

AFJ INSIDER



Dear Friend,

As we celebrate Women's History Month, I'm honored to reflect on what it means to be a woman leading Alliance for Justice — an organization built, strengthened, and carried forward by generations of women committed to expanding justice. Every day, I feel the weight and the privilege of this legacy. It's a legacy shaped by women who not only broke barriers, but redefined what leadership in this movement looks like.

I would not be here without the extraordinary leadership of AFJ's founder and longtime president, Nan Aron. For more than 40 years, Nan built and defended this organization at a time when women were neither welcomed into every room nor encouraged to lead the fights that shape our democracy. These are all attacks that happened in just the last three months. It's critical that people are aware of the threats to their court's independence and ability to ensure equal protection for all individuals.

And yet, as we honor women this month, it's important to remember that representation while powerful is not the whole story. Being a woman alone is not enough to ensure a commitment to equality, fairness, or justice. Our values are measured not just by who we are, but by the choices we make and the people we stand with.

That's why AFJ vociferously opposed the nomination of [Anna St. John](#) to a lifetime federal judgeship. Her record raised serious concerns about whether she can fairly preside over cases involving women and workers who face wrongdoing. For example, in 2021 at a moment when the #MeToo movement had created long-overdue space for women to speak out about sexual assault and harassment St. John testified against legislation to end forced arbitration for survivors.

Rather than listening to survivors' stories or acknowledging their struggles, St. John used her platform to downplay their harm and argue that giving women the choice to go to court would somehow hurt them. We were deeply disappointed when St. John was confirmed on March 17, 51-45, strictly along party lines.

This is not the leadership our judiciary needs. As we evaluate judicial nominees, we must look not only at identity, but at lived values whether they stand with the vulnerable, whether they understand the urgency of accountability, and whether they are committed to equal justice under law.

As we lift women up this month, I feel immense pride in the women who built AFJ, the women who continue this work today, and the women across the country who are fighting for a more just future. Thank you for standing with us, supporting our mission, and believing in the power of advocacy to change lives.

Together, we will keep pushing forward toward a world where every woman is heard, every survivor is believed, and justice is truly within reach for all.

With gratitude and hope,

Rachel Rossi

President of Alliance for Justice

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How We Fight Matters

Federal Courts

Alarming, Trump continues his push to entrench his cronies on the federal judiciary. This month, the Senate confirmed one of AFJ's Worst of the Worst nominees, [Anna St. John](#), to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Additionally, the latest batch of pending nominees features several individuals with highly concerning backgrounds, including [Justin Smith](#), [Katie Lane](#), [Kara Westercamp](#), and [Tony Mattivi](#). Smith, who Trump nominated to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, is one of Trump's personal lawyers and is heavily involved in the attempt to overturn the \$83.3 million sexual assault and defamation [judgment](#) entered against him in the lawsuit brought by journalist E. Jean Carroll. AFJ will continue to [expose](#) the distressing details of these nominees that prove they are unfit and unqualified for lifetime seats on the federal bench.

[View all of the unfit and unqualified nominees →](#)

State Courts

Defending Democracy

State supreme courts, as a co-equal branch of government, are an essential check on the legislative and executive branches. However, there is a disturbing and rising [pattern of retaliation](#) against state supreme courts for decisions on fair maps in redistricting, abortion access, private school voucher programs, ballot initiative language, and more. This retaliation comes in the form of limiting or eliminating the court's [ability to rewrite](#) ballot summaries or stripping [jurisdiction](#) over certain kinds of cases, [expanding](#) the court, or even [shrinking](#) the court.

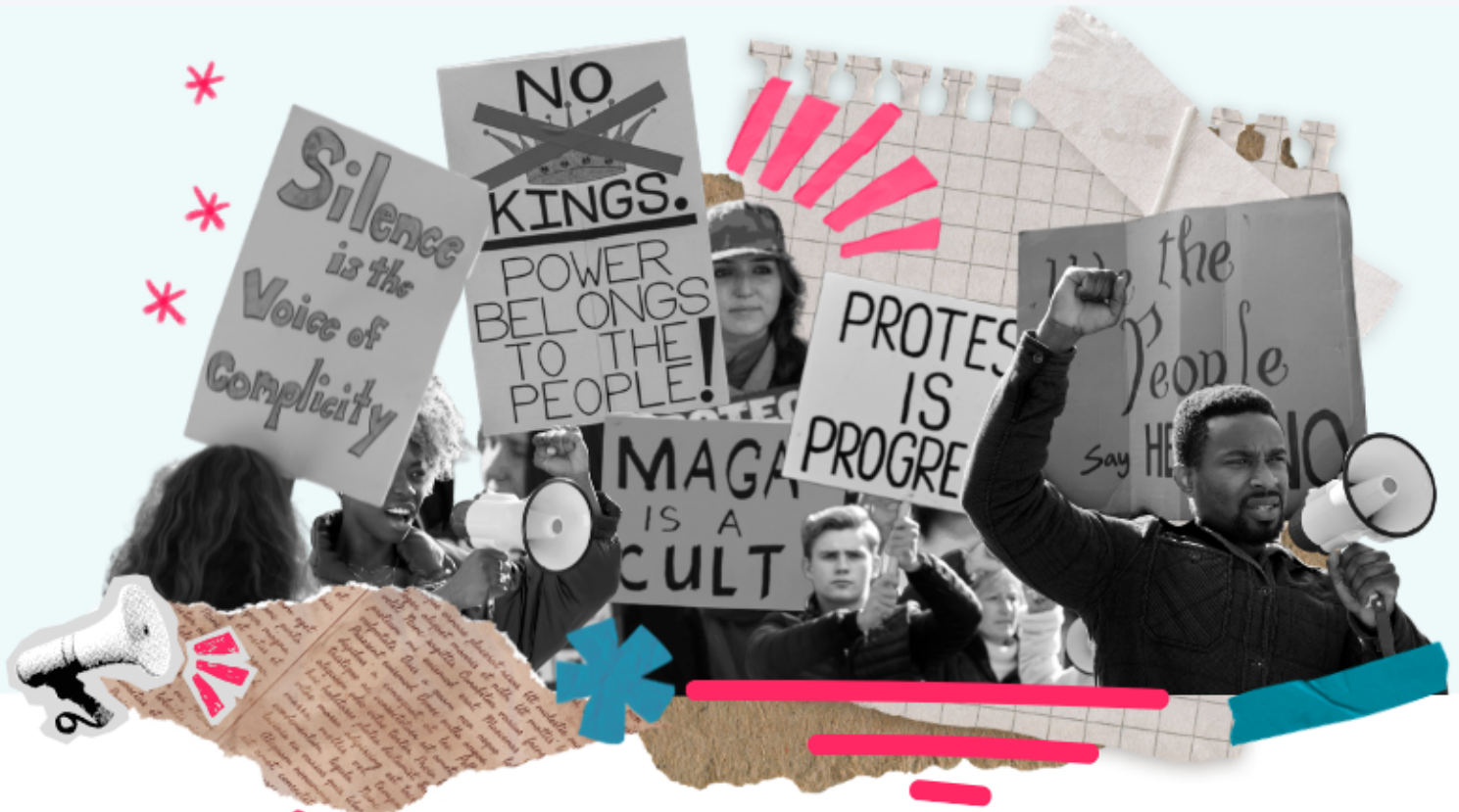


These are all attacks that happened in just the first quarter of the year. It's critical that individuals are aware of the threats to their court's independence and ability to ensure equal protection for all individuals.

In other state court news, Cleo Powell was [sworn in](#) as the first Black woman to serve as chief justice on the Supreme Court of Virginia. Five [finalists](#) were announced for the Hawaii Supreme Court chief justice vacancy. Kansas Supreme Court Justice Marla Luckert is [stepping down](#) on March 28.

Maine Gov. Janet Mills [nominated](#) Christopher Taub, chief deputy attorney general. Kyle Hixson was [confirmed](#) by the Tennessee legislature to succeed retiring Justice Holly Kirby in June. Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Annette Ziegler [will not seek](#) re-election next year, creating an open contest. Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson [appointed](#) Theo Angelis to the state supreme court.

[Help protect our state courts →](#)



Our Momentum



Bolder Advocacy

Protecting Nonprofits on the Front Lines

From [the courts](#) to [the Capitol](#), decisions are being made that could dramatically impact how nonprofits engage in ballot measure campaigns, get out the vote initiatives, legislative advocacy, and more. We're monitoring developments and have the details on the [Rules of the Game podcast](#).

[Tune in now to learn more →](#)

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH

A Stronger Movement — Because of You

Read our most recent Member Spotlight covering the essential work of Los Angeles Black Worker Center (LABWC) [here](#). An excerpt of LABWC's spotlight is below:

“Through programs like Ready 2 Work, which provides career readiness training and mentorship, and the 1000 Strong campaign — a coalition effort focused on creating pathways to high-quality employment — LABWC is placing Black workers on meaningful career trajectories while calling on government and industry partners to uphold fair practices because Black workers have been essential to Los Angeles' economic heartbeat for generations, yet they've too often been denied access to careers that offer stability, dignity, and growth.”

[Join the movement →](#)



BA LEADERSHIP WOMEN ON A MISSION



This Women's History Month, we're celebrating the powerhouse trio behind AFJ's Bolder Advocacy program — a nationally recognized initiative that has spent 30+ years equipping nonprofits and foundations with the tools to advocate boldly, effectively, and within the law.

Led by Program Director Natalie Roetzel Ossenfort, Legal Director Quyen Tu, and Senior Director of Operations and Evaluation Shannon Williams, this dynamic team supports thousands of organizations each year and has helped train more than 600 attorneys through the Nonprofit Legal Defense Network.

Together, they're not only expanding what's possible for nonprofit advocacy — they're helping fuel the movement at a time when it matters most.

[Read the full spotlight here →](#)

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IN A TIME OF UNPRECEDENTED
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