legal whiz or just looking for a fun night out with friends, [register now](#) and prove your trivia skills! We hope to see you at one (or both!) of these great events. **Register today to secure your spot!**

Donor Profile



“Our organization has benefitted from AFJ and Bolder Advocacy's vast knowledge and receptivity to our questions for years.”

This month we're happy to profile both a rather unusual supporter of Alliance for Justice, and an organization doing tremendous work: [Maternal and Child Health Access](#). MCHAccess works towards a California where women, pregnant people, and families are supported, and everyone can be healthy.

This summer, MCHAccess benefitted from some of our Bolder Advocacy training. They were so pleased that they sent both a donation AND a wonderful letter memorializing their experience:

“

Our organization has **benefitted from AFJ and Bolder Advocacy's vast knowledge and receptivity** to our questions for years. Never more so, however, than in trying to figure out our reporting and other obligations under California's Fair Political Practices Commission's rules and regulations.

Your employees **Sarah Efthymiou, Susan Finkle Sourlis, and Quyen Tu,** while very clear they were not offering legal advice... were **invaluable** in being willing to slog through mine and my colleague's understanding. They endured several back-and-forth email trails so that we were comfortable. With so many clauses and exceptions to the rules, I likened it to trying to understand Medicaid!

Please accept this donation as a token of our appreciation. We are very happy to serve as a reference for your work or write a letter of recommendation.”

We were stunned to get a donation of this sort from another nonprofit organization. We are busier than ever in Bolder Advocacy – on track to hold over 100 more workshops in 2024 than in 2023 and already surpassed 800 Technical Assistance calls (more than in all of 2023) by early October. While we work overtime to meet demand, this kind of support – both moral and financial – means the world to us.

Thank you, MCHAccess!

Important Dates

- ✓ **October 16:** Public Webinar: [How 501\(c\)\(3\)s Can Educate and Advocate During Election Season](#)
- ✓ **November:** Native American Heritage Month
- ✓ **November 5:** General and Special Elections
- ✓ **November 7:**
Public Webinar: [Post-Election Advocacy & What You Need to Know](#)
- ✓ **November 14:** Public Webinar: [How Your 501\(c\)\(3\) Can Influence Policy for the Greater Good](#)

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