ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE

AFJ INSIDER



Dear Friend,

I've experienced elections from many different vantage points. I've worked on Capitol Hill, served in the Department of Justice, and even put my own name on the ballot when I ran for Los Angeles County District Attorney in 2020.

But this election season is a first for me.

For the first time, I'm approaching a major election as the president of a deeply rooted nonprofit organization with a long legacy of work to advance justice.

I get to be on the side of civil society, advocacy and community, but in a moment when this critical pillar of democracy — the nonprofit sector — is under constant threat.

Throughout my career, I've seen how elections shape lives. As a public defender, I witnessed the consequences of decisions made by elected officials. On Capitol Hill and at the Department of Justice, I worked to advance policies that could change those lives.

Now, at Alliance for Justice, I have a different opportunity: helping organizations and communities exercise their power to shape our democracy, regardless of who holds office. And helping them hold the line despite constant efforts to discredit, defund and silence them.

And here's what excites me: Some of the most important work we can do during election season has nothing to do with supporting or opposing candidates.

The threats to the right to vote are constant and real. We can fight back by helping neighbors register to vote. By educating communities about issues that affect their lives. It's helping neighbors register to vote.

By ensuring that historically excluded voices are heard. By supporting advocacy around critical ballot initiatives. And by holding elected officials accountable.

Yet too many nonprofits hesitate to engage because the rules surrounding election activities can seem intimidating. They worry that speaking out could jeopardize their nonprofit status.

But nonpartisan doesn't mean powerlessness. And it certainly doesn't mean being silenced.

That's why AFJ's Bolder Advocacy program is so critical in helping nonprofits confidently navigate election-season advocacy while staying within the law.

Our **Game Time: Midterm Elections Hub** offers practical resources for voter education, issue advocacy, and other meaningful ways organizations can engage without supporting or opposing candidates And our Rules of the Game podcast recently went in-depth on **voter assistance and election protection** and how organizations can safely build collective power through **election coalitions.**

I encourage you to explore these tools and consider how your organization can make its voice heard, or to share them with colleagues.

I've spent much of my career working within political and legal systems to advance justice. Today, I'm energized by the opportunity to strengthen the communities that hold those systems accountable.

This November, I'm not on the ballot or working for a candidate. But I'm working alongside colleagues who defend and support nonprofits to stand boldly for our democracy and the right to vote.

We don't have to choose between being nonpartisan and being powerful advocates for change. We can — and must — be both.

In solidarity,

Rachel Rossi
President of Alliance for Justice

DONATE TODAY



How We Fight Matters

FEDERAL COURTS

The Federal Courts team continues to lead the fight for a fair and independent judiciary as the Trump administration advances nominees for lifetime seats on the federal bench. Since the Senate Judiciary Committee's September 30 nominations hearing, President Trump has announced five additional judicial nominees: **Todd Butler** for the Fifth Circuit, **Brian Meyers** for the Eastern District of North Carolina, **Philip Aubart** for the Middle District of North Carolina, **Eric Hamilton** for the District of Nebraska, and **Joseph Falvey** for the Northern District of Indiana.

Butler, a longtime Phelps Dunbar attorney and Federalist Society member, has spent much of his career defending municipalities and police officers in civil rights and employment litigation; he was nominated to replace Judge Leslie Southwick, for whom he previously clerked. Meyers, currently a federal magistrate judge, previously served as a Marine Corps judge advocate and federal prosecutor handling narcotics, public corruption, and national security matters. Aubart, currently First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina and a member of the Army JAG Corps, previously clerked for Judge Terrence Boyle.

Hamilton, whom AFJ opposes, previously served as Nebraska's solicitor general and now works in the Justice Department defending major Trump administration policies, including efforts to end birthright citizenship and actions involving the Department of Education. Falvey, an assistant U.S. attorney in Indiana, previously clerked for Chief Justice John Roberts, D.C. Circuit Judge Thomas Griffith, and District Judge Dabney Friedrich. We are closely scrutinizing these nominees as they move toward Senate consideration this fall.

View all of the unfit and unqualified nominees →

State Courts
Defending Democracy

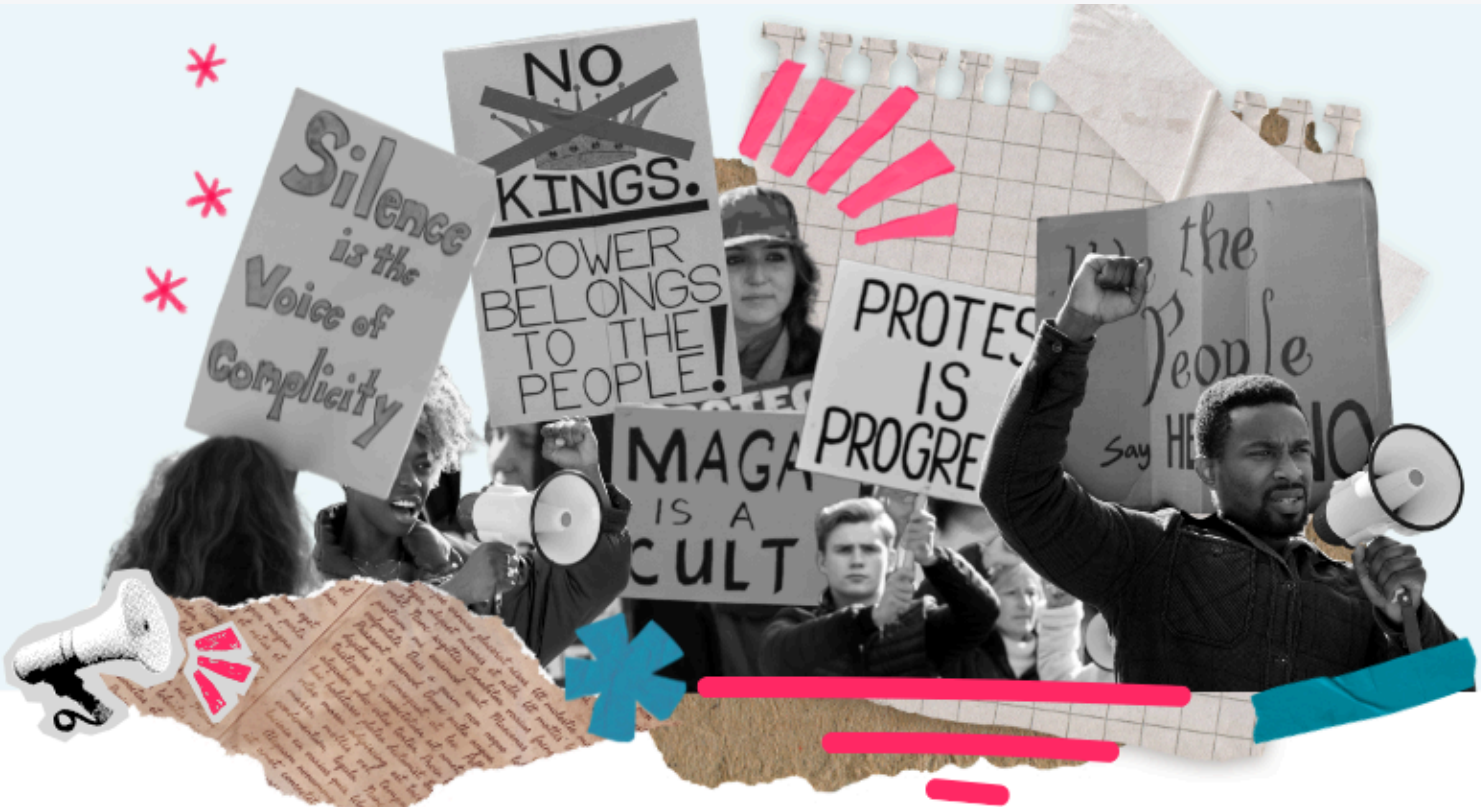


The midterm election is less than one week away!

Did you know that state court judges are elected in 38 states? That means you might see races for judge — possibly even your state supreme court justices — on your ballot when you vote on Tuesday, November 3.

State court judges can make decisions about every issue you care about, so you should get a say in who they are. You can find out if state supreme court justices will appear on your ballot **here**, and you can get all the information you need about where and how to vote **here.** We hope you'll be a state courts voter this year!

Help protect our state courts →



Our Momentum



BOLDER ADVOCACY

Protecting Nonprofits on the Front Lines

With Election Day fast approaching, nonprofits have an important role to play in helping communities participate in our democracy, sharing timely election information, and getting out the vote. Organizations also have a **role to play post-election,** while votes are being counted and results are being verified.

During this period, it is still important that 501(c)(3)s maintain a nonpartisan stance and do not support or oppose candidates for public office. Luckily, our "**Can We Say That?**" factsheet has some tips for commenting on the elections in the days following November 3.

For even more guidance, visit Bolder Advocacy's **Midterm Elections Hub,** a collection of resources to help nonprofits navigate election-year advocacy rules. And for organizations seeking guidance in Spanish, our **Bolder Advocacy en Español** resource library offers Spanish-language guidance to help nonprofits understand the rules and make their voices heard. Whether your organization is educating voters, responding to policy developments, or planning your post-election advocacy, Bolder Advocacy is here to help you make the most of this moment.

We will also be here in the months to come, when those elected **transition into their roles as policymakers,** as opposed to candidates. **Join us on November 19** to learn more about the role 501(c)(3)s can play during the transition period. You can also reach out to us at 866-NP-LOBBY for **free technical assistance,** or **click here** to schedule a training for your team or coalition partners.

Tune in now to learn more →

OUR RECENT OUTREACH & MEMBERSHIP EVENT

HOLDING COURT

An in-depth insights and analysis on the cases, justices, and issues that will shape the Supreme Court term ahead.





Janai Nelson

Legal Defense Fund



Rachel Rossi

AFJ & AFJ Action



Yasmin Cader

ACLU



Juan Proaño

League of United Latin American Citizens



Steve Vladeck

Georgetown University Law Center

ICYMI: Last month, we hosted our fifth annual **Holding Court: Supreme Court Term Preview**. Our speakers included Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse; Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of the Legal Defense Fund; Yasmin Cader, Deputy Executive Director for Program, Strategy, and Culture at the ACLU; Juan Proaño, Chief Executive Officer at the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); and Steve Vladeck, Agnes Williams Sesquicentennial Professor of Federal Courts at Georgetown University Law Center.

If you weren't able to join us in-person, you can watch our speakers breakdown the upcoming cases on the 2026-2027 Supreme Court docket **here.**

AFJ INSIGHTS

What Matters Most Right Now

Don't miss timely reads from our experts breaking down the issues shaping our courts and our communities. **More on the blog →**



August 12, 2026

Alliance for Justice Launches AFJ Law, Offering Free Legal Counsel to Nonprofits Facing Mounting Legal and Political Threats

AFJ is proud to announce the launch of AFJ Law, a new program providing direct, pro bono legal services to nonprofit organizations facing growing legal, regulatory, and political threats.

Read the press release here →



August 4 2026

Ms. Magazine: As Federal Courts Strip Away Rights, State Supreme Court Elections Take on New Urgency

According to AFJ president Rachel Rossi, state supreme courts matter because they have become the last line of defense for the protection of rights that federal courts are stripping away.

Read the complete piece here →

DONOR PROFILE

Jenn Diagostino



Meet Jenn Diagostino, an AFJ sustainer since January 2017! Jenn is a fellow worker in the nonprofit space, building relationships with organizations of all sizes to develop leadership and organizing strategies. Jenn became a sustainer in 2017 *"after Trump took office and every day was more crushing than the last and I needed to do something."*

Meet Jenn Diagostino, an AFJ sustainer since January 2017! Jenn is a fellow worker in the nonprofit space, building relationships with organizations of all sizes to develop leadership and organizing strategies.

Jenn became a sustainer in 2017 *"after Trump took office and every day was more crushing than the last and I needed to do something."*

Jenn likes that AFJ's work is focused on capacity-building programs that aim to make everyone stronger in the long term. She first learned about AFJ in 2013, through a Bolder Advocacy (BA) training, when her organization's board was worried about staff participation in lobbying activities. The BA training by an AFJ expert on how to conduct lobbying and remain compliant gave the staff and board confidence to engage in bold advocacy and increase their capacity for change.

Jenn shares that she trusts AFJ to elevate reliable, qualified people to judicial positions, and is glad that there is an organization watching out for threats to our courts and civil rights. Jenn also supports AFJ by telling her friends and community where she chose to donate during the year.

Monthly sustainers like Jenn are critical to AFJ's work. Recurring donations allows us to plan for expanding programs, increase free or low-cost resources, and help us connect one on one with people who feel impacted by our work. If you would like to share your donor story, please reach out to caroline.mcfall@afj.org.



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