



THE BENCHMARKLINE

Judicial Nominees

Last Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced four district court nominees. [Anna St. John](#) (Eastern District of Louisiana), [John Shepherd](#) (Western District of Arkansas), [Andrew Davis](#) (Western District of Texas), and [Chris Wolfe](#) (Western District of Texas) were all voted out of committee along party lines, 12-10. Once Majority Leader Thune (R-SD) files cloture on these nominees, they will be eligible for a full chamber vote.



KATIE LANE



KARA WESTERCAMP

TRUMP'S LATEST JUDICIAL NOMINEES INCLUDE
CANDIDATES WITH RECORDS ATTACKING:

VOTING RIGHTS

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

TROUBLING RECORDS FOR LIFETIME SEATS.

Additionally, the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing for Trump's 10th slate of judicial nominees is expected to occur in late March. This slate includes **Katie Lane** (District of Montana) and **Kara Westercamp** (Court of International Trade), both of whom have troubling backgrounds that render them unfit for lifetime appointments to the federal bench.

In her brief nine years as an attorney, Lane has consistently advanced harmful litigation across a myriad of issue areas. In roles including Montana deputy solicitor general and senior legal counsel for the Republican National Committee, she undermined **racial** and environmental justice initiatives and attacked reproductive, voting, and LGBTQ+ rights. Lane's work has also intersected with one of Trump's most concerning nominees, Anna St. John (mentioned above), who heads the far-right Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute. While working at the Montana Solicitor General's Office, Lane submitted an amicus brief in support of St. John's attempt to undo a Roundup class-action settlement.

Meanwhile, Westercamp has spent the past year defending Trump's tariffs in the White House Counsel's Office. In this role, she has been primarily responsible for drafting tariff-related executive orders and reports to Congress. Westercamp also previously worked at Jones Day, where she defended large corporations from insurance recovery and securities regulation enforcement.

While her once-public Twitter account has seemingly vanished from the Internet, timestamped snapshots of her previous tweets from 2016 reveal her loyalty to **Trump**, distaste for the **Clintons**, and reverence for the **Republican** Party. These inappropriate tweets establish a significant bias that renders her unfit and unqualified for a lifetime seat on the Court of International Trade.

THE SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court has once again misused its emergency "shadow" docket to interfere with a state's ability to protect its residents, stripping everyday people's rights with little explanation. Last Monday in **Mirabelli v. Bonta**, the Supreme Court's conservative majority refused to allow California to protect the sensitive and private information of transgender and gender nonconforming students. California had passed a policy that allowed educators to keep students' name and pronoun changes confidential. Several parents challenged the policy and argued that schools should be required to follow parent-directed instructions on student names and pronouns, lest the policy violate the parents' rights to exercise their religion freely and "direct the upbringing and education of their children."

The Supreme Court has once again **misused** its emergency **'shadow docket'** to **STRIP EVERYDAY PEOPLE'S RIGHTS** with little explanation.



The district court sided with these parents, but the Ninth Circuit paused, or stayed, the district court's order while California appealed the case. Ultimately, without oral arguments or proper consideration, the Supreme Court's conservative majority sided with those who challenged California's privacy protections.

Justice Kagan, one of the liberal justices on the Court, issued a seven-page **dissent**, criticizing the Court's choice to resolve the case on the emergency docket, noting they had "scant, and frankly, inadequate briefing" about the case and that they granted relief with a "tonally dismissive ruling." The Supreme Court rushed to rebuke California's attempts to protect an all-too-often targeted student population, and once again, those everyday students will be the ones to pay for the Court's refusal to carefully and fully consider the arguments that California advanced to support the policy.

HOLDING

THE BENCHLINE

On Sunday, Judge Randolph Moss of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia **blocked** major portions of a Trump administration rule that aimed to unjustly expedite the immigration appeals process.

The rule, which was finalized without sufficient public notice and comment, would have significantly reduced noncitizens' **right** to appeal their immigration court decisions. In particular, the rule would have reduced respondents' time to appeal from 30 days after their decision to **10** days. In his decision, Moss noted that such "issues . . . are so fundamental to the rights of tens of thousands of individuals" that they should be deliberated by the public **before** the rule takes effect rather than after.



THE JUDICIARY'S **LIMITED ABILITY**
TO ENFORCE ITS RULINGS, COUPLED WITH
THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S BLATANT
LACK OF COMPLIANCE, WILL **GRAVELY**
UNDERMINE OUR DEMOCRACY.



Additionally, Judge Royce Lamberth of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that Kari Lake, Trump's initial **choice** to lead the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), was never legally appointed to the position.

Lamberth held that Lake never received the Senate **confirmation** required by the Appointments Clause of the Constitution and the Vacancies Act. Instead, the Trump administration attempted an illegal **workaround** by having the previous acting head of the USAGM, Victor Morales, delegate all his powers to Lake. Consequently, Lamberth concluded that any actions Lake took while acting in this capacity were **illegitimate** and should be treated as “void.” Importantly, this included Lake’s decision to fire more than **1,000** journalists and staffers from the USAGM and the Voice of America, an international broadcasting organization that provides objective, accurate reporting in countries where the government controls the media.

Both decisions highlight the crucial role federal district courts play in protecting rights as fundamental as due process and freedom of the press against an out-of-control presidential administration.

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