

AFJ INSIDER

Dear Friend,



I am thrilled to be writing my first letter for June's Insider from my new perch as AFJ's third President. As we watch millions rise in demonstrations across the country, I am reminded that we are stronger in partnership together. Your support and collaboration make our work possible. This is why I am prioritizing and looking forward to meeting all AFJ's supporters, allies, members, donors, and advocates in the coming weeks and months.

And may I just say wow. Since joining last month, I have been working at warp speed to understand the tremendous work and impact of AFJ. And in so doing, I have come to believe even more deeply that AFJ is **the** organization to “meet this moment.” **The last lines of defense against the excesses of the Trump administration are the courts and the people,** through collective power and nonprofit advocacy. There is no organization that works in these two arenas with more strategy, integrity, and ferocity than AFJ.

And I have seen this work firsthand. The Trump administration has announced several groups of highly unqualified judicial nominees. As we outlined in our statements opposing these first slates, the lack of experience and the terrifying positions held by the nominees are alarming. **There is a deliberate intent to place under-qualified yet loyal ideologues in powerful judicial seats.** AFJ is fighting back by providing deep and consequential research on these nominees. As just one example, AFJ's Dorot Fellow, Jamaal Lockings found nominee Josh Divine's 2010 college writings arguing for the return of literacy tests to voting eligibility. This disturbing support for a voter suppression tool rooted in the racism of the Jim Crow south was picked up in numerous press outlets. AFJ will not be able to block every terrible nominee, but we will continue to stand firm against lifetime appointments intended to erode the rule of law, and to create a very public record of nominees' qualifications (and lack thereof), positions on key issues, and personal history.

When the fight seems difficult, we cannot forget the collective power that we hold. The resistance is growing and getting louder. And nonprofits are leading the charge. They are fiercely advocating for their communities, rights, and democracy even as the administration is weaponizing the government to punish and attack them at every turn. AFJ's Bolder Advocacy program is supporting and empowering nonprofits across the country to firmly oppose the harmful actions of the Trump administration. Whether it's protecting voting rights, fighting for environmental justice, or defending reproductive freedom, with Bolder Advocacy, nonprofits have the training, tools, and guidance they need to engage in effective, legal advocacy.

BA is creating directly responsive resources. We released two new on-demand webinars that will be bundled: one [Preparing for Politically Motivated Attacks](#) and will bundle it with a second, soon-to-be released on-demand webinar on how nonprofits can conduct an internal 'checkup' to ensure they are fully and completely in compliance. Just last week, a House Republican panel issued unfounded probes into more than 200 non-governmental organizations in an apparent effort to target and intimidate groups working to feed the hungry, fight for consumers, advocate for civil and human rights and more. Our work to empower the nonprofit community could not be more timely.

As I continue to learn and understand all AFJ's work, I am humbled to be leading this organization during such powerfully important times. Thank you for your support. I look forward to connecting with you soon!

In solidarity,

Rachel Rossi

President of Alliance for Justice



How We Fight Matters

Federal Courts

Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee held confirmation hearings for Trump's first slate of judicial nominees: [Whitney Hermandorfer](#) (6th Circuit); [Joshua Divine](#) (Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri); and [Zachary Bluestone](#), [Maria Lanahan](#), and [Cristian Stevens](#) (Eastern District of Missouri). Throughout the hearings, the nominees offered no meaningful explanations for some of their most extreme views and repeatedly refused to answer even the most basic questions about their legal philosophies or qualifications. If individuals seeking lifetime appointments to the federal bench cannot be transparent about their records or demonstrate a commitment to fairness, they have no business holding a position that will shape the lives of millions for generations to come.

Now, Trump has announced his second wave of judicial nominees — this time for the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and several district court seats in Florida. Unsurprisingly, these selections are just as [extreme and ideological as the first](#).

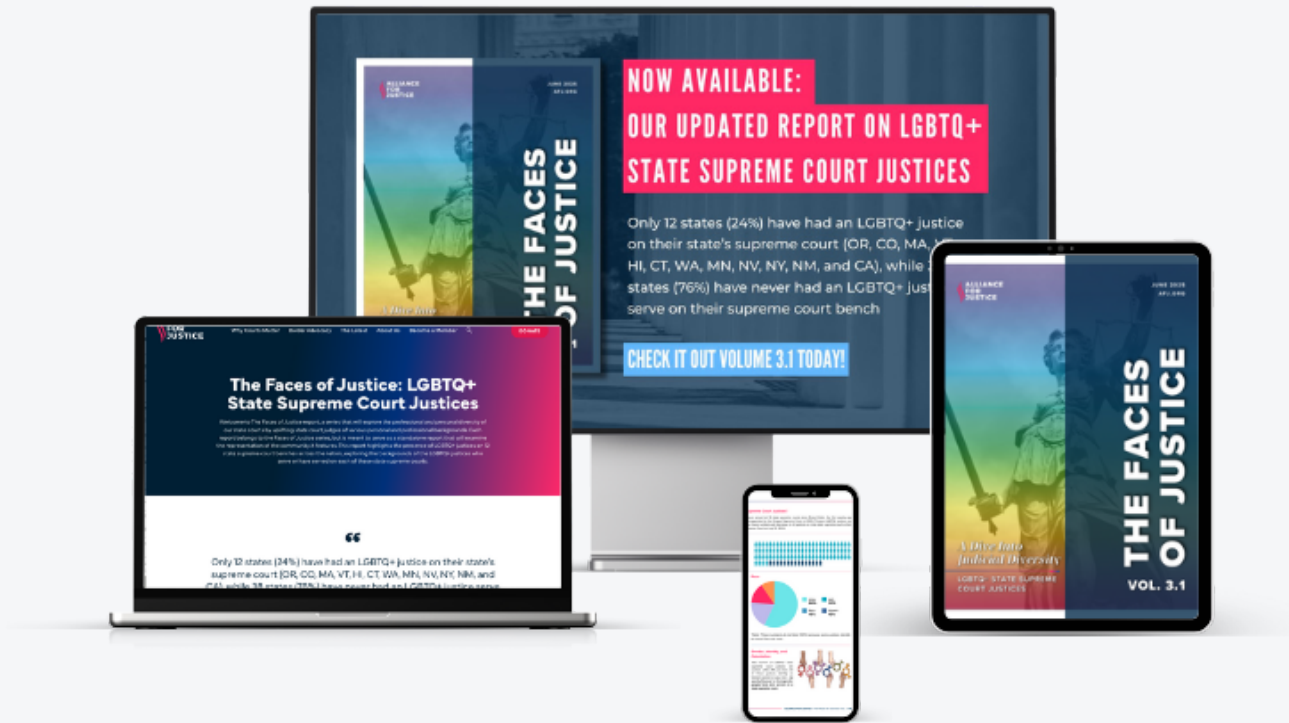
For the Third Circuit, Trump has nominated [Emil Bove](#) — his personal defense attorney in multiple criminal proceedings, including the New York case in which Trump was convicted of 34 felony counts, as well as the classified documents and election obstruction cases.

In Florida, Trump has named five more to lifetime appointments:

- Middle District of Florida: [Kyle Dudek](#), [Anne-Leigh Gaylord Moe](#), [John Guard](#), and [Jordan Pratt](#)
- Southern District of Florida: [Ed Artau](#)

Trump's picks continue a dangerous trend of prioritizing allegiance over qualifications, independence, and judicial integrity. These nominees are not committed to impartiality or the rule of law. Instead, they are deeply aligned with anti-civil rights movements and hostile to core constitutional protections. Their records show unwavering opposition to reproductive and gender justice, voting rights, equal protection, and more.

State Courts



Faces of Justice Volume 3.1



Happy Pride Month! Did you know that **38 states have never had an openly LGBTQ+ justice** serve on its highest court? Our courts should reflect the communities they serve, but for the LGBTQ+ community, representation still has a long way to go with only 20 openly LGBTQ+ individuals have served as justices on state supreme courts across the country. [Learn about them here.](#)

In other state court news, the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission held public interviews earlier this month to fill the seat being vacated by state supreme court Justice Evelyn Wilson. From those interviews, [three finalists](#) were sent to Gov. Laura Kelly (D) to make the final nomination. Kelly's eventual nominee must stand for retention election in the next general election.

Bolder Advocacy

In recent months, many nonprofits have faced dramatic funding cuts and policy decisions that threaten their communities and run counter to their missions. In response, AFJ's Bolder Advocacy team created new resources to assist nonprofit advocates as they prepare to respond to executive orders, administrative actions, and potential audits.

For example, in the wake of nationwide protests to ICE's immigration raids, Bolder Advocacy [launched its Spanish-language resource hub](#) where nonprofits and advocates can access our top Spanish-language materials to protect and empower immigrant communities. Additionally, since launching our new social justice advocacy series on our [Rules of the Game podcast](#), we've highlighted how advocates working on issues from LGBTQ+ rights to racial justice to voting rights can respond to potential threats and boldly build their power through advocacy. We've also published timely blogs on [responding to executive orders](#) and [standing up against policy decisions](#) that are negatively impacting the nonprofit sector and the communities we serve.

Our upcoming public webinar series is also focused on ensuring nonprofits are equipped to comply with relevant advocacy laws. [Join us on July 8](#) to kickstart your advocacy evaluation in practical ways!

As always, if you have questions about your nonprofit's ability to engage in advocacy and respond to government actions, our Bolder Advocacy team is here to help! Reach out to our [free technical assistance hotline](#) to connect with one of our team members. Or, check out our [on-demand webinar series](#) to learn more about the rules that apply to your lobbying, election, and other advocacy activities.



Membership & Outreach

Join us on **Thursday, June 26 at 3pm ET** for our next *Holding Court* event: “[SCOTUS Term Review — Church, State, and the Shifting Court](#)” with Chris Geidner of Law Dork, and more panelists to be announced soon. Our expert panel will dig into what this year’s Supreme Court decisions mean for advocates, policymakers, and the broader fight for civil rights moving forward. With the Court’s conservative majority continuing to reshape the legal landscape, this conversation will take a closer look at where things stand — and what comes next.

In case you haven't heard — AFJ member organizations can now connect directly with experts from our Communications and Development teams for customized support, whether it's reworking a logo, sharpening messaging, or strengthening fundraising plans. Sign up for a personalized one-on-one consultation with AFJ staff [here](#)!

Team Spotlight



Meet Our Biggest Intern Class Yet!

This summer, we welcomed a powerhouse crew of students and future changemakers — from rising sophomores to third-year law students — working across AFJ's teams to help defend justice, democracy, and our rights.

Want to see who's who?

[\[Click Here to Meet the Interns →\]](#)

We asked our readers (you)...

**"What keeps you up at night, and
what are you worried about?"**

