

AFJ INSIDER



Dear Friend,

The Senate may be in recess, but we're hard at work.

Behind the scenes, our Justice team is conducting rigorous research and in-depth analysis on judicial nominations that continue to move forward, even during this so-called "break." There is no pause in the push to reshape our courts — and we are not standing still. Every nomination, no matter how quietly introduced, carries long-term consequences for our rights, freedoms, and the future of our democracy. That's why we're digging into the records, writings, and rulings of each nominee to ensure nothing escapes scrutiny.

We are fortunate to be joined in this work by Christine Zinner, AFJ's new Federal Research and Advocacy Director (stay tuned for a profile on her next month!). With Christine's support, we are preparing now — so we can meet every nomination head-on the moment the Senate returns in early September. We are equipping our allies in the Senate with the critical information they need to do their job: to question, to challenge, and to oppose appalling Trump nominees who do not meet even the lowest standards of fairness, integrity, and commitment to equal justice under law.

We continue to track judicial appointments across the country — at both the state and federal level. These seats are not ceremonial; they are powerful. And we are committed to making sure they are filled by individuals who bring not only legal expertise, but lived experience, moral courage, and an unwavering dedication to justice.

Indeed, with respect to state courts, AFJ will shortly launch a new feature for our State Supreme Courts Hub: a searchable index of state court judges and decisions. This aims to close the understanding gap between who these judges are and how their decisions impact our individual lives and our communities. It will be an important resource to tell the story of why state courts and judges matter.

And we continue to invest in the future. Through our Building the Bench program, we are preparing the next generation of jurists — ensuring that new judges have the tools, knowledge, and values they need to be champions for justice from the bench. We're not just reacting to the courts of today — we're building the courts of tomorrow.

This work is urgent. It is constant. And it cannot be done alone.

Alliance for Justice has always stood at the intersection of law and movement — fighting to make the promise of justice real for all people, not just the powerful. With your partnership, we will continue to hold the line, push for progress, and demand accountability from those who seek to shape our courts in the shadows.

Thank you for standing with us.

In solidarity and determination,

Thank you,

Rachel Rossi

President of Alliance for Justice



How We Fight Matters

Federal Courts

The Senate continues to advance Trump's ideologically extreme judicial nominees. This includes [Emil Bove](#), confirmed by a vote of 50-49, to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The Senate also confirmed [Zachary Bluestone](#), by a vote of 49-47, to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Recently, the announcement of judicial nominees from the administration has been haphazard in what seemingly appears to be an attempt by Trump to avoid giving the public the proper time to understand the extent of these nominees' records and the harmful impacts they are likely to impose with a lifetime appointment on a federal bench. While the official announcement for some in Trump's fourth slate of nominees has yet to happen, AFJ is dedicated to ensuring you have the information that you need about these nominees.

Trump's Fourth Slate includes; [Jenn Mascott](#) nominated to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, [James Maxwell](#) and [Robert "Bobby" Chamberlin](#) to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, [Edmund LaCour](#) and [Harold Mooty](#) to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, and [Bill Lewis](#) to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama.

State Courts

Kansas Governor Laura Kelly (D) appointed Larkin Walsh to fill the seat opened when Justice Evelyn Wilson retired earlier this year. Justice Walsh is Gov. Kelly's fourth appointee to the court, meaning the governor has appointed four of the seven seats on the court. Before her appointment, Justice Walsh worked in private practice representing parties in both state and federal court. She also served as a law clerk to former Kansas Supreme Court Justice Carol Beier. Justice Walsh spent her career working across civil rights, labor and employment, and consumer advocacy law. Justice Walsh's career as a movement lawyer brings critical experience to the court in understanding the court's impact on all individuals, not just the wealthy and powerful.

Bolder Advocacy

As threats to nonprofits continue to intensify, so too has confusion around the rules that apply to nonprofit advocacy. In recent weeks, [one court case in particular](#) raised questions about the ability of churches to engage in partisan political activity. While the case does not specifically address non-religious 501(c)(3)s, our [free technical assistance](#) hotline lit up with questions about its potential impact on the wider nonprofit sector. As of now, the rules for 501(c)(3)s have not changed, but our Bolder Advocacy team is continuing to monitor the litigation and will provide updates as they are available.

In the meantime, you can learn more about the history of the Johnson Amendment and the prohibition on candidate campaign intervention in our new blog entitled [“Nonprofits in the Crosshairs: When Tax Status Becomes a Political Tool.”](#) You can also take a deep dive into election season advocacy rules by reviewing [The Rules of Game: Guide to Election Season Advocacy for 501\(c\)\(3\)s](#) or by joining our September 16 public webinar on [“Building Nonpartisan Partnerships”](#) with 501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s, Unions, and Political Organizations. As always, when you have questions, we have answers! Please don't hesitate to reach out to learn more about how your nonprofit can boldly and confidently engage in advocacy to advance your mission.



Membership & Outreach

We invite you to join us TODAY (Tuesday, August 26) at 1 pm ET for [**Holding Court: Defending and Expanding the ADA 35 Years Later**](#). This virtual conversation will feature Michelle Uzeta, Interim Executive Director of Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund and Erin Prangley, Director of Public Policy at The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. AFJ President Rachel Rossi will be moderating the discussion.

Our panelists will reflect on the 35th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act and what the disability justice movement, along with the wider progressive movement, is doing and must do to continue expanding rights and accessibility. The discussion will take place via [StreamYard](#) and be streamed through [**AFJ's YouTube channel**](#) and [**LinkedIn page**](#).

[**You can sign up to listen to the conversation here.**](#)

HOLDING COURT:

Defending and Expanding the ADA 35 Years Later



Rachel Rossi
AFJ President



Erin Prangley
Director of Public Policy at the
National Association of Councils
on Developmental Disabilities



Michelle Uzeta
Interim Executive Director of the
Disability Rights Education &
Defense Fund

WHEN:

**Tuesday,
August 26
1:00 pm**



Team Spotlight

AFJ's Honey Badgers for Justice!

AFJ's work would not be possible without the incredible hard work, creativity, and tenacity of our staff. One way we recognize these staff is with AFJ's version of Employee of the Month program - the **Honey Badger for Justice** award! Honey Badgers are often folks that work in the 'back of house' keeping everything going for AFJ and are nominated by fellow staff, who note their contributions and qualifications for this award. Nothing we do would be possible without these unsung heroes of AFJ. Recent Honey Badger Awardees include:



Shayna Orensztein, Senior Program Coordinator for Bolder Advocacy won the July Honey Badger for Justice award! One nominator raved about her commitment to her team and the work. They said, *"She is always the first to pitch in and volunteer to help when someone on our team needs assistance. She is also proactive and looking for ways we can improve."* Shayna also recently did a yeoman's job on an updated literature scan of the advocacy evaluation field and is excited to see it on the Advocacy Evaluation Resources section of our website!



Dakota Dula, Senior Manager of Development Operations won the June Honey Badger for Justice award. One of her nominators noted, *"She's always cheerful, and always kind, and always gives it her all keep our trains running smoothly."* Dakota embodies the culture of excellence AFJ strives toward. Her work with the many platforms AFJ utilizes to manage projects, data, and systems has really pushed our organization forward and made us more efficient and effective.



Jamaal Lockings, Dorot Fellow, won the May Honey Badger for Justice Award for his excellent research that led to finding Trump nominee Josh Divine's [racist opinion piece](#). This is exactly the kind of work that AFJ needs to push back against unqualified nominees. Aside from this piece of research, Jamaal recently wrote a [blog post](#) that one nominator called *"a poignant reflection on the current state of the Voting Rights Act."* And, of course, he continues to provide valuable contributions to several of the Justice team's key projects.

We are so grateful that Shayna, Dakota, and Jamaal add their brilliance and commitment to AFJ every day!

AFJ in the News

[Networks and Resources: Why Funding Nonprofit Infrastructure Matters - MacArthur Foundation](#)

DONATE



If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please [unsubscribe](#).

Alliance for Justice
11 Dupont Circle NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036
United States