



THE BENCHLINE

Judicial Nominees

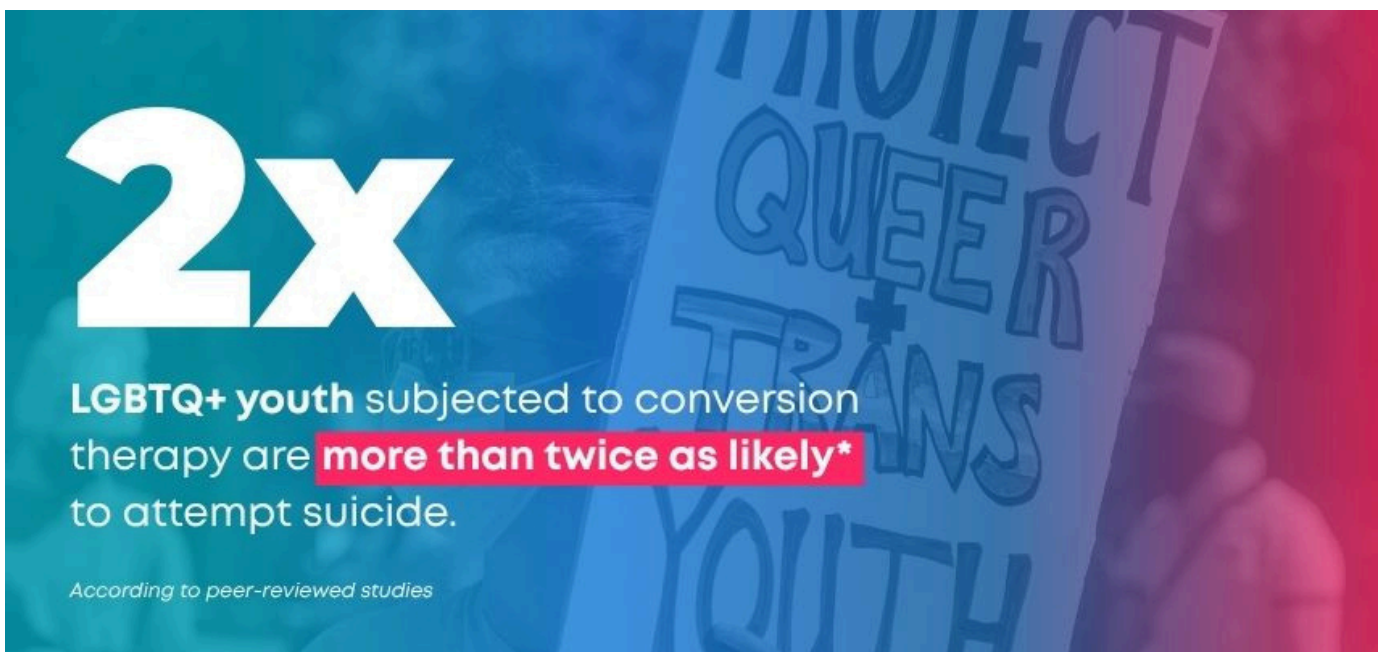
On March 25, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing for federal judicial nominees [Kara Westercamp](#) (Court of International Trade), [Katie Lane](#) (District Court for the District of Montana), and [Sheria Clarke](#) (District Court for the District of South Carolina). Senate Democrats spent much of the hearing highlighting Westercamp's conspiracy-theory-riddled Twitter/X [feed](#) and Lane's limited experience as an attorney. Senator Dick Durbin's questioning of Westercamp was particularly effective, as he grilled her for tweeting and retweeting several posts downplaying the January 6 [attack](#) on the Capitol, including a post stating that the insurrection was "orchestrated by members of the Senate and members of the Capitol Police." Durbin also chastised Westercamp for repeatedly referring to Senator Mitch McConnell as "Cocaine Mitch" and attacking Senators Lindsey Graham and Susan Collins for not adequately supporting President Trump's priorities. Westercamp's Twitter/X feed clearly shows that she lacks the temperament and impartiality necessary for a lifetime appointment to the federal judiciary.

Last week, President Trump announced four new nominees on Truth Social: [Mike Hendershot](#) (District Court for the Northern District of Ohio), [Jeffrey Kuntz](#) (District Court for the Southern District of Florida), [Arthur "Rob" Jones](#) (District Court for the Southern District of Texas), and [John Marck](#) (District Court for the Southern District of Texas). All four are white men, and all but Kuntz have previous experience in government roles. Since 2025, Kuntz has served as Chief Judge of the Fourth District Court of Appeal. In announcing their nominations, Trump highlighted the loyalty these nominees have displayed in advocating for causes that are important to Trump, such as Hendershot's work [challenging](#) the "Radical Left Policies of the Obama and Biden Administrations." AFJ will continue to dig into their records and surface the most pertinent and timely information on these nominees as it is uncovered.

THE SUPREME COURT

Therapists May Continue Administering Harmful Conversion Therapy

The Supreme Court issued a devastating blow to LGBTQ+ individuals last week, one that will undoubtedly increase the likelihood of suicide in an already marginalized and vulnerable community. In an 8-1 decision, the justices declared that Colorado may not pass a law that bans “conversion therapy,” a dangerous and discredited pseudoscientific “therapeutic” method used to force LGBTQ+ individuals to conform to heterosexual and cisgender norms. Peer-reviewed **studies** continue to show that LGBTQ+ youth subjected to conversion therapy are more than twice as likely to attempt suicide.



The justices couched their harmful decision in complicated arguments around whether Colorado’s law violated the First Amendment, and seemingly only Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, the lone dissenter in the case, saw the importance of the outcomes and potential impact of such a decision. Jackson **noted** that this decision “could be ushering in an era of unprofessional and unsafe medical care administered by effectively unsupervised healthcare providers.” Signaling her vehement disagreement with the majority, Jackson read portions of her 35-page dissent from the bench. She highlighted that Colorado, along with half of the states, has banned conversion therapy because of evidence that such treatments are harmful and ineffective.

This decision now jeopardizes those state-level protections, potentially putting LGBTQ+ teens and children directly in harm's way. The Supreme Court has once again gone out of its way to strip state-level protections, putting some of the most marginalized and vulnerable teens and children at severe risk of harm.

In Justice Jackson's lone dissent, she highlighted...



50%

Colorado and **half of the nation** has already **banned conversion therapy** because evidence shows it is harmful and ineffective.

Court Considers Severely Restricting Birthright Citizenship

Last Wednesday, the Supreme Court heard oral **arguments** in one of the most potentially impactful cases of the 2026 term, *Trump v. Barbara*. The case challenges Trump's 2025 executive **order** aimed at ending automatic birthright citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants. In an extraordinary move, Trump **attended** the arguments in person, marking the first time a sitting president has done so. The central issue in *Barbara* is the interpretation of the **Citizenship Clause** of the Fourteenth Amendment, which provides that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States."

Solicitor General D. John Sauer, a former colleague of current Eighth Circuit nominee **Justin Smith**, argued that the language "subject to the jurisdiction of" requires that parents are "domiciled in and owe allegiance to" the United States for their American-born children to be **citizens**.

ACLU National Legal Director Cecilia Wang, arguing for the challengers, contended that the Court should follow the precedent created in [**United States v. Wong Kim Ark**](#) (1898), which established that nearly everyone born on U.S. soil is an American citizen, with narrow exceptions for children of foreign diplomats and invading hostile forces. A majority of the justices appeared **skeptical** of Sauer's arguments, with even conservative Justices Gorsuch, Kavanaugh, Barrett, and Roberts suggesting that the administration's reasoning was **unpersuasive**. Nevertheless, Americans will be waiting anxiously for the Court's decision later this year, as a favorable ruling for Trump would fundamentally alter how citizenship works in the United States and dismantle over a century of Citizenship Clause precedent.

Not yet receiving AFJ Insider? Sign up to [**join us here**](#).
[**Donate today to help us keep up The Benchline**](#)



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