UNFIT & UNQUALIFIED

WILLIAM LAMBERT

ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE

On November 10, 2026, President Donald Trump nominated William Grayson Lambert to a lifetime seat on the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina. On paper, Lambert has the polished pedigree of a conservative appellate insider: a 2009 degree from the University of Virginia, a 2012 law degree from Duke, a clerkship for Fourth Circuit Judge Dennis W. Shedd, stints in private practice at McGuireWoods and Burr & Forman, and a post as chief legal counsel to South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster (R) since 2021.

However, Lambert's legal experience falls far short of the litigation and courtroom experience recommended by the American Bar Association. To date, Lambert has tried just two cases to verdict, and only one of those was decided by a jury. Running a federal district court requires mastering the rapid-fire realities of live trials, evidentiary rulings, jury management, and criminal sentencing. Lambert has spent his career writing briefs for political executives, not presiding over courtrooms. His lack of trial experience alone makes him unequipped and unqualified for this appointment, but his ideological record as a legal warrior for conservative causes makes his nomination untenable. From reproductive rights and voting access to disability protections and methods of execution, Lambert has consistently used the levers of state power to narrow individual rights.

LACKS SUFFICIENT COURTROOM EXPERIENCE

Lambert's legal career has been shaped inside conservative movement institutions rather than public trial courts. Since joining the Federalist Society as a law student in 2009, he has steadily climbed its ranks, serving on the executive board of Duke's student chapter and chairing the Columbia Lawyers Chapter since 2020. That ideological commitment is reflected in the narrow scope of his practice. Based on his public statements, 98% of his work has been civil litigation, leaving him with virtually no experience in the criminal law that consumes a massive share of a federal district judge's docket. His courtroom resume consists of a single bench trial, a single jury trial, and a supporting role in drafting outlines and briefs during a two-week private arbitration.

DISMANTLING ABORTION RIGHTS

Long before the Supreme Court stripped away the constitutional right to abortion, Lambert was working behind the scenes to make it happen. In July 2021, serving as counsel of record for McMaster and 11 other governors, Lambert filed an amicus brief in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization urging the justices to dismantle Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey. Framing federal abortion protections as an intrusion on state sovereignty, his brief argued that the Fourteenth Amendment left states entirely free to ban the procedure. When the Supreme Court adopted that exact reasoning in June 2022 and ended nearly 50 years of federal protection, Lambert immediately pivoted to enforcing the fallout in South Carolina.

UNFIT & UNQUALIFIED

WILLIAM LAMBERT

ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE

DISMANTLING ABORTION RIGHTS (CON'T)

In 2023, he stepped forward as the principal author of McMaster's brief before the South Carolina Supreme Court in Planned Parenthood South Atlantic v. State, successfully defending a sweeping ban on abortion once fetal cardiac activity is detected — a point before many women even know they are pregnant. He did not stop at banning the procedure; he also moved to cut off healthcare access for low-income patients. In February 2025, Lambert served as counsel of record on McMaster's Supreme Court amicus brief in Medina v. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, defending South Carolina's effort to expel Planned Parenthood from its Medicaid program. In that filing, Lambert argued that Medicaid patients have no right to sue in federal court when a state violates the federal free-choice-of-provider law, effectively seeking to strip vulnerable patients of their ability to hold state officials accountable. Across every stage of this legal battle, Lambert's throughline has been clear: maximize state control and minimize bodily autonomy.

TARGETING TRANSGENDER YOUTH

Lambert's push to elevate state authority over individual medical decisions extends directly to transgender youth. In his nomination materials, Lambert defended the power of state legislatures to ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors. Rather than treating these bans as targeted infringements on civil rights, his brief equated life-saving, medically recommended care with routine state regulations on vaccinations and medical marijuana, demanding broad judicial deference to politicians over doctors and parents. Federal district judges are the front line for equal protection challenges brought by transgender litigants. His record of minimizing their constitutional claims raises significant doubt that Lambert would be able to set aside his evident anti-trans biases and fairly adjudicate cases involving trans litigants.

BLOCKING THE BALLOT BOX

When a deadly pandemic forced states to adapt how citizens cast their ballots in 2020, Lambert fought in court to keep voting difficult. In Middleton v. Andino, he represented South Carolina election officials in federal district court, circuit court, and the Supreme Court to preserve the state's strict witness-signature requirement for absentee ballots. Plaintiffs warned that forcing high-risk voters to find a witness during the height of COVID-19 forced an impossible choice between their health and their constitutional right to vote. Lambert aggressively sought emergency relief in the Fourth Circuit to block a lower court's injunction, helping secure a Supreme Court stay that kept the barrier in place. He doubled down in Thomas v. Andino, serving as the principal author of the state's briefs defending pandemic voting restrictions and taking a lead role in discovery. In a moment of national crisis, when the judiciary was asked to safeguard access to democracy, Lambert used his legal skills to defend the obstacles.

UNFIT & UNQUALIFIED

WILLIAM LAMBERT

ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE

UNDERMINING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inside South Carolina's classrooms, Lambert repeatedly aligned himself against public education advocates and vulnerable children. In Eidson v. South Carolina Department of Education, he represented McMaster in defending a voucher-style school-choice program that funneled taxpayer dollars into private schools — a scheme the South Carolina Supreme Court ultimately struck down as a violation of the South Carolina Constitution. Even more starkly, in Disability Rights South Carolina v. McMaster, Lambert defended the state's ban prohibiting public school districts from using state funds to enforce mask mandates during the pandemic. Students with severe disabilities sued under the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, arguing that stripping away basic safety protocols effectively locked them out of public school buildings. Appearing in federal court, Lambert argued to keep the ban intact, prioritizing political culture-war mandates over the federal civil rights of students with disabilities.

DEFENDING THE FIRING SQUAD

As South Carolina struggled to obtain lethal injection drugs, state lawmakers rewrote execution protocols to make the electric chair the default method of death and added the firing squad as an alternative. When people on death row challenged these methods, Lambert took the lead in defending them. In Owens v. Stirling, he handled the legal research, wrote the briefs, and delivered the appellate arguments for McMaster, persuading the South Carolina Supreme Court to uphold both electrocution and the firing squad. He later returned to the issue in Stanko v. Anderson, representing the governor in opposing emergency relief for an incarcerated person facing a scheduled June 2025 execution. Federal trial judges regularly preside over Eighth Amendment challenges brought by incarcerated people. Lambert's efforts to advocate for such extreme pro-death penalty positions remains concerning as someone who would preside over cases defining and interpreting what counts as cruel and unusual punishment.

LAMBERT UNFIT AND UNQUALIFIED FOR FEDERAL BENCH

A federal district courtroom is no place for on-the-job training. Presiding over complex jury trials, making split-second evidentiary calls, and handing down criminal sentences demand seasoned trial lawyers with proven impartiality. Lambert offers neither. Instead, he brings a career spent advancing hard-right legal theories for government clients — working to overturn Roe, restrict voting, sideline students with disabilities, and defend execution by firing squad. Confirming him would put extreme ideological loyalty ahead of basic courtroom competence.