

# 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

 ALLIANCE  
FOR  
JUSTICE

 AFJ  
ACTION



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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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## DEAR FRIENDS,

When I started in May as AFJ's new president, I knew I was joining an organization that was uniquely prepared to respond during this truly terrifying time for our democracy. For over four decades now, AFJ has been on the front lines of championing a fair judiciary, educating nonprofits on how to be confident, bold advocates, bolstering and leveraging the strength of our member organizations, and building power across the progressive movement. Today, in the face of existential threats to our civil society and inhumane attacks on the most vulnerable among us, AFJ stays unwavering in our resolve.

Last September, AFJ staff did extensive scenario planning in advance of the 2024 election, imagining how the organization's work would shift depending on the results. While no one could quite predict the pace and ferocity of Trump's attacks on our democracy from day one, AFJ was nonetheless prepared to respond, and to respond immediately.

This report highlights that response, as well as our accomplishments and growth in 2025. Because of the organization's foresight, as soon as the year began, we were able to pivot to both immediate defense and the pro-active work for deeper, systemic change needed in this moment: pipeline building for the judiciary at the state and federal levels, building long-term power through strategic opposition, and strengthening and supporting our nonprofit partners, member organizations, and allies. As part of that strategy, we recently launched two new programs to provide legal support to nonprofits facing politically motivated attacks: the Nonprofit Legal Defense Network (a collaboration with We the Action) and AFJ Law.

In my first seven months as President, seeing the energy and love for AFJ by so many has confirmed what I've known about this organization: AFJ's superpower is our team — from our passionate, committed staff to our partners, friends, and allies across the movement, and to

our supporters. At a time when the world seems so dark, AFJ continues to shine brightly with hope and fight. We know that we've been here before — so we also know that we've fought back, and we've won. In the face of these existential threats to our civil society and democracy, AFJ has not slowed our work to protect and empower two critical pillars in the defense of democracy: our courts and nonprofit advocacy that represents the voice of the people. We are so grateful to have you in this fight.

**Together we stand,**

*Rachel Rossi*





# RACHEL'S FIRST YEAR

Although it has not been a full year, Rachel has hit the ground running demonstrating her thought leadership and commitment to bringing the work of AFJ to the forefront of progressive spaces. On top of appearances on MSNBC and in Democracy Docket and moderating our Holding Court series with leading commentators and advocates, she has also hosted events and meetings for our donors to get to know her better in DC, NYC, LA, and San Francisco.

## SPEAKING EVENTS & INTERVIEWS



**Courts Under Attack: A Conversation with Marc Elias**

*Democracy Docket*  
October 29, 2025



**Interview Hosted by Angela Reddock-Wright**

*Legal Lens Podcast*  
October 9, 2025



**Trump Administration Doubles Down on Judicial Coup**

*Legal AF*  
September 3, 2025



**Defending Democracy: Why Nonprofits Matter Now More Than Ever**

**Congressional Black Caucus**  
September 24, 2025

# ARTICLES



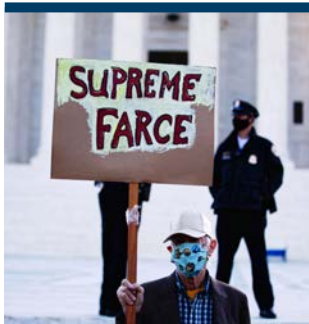
**The Election Denier Script Trump’s Judicial Nominees Are Following**

*Democracy Docket*  
November 5, 2025



**The Supreme Court Is Poised to Further Undermine Access to the Polls**

*Democracy Docket*  
October 2, 2025



**The Supreme Court Doesn’t Need Trump to Dismantle Democracy, But He Helps**

*Democracy Docket*  
August 7, 2025



**Trump’s Spat with the Federalist Society Signals a Heightened Threat to the Rule of Law**

*Democracy Docket*  
June 25, 2025

WE ARE OUT HERE TODAY BECAUSE THIS SUPREME COURT HAS ABANDONED ITS DUTY TO SAFEGUARD OUR LIBERTY... CLEARLY UNLAWFUL ACTIONS BY THIS ADMINISTRATION ARE BEING RUBBER-STAMPED FOR APPROVAL BY OUR NATION’S HIGHEST COURT. THIS IS SIMPLY NOT JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW. **AND WE’RE HERE TO SAY, ‘ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.’**

RACHEL ROSSI



# DEFENDING THE COURTS

FROM PERSISTENCE TO **RESISTANCE**

## VICTORIES UNDER THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

During the Biden years, Alliance for Justice advanced a vision of a fair and inclusive judiciary. Those four years, AFJ partnered with the Senate and the Biden administration to transform the courts, resulting in 235 confirmations representing a historic number of women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and lawyers with diverse professional backgrounds — including public defenders, civil rights attorneys, labor lawyers, and consumer protection lawyers — confirmed to Article III courts.

For more information on judicial appointments under the Biden administration, check out the 2024 End of Year Report on the Federal Courts: [Our Courts, Our Rights: Defending Justice Beyond 2024](#). AFJ was proud to help shape that progress.



## DEFENDING OUR PROGRESS

Those 235 judges have been a critical bulwark against Trump’s egregious power grabs and attempts to dismantle our democracy. While there’s no denying the harms this administration has inflicted on our rights and communities in just one year, these judges have held the line to slow or stop dangerous policies and refused to back down even in the face of increasing hostility and threats to their very safety. We track these pivotal rulings in **The Benchline**, our courts newsletter, so supporters can see where judges are holding the line — and what’s at stake.

As Trump began announcing judicial nominees, it was immediately clear that this administration demands a new approach. Trump has eschewed even the conservative advisers of his first term, demanding a new level of loyalty and blatantly dangerous positions from his nominees. While AFJ has long been a trusted source for congressional offices, the media, and the public with our unique, timely, and in-depth analysis on federal judicial nominations, our work has become even more crucial.

Trump has increasingly denied the public transparency and the opportunity to examine his nominees’ records and views. Breaking with the practice of every recent administration, he has not publicly announced recent nominees until as close as two days before their hearing. But AFJ has been prepared. Our nominations tracking and research has at times become the only public resource in the country on their announcements — sometimes for weeks. And we have sounded the alarm on nominees’ **abhorrent views** and **unyielding loyalty** to Trump’s dangerous agenda.

With 34 judicial nominees put forward by the Trump administration this year, AFJ has created **dedicated pages highlighting the biographies** of those with the most glaring pasts. Our research provides exclusive insights into nominees’ records, helping stakeholders understand the potential implications of their confirmations. Since January, we’ve produced:

**22** fact sheets

**6** detailed reports

**19** letters of opposition  
(shared with all 47 Senate offices in the Democratic coalition)



Our advocacy doesn't end with the research. Our findings inform our communications strategies, coalition building, and engagement of new partners and constituencies to speak out against nominees most dangerous to their rights, expanding the progressive courts movement to build our power. AFJ has built new partnerships, such as working with progressive prosecutors to oppose Emil Bove's nomination and deepening our reach across the country by leading joint letters of opposition from nominees' home states. Leveraging the strength of our affiliates, AFJ Action has mobilized thousands of advocates, including generating over 2,000 constituent calls to key senate offices opposing Bove's confirmation. While we won't defeat every nominee, we've succeeded in garnering bipartisan opposition despite the super charged politicization of today's politics.

Our team has also continued to brief Hill staff and the public on access to civil justice issues, ensuring the courts remain an avenue to hold the wealthy and powerful accountable for harm they cause, often in collaboration with coalition partners through webinars and briefings.

AFJ has remained a leading voice in the fight against forced arbitration. We moderated a press conference with Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Rep. Hank Johnson for the reintroduction of the Forced Arbitration Injustice Reform Act and led a panel for the National Association of Consumer Advocates on preserving access to the courts for consumers.

We also co-led a House and Senate Judiciary Committee briefing on "Corporate Attacks on Judicial Review," highlighting how corporate interests are undermining the independence of the judiciary.

Through traditional and social media, AFJ and AFJ Action has amplified the public's understanding of the judiciary's role in safeguarding democracy.

We've also used creative digital campaigns to raise awareness, including:

- Book of Bragdon: A social media series spotlighting troubling quotes from nominee David Alan Bragdon (MD NC)
- Engaging content across [Bluesky](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter/X](#)
- A video from the [Louisiana v. Callais](#) oral arguments at the Supreme Court
- A [video](#) on why Bove is dangerous for our futures



**UNFIT AND UNQUALIFIED**

**Explainer Video on Why William Crain is Unfit and Unqualified**

AFJ Action, Tik Tok  
November 19, 2025



**Nomination of William Crain (ED LA)**

nola.com  
October 21, 2025



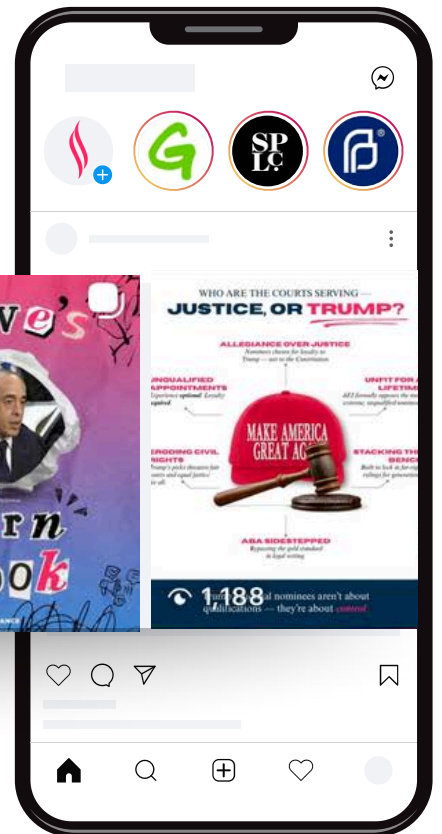
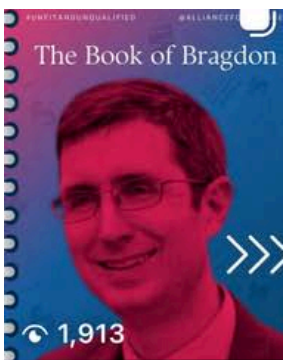
**AFJ Blog Feature on SCOTUS Decision in Louisiana v. Callais**

Salon  
October 8, 2025



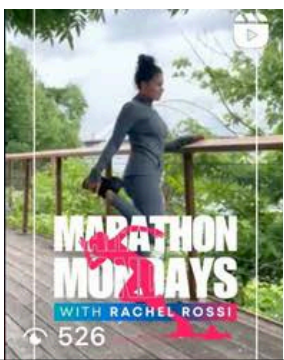
**AFJ's Advocacy Against Attacks on D.C.'s Judicial Nominations Process**

DC News Now  
September 25, 2025

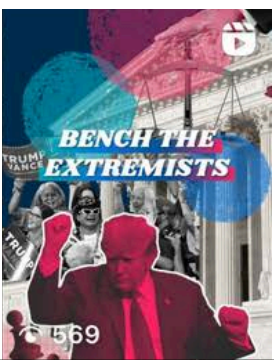
The Book of Bragdon

1,913



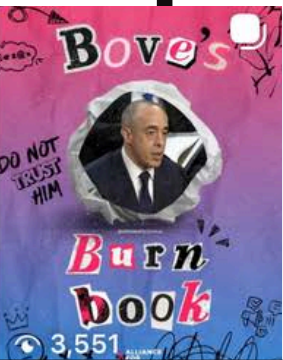
MARATHON MONDAYS WITH RACHEL ROSSI

526



BENCH THE EXTREMISTS

569



Bove's Burn book

3,551



# A SHIFT TO MAGISTRATE JUDGES

Early in 2025, we expanded our flagship judicial preparedness program, *Building the Bench*, to consider magistrate judges alongside federal and state supreme court-level judges. Magistrate judges are selected by district court judges from a list of recommendations from local commissions. They are also often the first point of contact for litigants in federal court, handling a range of civil and criminal matters, and their decisions have a profound impact on the administration of equal justice under law. Most strikingly, almost 20% of the current sitting federal judges were magistrate judges earlier in their careers, underscoring the importance of this role as a training ground for future federal judgeships.

To help broaden the pool of attorneys considering this path, we've held three 101 briefings to demystify the process this year.

## SPOTLIGHT

# STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY & STATE SUPREME COURT NOMINEES

While the federal judiciary has seen a wave of ideologically extreme nominees, AFJ has seized this moment to deepen our engagement with state-based organizations. By highlighting the real-world consequences of harmful nominations, we've helped local groups understand how federal judicial decisions impact their communities — and how they can act.

For example, when David Alan Bragdon was nominated to the Middle District of North Carolina, AFJ was the only national organization to alert state-based partners to his troubling record. Our outreach led to a coalition briefing and a **public letter of opposition**, amplifying local voices and concerns.

We used a similar approach in Louisiana, working with state groups to raise awareness about the nomination of William Crain (ED LA), which resulted in **significant local media coverage**.

We took our state courts work to new states in 2025 while strengthening our enduring, year-round partnerships in key states. We celebrated outstanding jurists

joining state supreme courts:

- **Larkin Walsh** was appointed to the Kansas Supreme Court, bringing a strong record of advocacy for workers, consumers, and survivors of human trafficking.
- **Maria Elena Cruz** joined the Arizona Supreme Court, becoming the first Black person and the first Hispanic woman to serve on the court. Her background in criminal defense and tribal law brings critical perspectives to the bench.

AFJ supported both appointments with letters to Govs. **Katie Hobbs (AZ)** and Laura Kelly (KS) and followed up with letters of gratitude after their selections.

Our State Courts Hub remains one of the only public resources identifying state court selection methods and upcoming vacancies in the country, and is even more important as we look ahead to over 30 states holding supreme court elections, with appointments expected in even more states next year. The year began with the **2024 North Carolina race** between Justice Allison Riggs and Jefferson Griffin yet to be finalized until a federal court ruled against Griffin's attempts to throw out thousands of lawfully-cast votes.

AFJ Action Campaign conducted voter education campaigns in Wisconsin, where Justice Susan Crawford defeated her opponent Brad Schimel, and Pennsylvania, where voters retained Justices Christine Donohue, Kevin Dougherty, and David Wecht. Despite millions of dollars pouring in from national and state conservatives – including drawing the attention of Elon Musk in Wisconsin – justice prevailed. In both states we sent over 500,000 primary purpose text messages to voters about the importance of the race, and developed **educational videos** and other digital media.





# DEFENDING DEMOCRACY IN STATE SUPREME COURTS

AFJ continues to lead national conversations about state judiciaries' role in democracy. As the Supreme Court and Trump administration go ever further in an agenda to dismantle our rights, state supreme courts — and the judges who sit on them — are taking on more critical questions such as voting rights and gerrymandering and can at times check federal attacks with more expansive state constitutions. In 2025, we released a new volume in our **Faces of Justice series**, highlighting **Hispanic** representation on state supreme courts. We also updated previous volumes on **Black** and **LGBTQ+** justices to reflect recent changes.

We released a joint report of AFJ and AFJ Action, **State of Justice 2025**, examining how retirements, appointments, and elections are reshaping state courts — and what that means for the future of democracy.

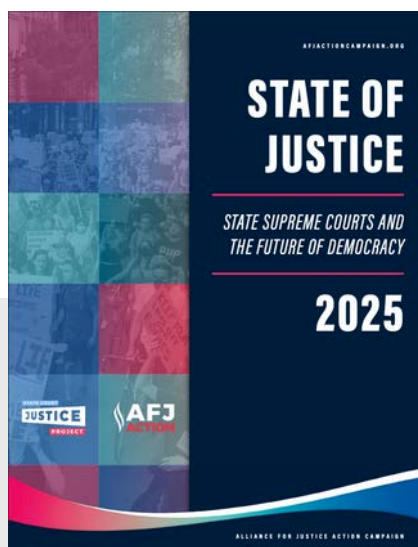
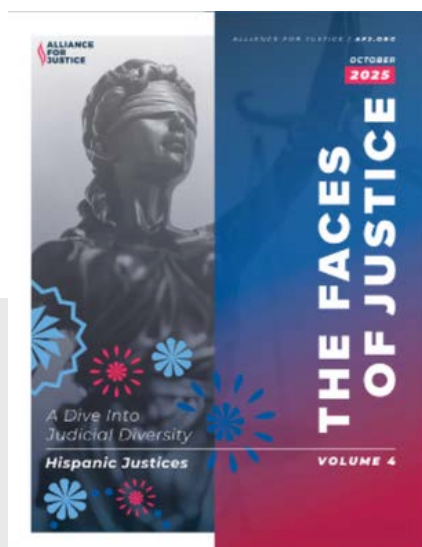
We also soft-launched a **State Supreme Court Case Database**, starting with decisions from New Jersey and New York. This tool, when publicly launched in early 2026, will allow users to explore significant rulings within our focused issue areas by year, state, and topic, with plans to expand to all 50 states by mid-2026.



Through events like AFJ Action's **Gavel In** series and trainings with partners like re:power and the People's Parity Project, AFJ and AFJ Action continue to educate and empower advocates, voters, and legal professionals to defend judicial independence and promote a fair, representative judiciary.

## WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

The courts are under attack, but AFJ is not standing still. We are transforming this moment of crisis into an opportunity to educate, mobilize, and build power. By connecting federal fights to state level advocacy, we are laying the groundwork for a future judiciary that upholds fairness and equality. Even in the face of Trump's regressive nominees, we are strengthening coalitions and preparing for the day when progress is possible again.





# EXPANDING NONPROFIT SUPPORT AND DEFENSE

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Nonprofits are central to protecting our democracy, from representing the voice of the people in policymaking to defending the rule of law and constitutional rights. It's why the Trump administration targeted civil society from day one, signing executive orders demanding the DOJ and other agencies provide lists of organizations to investigate, dismantling programs necessary to nonprofits providing basic needs to their communities, and prohibiting efforts to address the dangerous inequities embedded across our systems. AFJ has bolstered our Bolder Advocacy (BA) program and launched new initiatives to help nonprofits fight back: AFJ Law and the Nonprofit Legal Defense Network.

## WE THE ACTION PARTNERSHIP

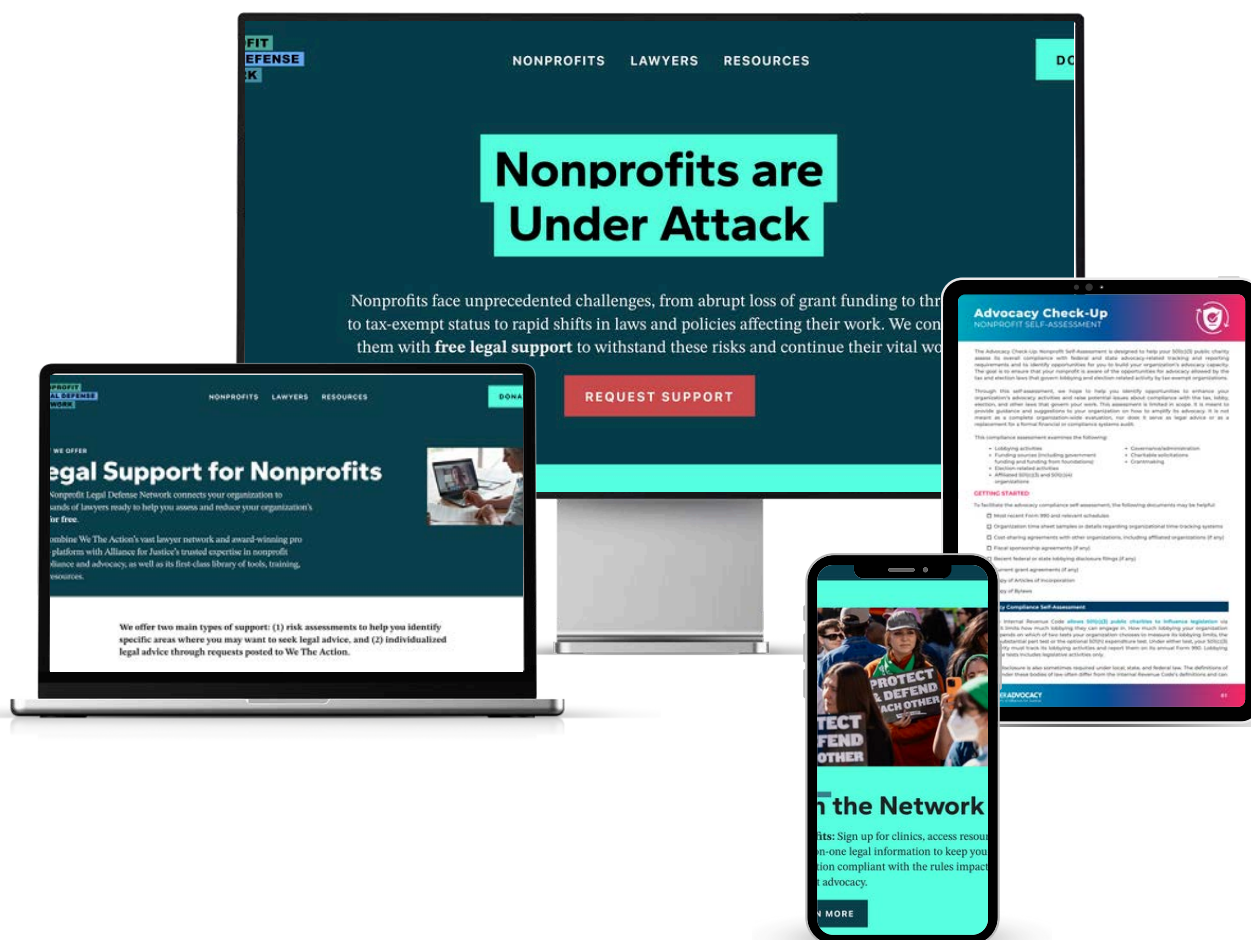
In partnership with We the Action, AFJ launched the **Nonprofit Legal Defense Network**. Combining the tried-and-true methods of our two organizations — AFJ's Bolder Advocacy program's trusted expertise in 501(c)(3)/501(c)(4) compliance and WTA's network of more than 54,000 lawyers poised to provide pro bono assistance — NLDN connects organizations to AFJ-trained lawyers to identify compliance needs and use WTA's network to find pro bono assistance to meet them. Through this partnership, nonprofits can access WTA's full network to find pro bono assistance to address any needs or vulnerabilities.

This year, NLDN has organized risk assessment clinics pairing trained lawyers with individual nonprofits to provide tailored assistance completing AFJ's **Advocacy Check-Up Tool** to identify gaps related to election season advocacy, lobbying, and governance. While no legal advice is offered at the clinics, organizations are then able to utilize We the Action's platform to request formal legal advice from WTA's full network to address any issues identified.

To increase the fluency among WTA’s network on nonprofit advocacy and tax law (and therefore the number of attorneys able to provide support to nonprofits), AFJ is providing training opportunities to their pro-bono attorneys on compliance and principles of movement law in working with mission-driven organizations. To date, more than 400 attorneys have been trained.

This network helps organizations navigate shifting laws and policies, defend against politically motivated attacks, and continue advocating boldly for their missions.

## We The Action Partnership





## “BREAK IN CASE OF PANIC!” HUB

Recognizing the growing threats facing justice- and equity-focused nonprofits, AFJ launched the **“Break in Case of Panic!” hub**. This curated resource center equips organizations with tools to defend their missions and respond proactively to legal and political challenges. It reflects AFJ’s commitment to helping nonprofits not just survive — but lead — in turbulent times.

## EXPANDED ON-DEMAND TRAINING LIBRARY

AFJ continued to grow its **on-demand training offerings**, including new sessions on “Preparing for Politically Motivated Attacks” in both English and Spanish. These trainings build on a robust library covering topics such as nonprofit lobbying, election advocacy, and coalition work — available anytime, anywhere.

## BOLDER BASICS WITH BRITTANY

Recognizing the changing landscape of communications tools to reach new audiences, we launched **Bolder Basics with Brittany**, a new TikTok and Instagram series with one of our Bolder Advocacy experts breaking down how nonprofits work, why they matter, and how advocates and the public can make a difference. Through short videos, we go over the rules in digestible segments covering the difference between lobbying and advocacy, how nonprofits and foundations can maximize their allowed amount of lobbying, and more.



## EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN THE MOVEMENT

Attacks from every direction mean nonprofits must unite to be stronger together across the progressive movement. Following the 2024 election, AFJ began new efforts to expand our capacity through strategic partnerships in addition to the Nonprofit Legal Defense Network. We've joined networks with dozens of organizations providing support to nonprofits to ensure our unique advocacy and compliance assistance can be coordinated with partners working in areas ranging from physical and cybersecurity to response to government investigations.

In one partnership, we've joined with United Philanthropy Forum to provide training and legal education for UPF's vast network of Philanthropy Infrastructure Organizations (PIOs). This partnership will strengthen the philanthropy sector's advocacy capacity through tailored trainings, co-developed resources to assess and strengthen PIO's advocacy-readiness, and ongoing trainings to normalize and educate about the rules of advocacy.

## IMPACT STORIES

AFJ's trainings are making a tangible difference:

- **Tony's Place** in Texas, after attending our training, chose to make the **501(h) election** to maximize its lobbying capacity. The organization also created a new advocacy committee to guide its state-level legislative work.
- The **Virginia Conservation Network** reported that our training served as a great refresher on how their network can safely engage in 501(c)(3) safe advocacy.
- Another organization, **Family Values at Work Action**, credited our guidance with reinforcing the importance of timekeeping for advocacy activities. They noted that their successful campaigns for paid leave and sick days were "structured by the knowledge they learned through AFJ."



## EXPANDING AND RESOURCING LEGISLATIVE AND STATE-LAW EXPERTISE

In April, **Maggie Ellinger-Locke** joined the Bolder Advocacy team as the first **Senior State Law and Legislative Counsel**. Maggie monitors the evolving legal landscape at both the state and federal levels, ensuring our resources remain current and actionable. Her work strengthens our ability to support nonprofits navigating complex compliance challenges while advancing bold advocacy.

## AFJ LAW AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

AFJ was proud to launch AFJ Law this year as a new program to deepen our support of nonprofit advocacy, strengthen the progressive movement's ability to advocate within the bounds of IRS restrictions on tax-exempt organizations, and ensure compliance to keep their organizations safe. Building on the success of Bolder Advocacy, AFJ Law will go beyond providing technical assistance to providing limited legal advice on clients' activities. By offering critical guidance on the most

challenging advocacy rules and regulations, AFJ Law will empower nonprofits to be both bold and secure in their advocacy as they fight to advance their missions, protect their communities, and transform our democracy. AFJ is thrilled to announce that we've hired AFJ Law's inaugural program director, **Deepa Padmanabha**, and look forward to piloting this program of legal services in 2026!

# BOLDER ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS

The Bolder Advocacy program continues to serve the nonprofits and advocates alike looking to enhance their work without compromising their security or legality.

**200+**

**webinars & workshops hosted in 2025**  
(with over 60 more scheduled before 2025 closes)



**2,200**

**organizations served through Technical Assistance and workshops**




**6,500+**

**individuals trained**



**8,500+**

**"Rules of the Game" podcast listens**



## MOST POPULAR PODCAST EPISODES IN 2025



**Memos, Executive Orders, and Impacts on Nonprofits**



**Advocacy & Fiscal Sponsorship**



**Advocacy for Racial Justice, Civil Rights, & Immigration**

## TOP TRAININGS IN 2025



**Nonprofit Advocacy in Tumultuous Times**



**Preparing for Politically Motivated Attacks**



**Using AFJ's Advocacy Check-Up Tool**



# OUTREACH & EDUCATION

## BUILDING POWER THROUGH **KNOWLEDGE**

In 2025, Alliance for Justice deepened its commitment to public education and outreach, equipping advocates, legal professionals, and community members with the tools and knowledge to defend democracy and advance justice.

### HOLDING COURT SERIES

AFJ hosted a powerful lineup of **Holding Court** events, each designed to spotlight urgent legal and social justice issues:



#### **Power, Precedent, and Pushback in Trump's Second Term**

February 18 | 1,397 views

*Featuring Hannah Swanson (Planned Parenthood), Golnaz Fakhimi (Muslim Advocates)*



#### **From Visibility to Victory — Defending Trans Rights**

March 26 | 471 views

*Held in honor of Transgender Day of Visibility, with panelists from the National Women's Soccer League Players Association, Advocates for Trans Equality, PFLAG National, and the National LGBTQ Task Force.*



#### **Environmental Law in the Age of Erosion**

April 30 | 498 views

*Held in honor of Earth Day, featuring leaders from Earthjustice and the Native American Rights Fund.*



## The Supreme Court and Conservative Grievance

May 28 | 438 views

*Featuring Leah Litman (Strict Scrutiny podcast), this event marked Rachel Rossi's first appearance on the series.*



## SCOTUS Term Review – Church, State, and the Shifting Court

June 26 | 842 views

*With Chris Geidner (Law Dork), Dena Sher (Americans United), and Alison Gill (National Women's Law Center).*



## Expanding Disability Rights and Defending the ADA 35 Years Later

August 26 | 269 views

*Celebrating the ADA's 35th anniversary with panelists from the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities and the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.*



## Supreme Court Term Preview

September 9 | 105 in-person attendees

*Co-hosted with AFJ Action in Washington, D.C., featuring Deepak Gupta (Gupta Wessler LLP), Tara Malloy (Campaign Legal Center), Allen Morris (National LGBTQ Task Force), and remarks from Reps. Hank Johnson and Mary Gay Scanlon.*



## NONPROFIT ADVOCACY & DEMOCRACY

To defend against the onslaught of attacks on nonprofits and efforts to chill nonprofit advocacy, this year AFJ elevated the role of nonprofits in our democracy through events, media, and public education.

- **Nonprofits Under Attack: Protecting our Role in Protecting Democracy** (August 8, Netroots Nation in New Orleans)
- Advocacy in a Second Trump Administration: A Practical Guide for Leaders on Defending Progress and Advancing Justice (February 20 Nonprofit Quarterly event, **virtual**)
- **Legal Defense Funds Protect Nonprofits Under Political Attack by Trump Administration** (Nonprofit Quarterly)

## CO-HOSTED EVENTS

AFJ also partnered with allies to support civic engagement and legal advocacy:

- **Rally for Inclusive Education**  
April 22 | Outside the Supreme Court during *Mahmoud v. Taylor* oral arguments
- **Law Day of Action**  
May 1 | Rally outside the Supreme Court, hosted by Lawyers for Good Government
- **National Day of Action**  
May 1 | Rally at Lafayette Square, hosted by NEA
- **Lawyers March for Democracy**  
November 15 | Rally outside the Supreme Court co-hosted by People’s Parity Project, ACLU, American Constitution Society, Lambda Legal, Project South, Lawyers for Good Government, Women Lawyers on Guard, and Virginia Poverty Law Center

## MEMBER ENGAGEMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING

AFJ welcomed new member organizations and expanded our capacity-building offerings in 2025:

- **New Members:** Funders Together to End Homelessness, LA84 Foundation, Sojourn Strategies, Greenpeace USA, Women’s Fund of Central Indiana, U.S. Climate Action



Network (USCAN), Cone Health Foundation, Working Partnerships USA, Jeremiah Program, Advancement Project, FairVote, Committee for Rural Engagement/Indiana Rural Summit, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, Missouri Council on Aging, OUT Maine, White Men for Racial Justice, and Win Without War.

AFJ also launched new consultation services and greater access to our BA experts:

- **Fundraising Consultations** with Amy Ciciora, Director of Individual Giving
- **Branding Consultations** with Nadia Watson McDaniel, Branding Strategist
- **Digital Communications Consultations** with Taylor Miller, Senior Digital Communications Strategist
- Within our **eight member cohorts** defined by issue areas, each cohort has an assigned BA representative allowing a closer connection between our resources and our members.

AFJ's membership program not only brings together the power of our member organizations but also builds it further through capacity building and advocacy resources and education. Our training offerings this year included:

# 30

**staffers across 15–16 member organizations were in full attendance** during our two **Midwest Academy** trainings in 2025.

# 34

**attendees from 22 organizations participated** in our new offering with **The Management Center** for trainings on equitable management and performance feedback.

# Q1

**Nonprofit Advocacy in Tumultuous Times** (Feb 26) – A session featuring **Keith Thirion** and **Victor Rivera Labiosa** that explored lessons from the first Trump administration and strategies for the current moment, with 53 staffers registered.

# Q2

**Using AFJ's Advocacy Check-Up Tool to Strengthen Your Strategy** (June 24) – This interactive session walked members through our quick self-assessment tool designed to help nonprofits evaluate and elevate their advocacy work, with **17 member staffers registered**.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & TRAININGS

AFJ invested in people and partnerships through high-impact trainings and events:

- Justice Trivia – A fun, in-person community-building event held in D.C. on June 24 with 77 attendees and October 24 with 44 attendees.
- Netroots Nation 2025
  - AFJ and AFJ Action sent 12 staff members across five teams to the Netroots Nation 2025 conference in New Orleans
  - AFJ Action sponsored a booth in the Netroots Nation’s Town Hall. Attendees of the conference signed our ‘**Unfit and Unqualified**’ pledge
  - AFJ and AFJ Action had four sessions accepted, two of which were live-streamed during the conference (only a few sessions are live-streamed). See below for the sessions.

Session Title	AFJ/AFJ Action Staffer(s)	Session Type	Additional Speakers
<b>2026 is Coming: Maximize Your 501(c)(4), Start a PAC, &amp; Build Power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan Finkle Sourlis</li> <li>• Melissa Marichal Zayas</li> </ul>	AFJ Action Training	
<b>Shield Your Mission: Assess Your Advocacy &amp; Protect Your House!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victor Rivera Labiosa</li> <li>• Natalie Roetzel Ossenfort</li> </ul>	AFJ Training	
<b>Beyond Review: How State Courts Can Stop the Erosion of Our Rights</b>	Tish Gotell Faulks	AFJ Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mercedes Fulbright, re:power</li> <li>• Alicia Bannon, the Brennan Center for Justice</li> <li>• Shwetika Bajjal, PPFA</li> <li>• Tasleemah Tolulope “Tolu” Lawal, NYU’s Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law</li> </ul>
<b>Nonprofits Under Attack: Protecting Our Role in Protecting Democracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keith Thirion</li> <li>• Natalie Roetzel Ossenfort</li> </ul>	AFJ Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brianna Twofoot, PPFA</li> <li>• Leroy Johnson, Southern Partners Fund</li> </ul>

# NEW STAFF. NEW ENERGY.

This year, AFJ welcomed exceptional talent across our programs, strengthening our ability to defend justice and empower advocates nationwide.



## TISH GOTELL FAULKS

STATE COURTS DIRECTOR

Tish is an attorney, advocate, and educator passionate about inspiring the United States to fulfill its promise of empowering the people to self-govern. She joins the Alliance for Justice as the state courts director with the Justice Team. In this role, Tish will continue the vital work of supporting progressive, state-based coalitions in their efforts to seat demographically diverse and movement attorneys and lower court judges to state supreme courts.



## CHRISTINE CHEN ZINNER

FEDERAL COURTS RESEARCH & ADVOCACY  
DIRECTOR

Christine recently joined AFJ as the Justice team's federal courts research and advocacy director, where she helps lead research and advocacy efforts to push for the most rights-expansive and diverse federal judiciary possible. Prior to AFJ, she specialized in consumer advocacy and access to justice issues at the American Association for Justice and the Americans for Financial Reform. She began her advocacy journey as an Esther Peterson fellow with Consumers Union (now Consumer Reports), where she was selected by a panel that included Nan Aron.



### **MAGGIE ELLINGER-LOCKE**

SENIOR STATE LAW AND LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Maggie (she/her) joined Bolder Advocacy in April as senior state law and legislative counsel. She brings a deep background in movement lawyering and decades of experience supporting nonprofits and frontline communities. Maggie is excited to expand Bolder Advocacy's state-specific resources and strengthen the resilience of the nonprofit ecosystem.



### **MORGAN FLITT**

DOROT FELLOW

Morgan is a recent graduate of Georgetown Law School, where she interned with a variety of public interest organizations working on civil rights, racial justice issues, and appellate litigation. She joined AFJ in September as a Dorot fellow, where she supports the work of the federal courts teams. Her days are spent researching new judicial nominees, monitoring and distilling Supreme Court decisions, and engaging in coalition work.



### **RANDY FAIGIN**

BUILDING THE BENCH COUNSEL

Randy joins AFJ as Building the Bench counsel, where she empowers movement lawyers to pursue judgeships, focusing on recruiting and supporting public interest attorneys for the bench. Previously based in Ithaca, NY, she moved to Atlanta after law school and is active in local elections, often recruiting and managing school board candidates. She also serves on the board of the Equality Clinic of the Medical College of Georgia. Known for her dedication and warmth, she lives in DeKalb County with her family and their rescue pitbull, a frequent presence in her Zoom calls.



## TUESDAY SMITH

### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Tuesday serves as chief financial officer, bringing extensive experience in financial management, strategic planning, and operational efficiency across nonprofit and private equity sectors. Previously CFO at the Illinois Environmental Council, she oversaw human capital and \$5M+ in financial operations and earlier strengthened finance infrastructure for a Chicago food access nonprofit. A Chicago native, Tuesday holds an MBA in Finance & Strategy from the University of Notre Dame and a BS in Accounting & Marketing from DePaul University. When she's not crunching numbers, you might find her on the tennis court, watching HGTV, or hanging out with her mini doodle, Kitty.



## CAROLINE MCFALL

### SENIOR DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

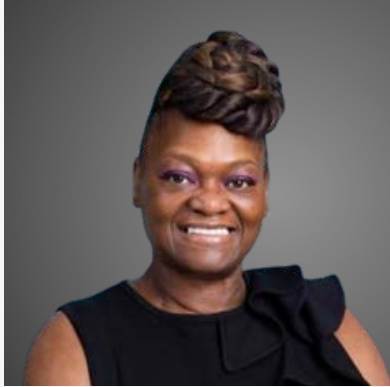
Caroline is AFJ's senior development associate and helps AFJ secure funding for programs. She works in 3-5 spreadsheets a day to make sure that donors feel connected to AFJ's work and feel like their gift is making a difference. She enjoys working with everyday donors and sharing in peoples' ordinary generosity, although an extraordinary \$10,000 gift is something she really enjoys seeing come in. Outside of work she enjoys knitting, gardening, and watching multiple Real Housewives franchises at a time.



## DEEPA PADMANABHA

### AFJ LAW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Deepa joins as AFJ Law Program Director, bringing extensive experience from her 14-year tenure at Greenpeace USA, where she served as lead in-house attorney defending the organization against major lawsuits and protecting advocacy rights. She is skilled at guiding teams through existential challenges and building coalitions to strengthen movements beyond the courtroom. Deepa is passionate about advancing advocacy and supporting the right to protest. Based in Takoma Park, MD, she enjoys baking desserts and doing cartwheels with her kids in her free time.



## PAMELA EVANS

SENIOR MANAGER OF EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

With 20+ years of proven success supporting executives in nonprofit and association leadership, Pam is known for strengthening operational efficiency and executive performance. Her strengths include C-suite partnership, complex calendar and travel management, and board engagement and governance support. Pam launched her career at the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and went on to support executives at the American Nurses Association (ANA), American Red Cross, Children's National Medical Center, and Results for Development (R4D), where she served as a strategic partner to the CEO and CFO.



# AFJ IN THE NEWS



**Why the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Matters —and How to Make Your Voice Heard in the Ongoing Election**

*Ms. Magazine*  
October 22, 2025



**SCOTUS Ruling Could Let GOP Add 19 House Seats And Clear Path for a One-Party System**

*Salon*  
October 8, 2025



**Trump Hijacked the Courts: Here's How to Fix It**

*Boom! Lawyered Podcast*  
August 28, 2025



**Legal Defense Funds Protect Nonprofits Under Political Attack by Trump Administration**

*Nonprofit Quarterly*  
August 13, 2025



**Why Critics Fear Emil Bove's Confirmation Will Start a MAGA Judicial Shift**

*Al Jazeera*  
July 31, 2025

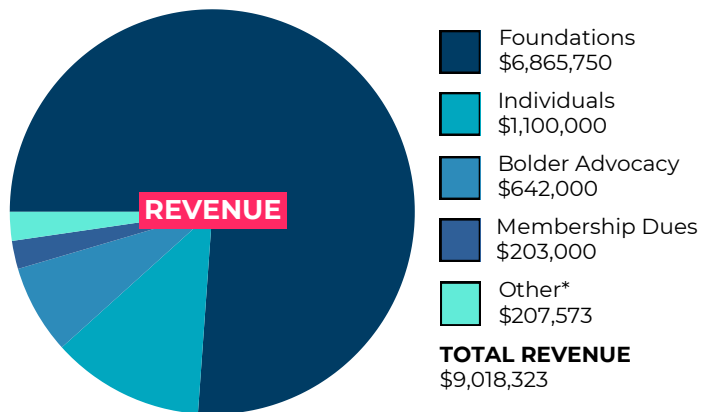


No Kings  
No Dictators  
No Oligarchs  
Congress, do your job!

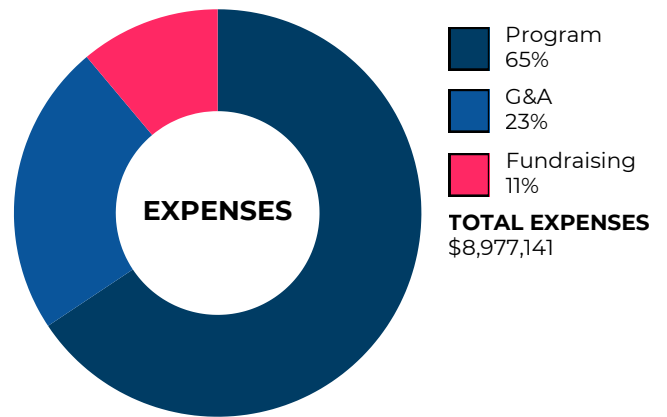
Gov't for the  
PEOPLE  
NOT FOR  
BILLIONAIRES

# AFJ FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## 2025 REVENUE VS. EXPENSES

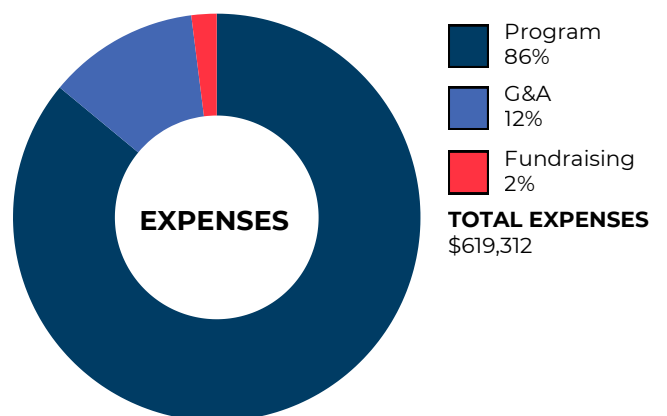
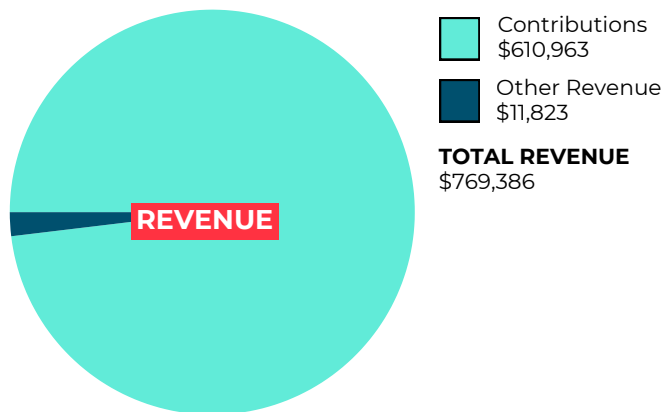


\*Projected, accrual basis



# AFJ ACTION FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## 2025 REVENUE VS. EXPENSES





# AFJ FUNDERS

501(C)(3)

Alpern Family Foundation  
Anonymous (6)  
Alan Berlow & Susan Blaustein  
Bernard and Anne Spitzer Charitable Trust  
David and Paula Block  
Nancy Brown  
Blue Sheild of California Foundation  
California Community Foundation (CCF)  
California Wellness Foundation  
Carmel Hill Fund  
Carnegie Corporation of New York  
Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity,  
*a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy  
Advisors*  
Cone Health Foundation  
CS Fund and Warsh-Mott Legacy  
Dorot Foundation  
Serra Falk Goldman  
FJC Philanthropies  
Ford Foundation  
Mary Ford & Robert Lewis  
Four Freedoms Fund  
James L Fournier  
Freedom Together Foundation  
Eleanor Friedman  
Robert Friedman  
E. Marianne Gabel  
Linda & Sandy Gallanter  
Alison Geballe  
David Gottlieb  
Gravity Works  
Gary G. William

Gerald & Barbara Harting  
Heising-Simons Foundation  
Steve and Susie Hotelling  
Houston Endowment  
The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment  
Labaton Keller Sucharow LLP  
Lebowitz-Aberly Family Foundation  
Meyer Foundation  
Paulette Meyer & David Friedman  
New-Land Foundation  
Ken Olum  
Outten & Golden  
Laurie A. Robbins  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
San Francisco Foundation  
Scherman Foundation  
Serendipity Foundation  
John & Nancy Solana  
Thomas Spiro  
Ann Stokes  
Surdna Foundation  
Texas Women's Foundation  
The California Endowment (TCE)  
The George Gund Foundation  
The William Penn Foundation  
Movement Voter Fund, a fund of Tides Foundation  
Water Foundation  
Weingart Foundation  
WHH Foundation  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
Zegar Family Fund

# AFJ ACTION CAMPAIGN FUNDERS

501(C)(4)

American Federation of State, County & Municipal  
Employees (AFSCME)  
Cohen Milstein  
Gender Equity Action Fund  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
National Education Association (NEA)

# 2025

 ALLIANCE  
FOR  
JUSTICE

 AFJ  
ACTION