

**2024**

# **AFJ Action 2024 State Supreme Court Election Guide**

# Table of Contents:

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>04</b>
Alabama – Arkansas	<b>06</b>
Colorado – Indiana	<b>14</b>
Iowa – Maryland	<b>22</b>
Michigan – Missouri	<b>27</b>
Montana – New Mexico	<b>34</b>
North Carolina – Oklahoma	<b>41</b>
Oregon – Texas	<b>51</b>
Utah – Wyoming	<b>60</b>

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# The State Supreme Court Election Landscape in 2024

**Currently, 30 state supreme courts are controlled by Republicans and 20 are controlled by Democrats.**

For the 33 states holding state supreme court elections in 2024, below is an outline of each of these states, with details about the justices whose seats are up for election in 2024 and the candidate challenging them, as well as candidates for open seats.

Of those courts with elections this year, 23 are controlled by Republicans and nine are controlled by Democrats. Two courts currently held by Democrats (Michigan and Montana) could flip to Republican control, and one court currently held by Republicans (Ohio) could flip to Democratic control as a result of the 2024 elections. The high courts in Oregon and Nevada could have flipped from Democratic to Republican control in this year's elections, but no challengers filed to run against the incumbent justices on either court. Neither court's composition will change as a result of this year's elections.

With 95% of court cases in the United States being heard in state courts, we know that most judges in this country are state court judges. We [also know](#) that a judge's practice area as an attorney impacts how they rule on cases when they become judges. With 40% of state court judges having served as prosecutors before joining the bench, judges with criminal defense and especially indigent and public defender experience are extremely underrepresented on our state courts. [Other research shows](#) that as many as 60% of judges have previous experience practicing some type of corporate law, and that judges with corporate backgrounds are less likely to rule in favor of workers, tenants, and criminal defendants.






In light of these facts, Alliance for Justice Action is committed to expanding the diversity of professional experience of judges who serve on our state courts, especially our state supreme courts. Since the majority of state court judges are former prosecutors or corporate attorneys, AFJ Action considers judges who practiced law outside these areas before joining the bench to be professionally diverse. In our country's judicial system, we know that outcomes for workers, consumers, renters, and people accused of crimes can be greatly impacted by the professional backgrounds of the judges who hear these cases. This is why we place such focus on the importance of professional diversity.


Alliance for Justice Action considers judges to have professionally diverse backgrounds if they have spent less than half of their career working as a prosecutor, practicing commercial litigation, or working on behalf of employers, CEOs or landlords. We oppose judges or candidates who have spent their careers deciding cases in support of corporations or to further the carceral state. Alliance for Justice Action supports judges and judicial candidates who have spent their careers advocating for people who are traditionally underserved in the legal system: workers, tenants, impoverished people, members of marginalized communities, and those accused of crimes. Before seeking judicial office, they worked as public defenders, advocated for workers or labor unions, or took on alleged violations of civil rights.

With former prosecutors and corporate attorneys so overrepresented in our state courts, we believe in the importance of ensuring that judges who can bring differing viewpoints and approaches to our state courts are elected to state supreme courts in every state. With state supreme courts serving as the courts of last resort for all cases involving state law, we are committed to advocating for greater diversity of professional experience on every state supreme court. Judges with these backgrounds remain underrepresented on state court benches, especially state supreme court benches. We believe these courts can best serve the people only when they are representative of the people themselves.

## ALABAMA SUPREME COURT

Alabama's supreme court justices are selected in partisan elections. In 2024, five supreme court seats are on the ballot in Alabama, including the chief justice. All four associate justice seats are unopposed, and three incumbents will be returning to the bench. Only the chief justice seat is contested. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
<b>Chief Justice</b>	 <p><b>Greg Griffin</b> 15th Judicial Circuit Judge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously chief legal counsel for the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles from 1995 to 2014</li> <li>• Also served as assistant Alabama attorney general</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Sarah Stewart</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected to the Alabama Supreme Court in 2018</li> <li>• Appointed to the 13th Judicial Circuit Court in 2006</li> <li>• Previously a private practitioner</li> </ul>
<b>Place 1</b>	<b>No Candidate</b>	 <p><b>Chris McCool</b> Judge of the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the appeals court by Gov. Kay Ivey (R)</li> <li>• Previously worked as a prosecutor for 24 years</li> </ul>
<b>Place 2</b>	<b>No Candidate</b>	 <p><b>Tommy Bryan</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected to the Alabama Supreme Court in 2012</li> <li>• Elected to the Court of Civil Appeals in 2005</li> </ul>
<b>Place 3</b>	<b>No Candidate</b>	 <p><b>William Sellars</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the Alabama Supreme Court by Gov. Kay Ivey (R) in 2017</li> <li>• Previously worked in private practice on business, finance, and tax litigation matters</li> </ul>

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
<b>Place 4</b>	<b>No Candidate</b>	 <p><b>Jay Mitchell</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected to the Alabama Supreme Court in 2018</li> <li>• Previously worked in private practice</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

Last year, the Alabama Supreme Court [upheld a lower court decision](#) dismissing a claim that sought to prohibit the state's use of electronic voting machines. The court also gave the state [permission to move forward](#) with a novel method known as nitrogen hypoxia in the execution of a death row inmate who survived a previous effort by the state to execute him using lethal injection. Experts on the United Nations Human Rights Council appealed to state and federal authorities to halt the execution, warning that it would likely violate U.N. conventions against torture and medical experimentation, and his attorneys [sought](#) a stay from U.S. Supreme Court. The appeal was [denied](#), and the state of Alabama [killed](#) the condemned man, Kenneth Smith, on January 25, 2024.

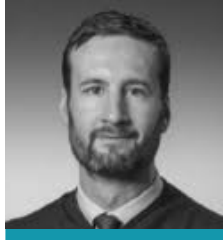

In February of this year, the Alabama Supreme Court issued an unprecedented [ruling](#) that held that fertilized embryos frozen during the course of in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment are children, with the court's conservative majority finding that embryos count as unborn children no matter their developmental stage. The decision left some patients without care or [access](#) to their IVF treatments or frozen embryos as IVF clinics closed their doors to avoid liability. The state's legislature and governor scrambled to [enact legislation](#) protecting IVF providers from civil and criminal liability in an effort to limit the political fallout of the court's decision. Due to the ruling's profound implications, two fertility care providers asked the court to rehear the case, but the court [denied the request](#), leaving its ruling that gave fertilized embryos the same legal rights as living people in place.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

Justices of the Alabama Supreme Court have said that they are committed to the protection of life at every stage, but recent rulings have placed the importance of protecting fertilized embryos over the human rights of living Alabamians. Associate Justice Sarah Stewart, who is seeking the chief justice position, has joined the court's majority in these decisions. AFJAC recommends Greg Griffin for the position of chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court in the general election on November 5, 2024.

## ALASKA SUPREME COURT

Alaska’s five supreme court justices are appointed using the assisted appointment method, with a judicial nominating commission selecting a slate of candidates from which the governor chooses a finalist. Justices run in retention elections after serving at least three years on the court and run for additional 10-year terms to remain on the court. Two justices who were appointed to the court in recent years are running to serve full terms on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Dario Borghesan</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court in 2020 by Gov. Mike Dunleavy (R)</li> <li>• Former chief assistant attorney general of the Opinions, Appeals, &amp; Ethics Section of the Alaska Department of Law from 2009 to 2020</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Jennifer Henderson</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court in 2021 by Gov. Mike Dunleavy (R)</li> <li>• Previously a superior court and district court judge from 2012 to 2021 · Worked in the Anchorage District Attorney's Office and in private practice on personal injury defense and labor and employment law matters before becoming a judge</li> </ul>



## THE STAKES

Last year, the Alaska Supreme Court **unanimously ruled** that an administrative order restricting methods used by public employee unions to collect member dues violated both state law and the state’s collective bargaining agreements with the unions and ordered the state to pay the union damages and attorney fees. The decision was a major victory for the state’s public employee unions. The court also **overturned the sentence** of a man convicted on weapons and controlled substance charges, ruling that law enforcement officials who obtained probable cause for a search warrant of the man’s home and outbuildings by using aircraft and cameras with high-powered zoom lenses to capture aerial photos of his property. This ruling, written by Justice Borghesan and joined by Justice Henderson, re-affirmed the privacy rights of all Alaska residents. But the court **ruled in favor** of the state in a dispute between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, which had sued the department alleging that mismanagement of the commercial fishing industry had led to poor subsistence harvests of herring eggs. The herring population represents a major source of food for the tribe, who will be harmed by the court’s decision. Justice Henderson joined the court’s majority, while Justice Borghesan did not participate.

In upcoming decisions, the court will decide whether Alaska residents can challenge the state’s predator control program that kills predators such as bears and wolves as part of efforts to maintain the state’s caribou population and a challenge to the 2020 repeal of the state’s ban on the use of personal watercraft in conservation areas.

## ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

Arizona’s seven supreme court justices are chosen using the assisted appointment method, with a judicial nominating commission comprising 14 members appointed by the governor selecting a slate of candidates from which the governor chooses a finalist. Justices run in retention elections after serving at least two years. In 2024, two justices appointed to the court by Gov. Doug Ducey (R) are running for retention election. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Clint Bolick</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2016 by Gov. Doug Ducey (R)</li> <li>• Previously vice president for litigation at the conservative policy think tank Goldwater Institute, co-founder and vice president for litigation at the Institute for Justice</li> <li>• Worked at the U.S. Department of Justice and Landmark Center for Civil Rights</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Kathryn Hackett King</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2021 by Gov. Doug Ducey (R)</li> <li>• Previously deputy general counsel for Ducey’s office</li> <li>• Represented employers in matters including discrimination, harassment, retaliation, disability accommodations, wage and hour issues, and unfair labor practices before her appointment</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

The Arizona Supreme Court has a central role in defining personal and bodily autonomy in Arizona. In a 4-2 decision, the Arizona Supreme Court issued a ruling, which Justice Clint Bolick and Justice Kathryn Hackett King joined, that allowed a near-total ban on abortion that was enacted in 1864 to go into effect. The shocking opinion overturned a lower court ruling that held that a state law passed in 2022 banning abortions after 15 weeks did not supersede the near-total ban that was enacted 158 years earlier and made abortion a two-to-five year felony for any doctor who performs an abortion or anyone who helps a patient obtain one. The court later unanimously stayed its ruling, allowing a more recent abortion ban that prohibits abortions after 15 weeks to remain in place for 90 days. The ruling allowed the state legislature’s recent repeal of the 1864 law to take effect before the court’s ruling expired, and abortions have remained legal in Arizona until 15 weeks. A statewide ballot initiative that aims to enshrine reproductive rights in the state constitution will appear on ballots this fall and will supersede the ban if it is passed.

Following the passage of a ballot proposal that legalized cannabis for adult use and provided for the expungement of certain cannabis-related convictions, the court ruled that the expungements are subject to direct appellate review, allowing prosecutors to challenge expungements in court and weakening the ballot measure’s effect in contravention of the will of Arizona voters. King authored the court’s opinion, which Bolick joined. The court also unanimously rejected a challenge to a ballot proposal that is intended to strengthen measures to prevent people from crossing into Arizona from Mexico and ordered the proposal to appear on Arizona ballots this November.

In a decision that attacked the rights of workers in some of the state’s largest cities, the court unanimously ruled earlier this year that the city of Phoenix violated the state constitution’s gifts clause when it paid city employees for release time to conduct union business during work hours, a standard practice found in collective bargaining agreements across the country. The decision will jeopardize similar agreements made with public sector unions by municipalities around the state. The challenge was brought against the city by non-unionized workers and was litigated by the Goldwater Institute, a conservative think tank. Bolick, a former litigator and vice president at the Goldwater Institute, authored the court’s opinion. Two lower courts had rejected the challenge before it was appealed to the Supreme Court.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

Because they have consistently authored and joined opinions that have threatened the fundamental rights of Arizona residents, AFJ Action recommends voting no on retaining Justice Clint Bolick and Justice Kathryn Hackett King.

## ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT

Arkansas's supreme court justices are elected in nonpartisan elections. In 2024, two of the court's sitting associate justices are seeking the open chief justice seat, which is being vacated by the retirement of the current chief justice. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

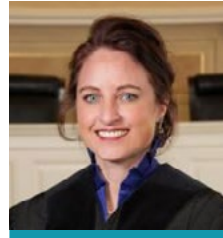
### Candidates

#### Chief Justice



**Justice Karen Baker**  
**Incumbent Associate Justice**

- Elected to the supreme court in 2010
- Previously a judge of the Arkansas Court of Appeals and a chancery and juvenile judge in the 20th Judicial District Circuit
- Worked as a public defender for Van Buren and Searcy Counties before becoming a judge



**Justice Rhonda Wood**  
**Incumbent Associate Justice**

- Elected to the supreme court in 2014
- Previously a judge of the Arkansas Court of Appeals and a circuit judge in the 20th Judicial District
- Was an assistant dean at the University of Arkansas Little Rock's Bowen School of Law

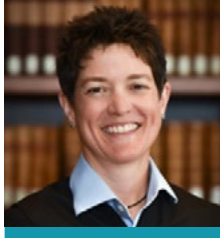


## THE STAKES

Associate Justice Courtney Hudson successfully ran to fill the seat against Circuit Judge Carlton Jones in Arkansas's primary elections in March 2024. Though Justice Hudson currently occupies Position 3 on the court, she chose to run for the Position 2 seat because the move will allow her to serve four more years on the court before she is stripped of her retirement benefits in 2046; if she had remained in Position 2, she would have faced this outcome in 2042. As a result of Justice Hudson's move and the eventuality of either Justice Baker or Justice Wood moving into the chief position after the November election, Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders will have the opportunity to appoint two new justices to the court following this year's election. This role should have fallen to Arkansas voters due to the state selecting its judges through nonpartisan elections, but it was circumvented by these justices' decisions to run for seats other than their own — with the resulting shakeup almost certain to shift the state's highest court even further to the right.

Earlier this year, the court [upheld a ruling](#) from state elections officials that found a group collecting signatures for a citizen initiative to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution improperly submitted documents pertaining to its paid signature gathering effort in violation of state election laws. After signatures gathered by paid canvassers were rejected due to the error, the effort lacked the required number of signatures to achieve ballot access and will not appear before voters this fall.

## COLORADO SUPREME COURT

The seven justices of the Colorado Supreme Court are appointed by the governor to fill vacancies and run in retention elections after serving at least two years on the court. Justices run for additional 10-year terms to remain on the court. The terms of two justices are expiring in 2024, with both justices seeking additional terms. One recently appointed justice is running for a full term on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
<b>Chief Justice</b>	 <p><b>Monica Márquez</b> Incumbent Chief Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2010 by Gov. Bill Ritter Jr. (D) and became chief justice in 2024</li> <li>• Previously a deputy attorney general, assistant solicitor general, assistant attorney general for the Public Officials Unit and Criminal Appellate Section at the Colorado Attorney General's Office</li> <li>• Practiced general commercial litigation and employment law before entering public service</li> </ul>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Maria Berkenkotter</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2020 by Gov. Jared Polis (D)</li> <li>• Worked at the Judicial Arbiter Group, an organization of former judges who provide professional dispute resolution and litigation services before being appointed to the court</li> <li>• Retired from the 20th Judicial District Court in 2017 after serving for 11 years, including four as chief judge</li> <li>• Led the Antitrust, Consumer Protection, and Tobacco Litigation units at the Colorado Attorney General's Office before becoming a judge</li> </ul>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Brian Boatright</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2011 by Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) and served as chief justice from 2021 to 2024</li> <li>• Previously a First Judicial District Court judge from 1999 to 2011</li> <li>• Worked as a deputy district attorney in the First Judicial District for nine years before becoming a judge</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES



In an [unprecedented 4-3 ruling](#), the Colorado Supreme Court ruled in December 2023 that former President Donald Trump was ineligible to appear on primary ballots as a presidential candidate due to his involvement in the January 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol. The state's high court ruled that the riot was an insurrection that Trump helped to incite, rendering him unqualified under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to swear an oath to defend the Constitution as required of officers of the United States, including the president. Justice Márquez joined the court's majority, while Justices Berkenkotter and Boatright dissented. The ruling was appealed by the Trump campaign to the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck down the court's order in April 2024.

The court recently [dismissed another case](#) involving Jack Phillips, the baker who owns Masterpiece Cake Shop, a Colorado bakery that was at the center of a case involving Phillips's refusal to bake a cake for an LGBTQ+ couple's wedding because he alleged that doing so would violate his religious freedom. That case was [ultimately decided](#) in Phillips's favor by the U.S. Supreme Court. In the most recent case, brought by Autumn Scardina, who filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Division against Phillips after he refused to bake a cake to celebrate her gender transition. When the Division dismissed the complaint without issuing an order or explanation of its reasoning, the Scardina sued Phillips in state court, which found him liable for discrimination and levied a fine. Phillips appealed the determination to the state's highest court, which, rather than ruling on the merits of the case as the lower courts had, instead found that Scardina's case was improperly brought in state court because she did not first exhaust her options in the administrative proceedings by seeking an explanation of the Civil Rights Division's order dismissing the complaint. The court dismissed the case on this reasoning, choosing not to address the substance of the legal arguments presented by either Scardina or Phillips. Chief Justice Márquez and Justice Boatright joined the majority opinion, while Justice Berkenkotter dissented.



## FLORIDA SUPREME COURT

Florida’s seven supreme court justices are appointed using the assisted appointment method. Justices run in retention elections after serving at least one year on the court and run for additional six-year terms to remain on the court. Two justices recently appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) are running for full terms on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Renatha Francis</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2022 by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Palm Beach and Miami Dade circuit courts</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on complex commercial litigation matters</li> <li>• Member of the Federalist Society</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Meredith Sasso</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2023 by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Fifth and Sixth District Courts of Appeal</li> <li>• Chief deputy counsel to Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R)</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on general liability, negligence, and complex commercial litigation matters</li> <li>• Member of the Federalist Society</li> </ul>



## THE STAKES

Last year, the Florida Supreme Court [dismissed a lawsuit](#) filed by a state attorney who was fired by Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) after pledging not to prosecute those who seek or perform abortions or provide gender-affirming treatments to transgender people in defiance of measures that had been recently signed into law by DeSantis. The Florida Supreme Court [ruled in a unanimous decision](#) that an amendment to the state’s constitution intended to protect the rights of crime victims does not shield the names of police officers who are injured in the line of duty. The court also [dismissed a motion](#) to expedite its hearing of a challenge to the congressional reapportionment plan enacted by the legislature in 2022 at the behest of DeSantis, which had eliminated a minority access district representing the city of Jacksonville’s urban core. A district court had thrown out the maps for disenfranchising the minority voters, but an appeals court reinstated the map in late 2023. The court’s decision not to expedite its hearing of the challenge allowed the new map to remain in place for the 2024 election. Justices Francis and Sasso joined the court’s majority in all of these decisions.

This year, the court [overturned its own ruling](#) in a 1989 case that held that the state constitution’s privacy protections extend to abortion, declaring that the case was “wrongly decided” and allowing a near-total six-week ban on abortions enacted in 2023 to take effect. Justices Francis and Sasso joined the majority. In a [separate decision](#), the court also ruled that a ballot proposal that would supersede the six-week ban by enshrining the right to an abortion into the state constitution until fetal viability — around 24 weeks’ gestation — can appear on ballots this fall. Justice Francis joined the court’s majority to order the question on the ballot, while Justice Sasso dissented. The court also [denied](#) a second Democratic state attorney’s petition for reinstatement to her job after she was removed from office last year by DeSantis, with both Justices Francis and Sasso in the majority once again. DeSantis has appointed five of the court’s seven justices.

## ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT

The seven justices of the Illinois Supreme Court represent five geographical judicial districts, with three justices representing Cook County and the remaining four justices representing the other four districts. The residents of each judicial district elect the justices to represent their district. The court's justices are elected in partisan elections to serve 10-year terms. Following the completion of their first 10-year term, justices run in retention elections to remain on the court. Vacancies on the court are filled by the other members of the court, with appointed justices serving one to two years before running in a partisan election to remain on the court. Two recently appointed justices are running for full terms on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.




	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
1 <sup>st</sup> District	 <p><b>Joy Cunningham</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed to the court in 2022 by the Illinois Supreme Court</li> <li>Previously a judge of the Illinois Appellate Court and Circuit Court of Cook County</li> <li>Worked in health systems administration and private practice before becoming a judge</li> </ul>	No Candidate
4 <sup>th</sup> District	No Candidate	 <p><b>Lisa Holder White</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed to the court in 2022 by the Illinois Supreme Court</li> <li>Previously a judge of the Appellate Court and the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court</li> <li>Worked as a private practice attorney, assistant public defender, and assistant state's attorney before becoming a judge</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

The Illinois Supreme Court issued several important decisions in 2023, with the court [upholding a statewide ban](#) on assault-style firearms, interpreting Illinois's constitution to protect its residents from the impacts of gun violence in spite of the U.S. Supreme Court's repeated failures in this area. Justice Cunningham joined the majority, while Justice Holder White dissented from this opinion. The court also [strengthened the rights of pedestrians and bicyclists](#) by ordering auto insurance policies to strike language in their policies that required a person to be in an insured motor vehicle to qualify for coverage after they have been injured by an uninsured motorist. Justice Holder White wrote the opinion for a unanimous court. And in two decisions that impacted criminal justice rights in the state, the court [allowed a new law](#) eliminating the state's cash bail system to go into effect and overturned a wrongful conviction. Justice Cunningham joined the court's majority in allowing the elimination of the cash bail system to take effect, while Justice Holder White joined a dissenting opinion. The court [unanimously ruled that a man](#) beaten by detectives into signing a confession and pleading guilty to a murder he did not commit was eligible for a certificate of innocence purging his criminal record and making him eligible to receive compensation from a fund for the wrongfully convicted. The court also [unanimously decided](#) that the smell of cannabis, which was legalized in the state in 2020, does not constitute probable cause for a police officer to search a vehicle. Many criminal justice advocates had supported the plaintiffs in the case, pointing to the disparate impact that searches of this nature have on Black and Latino individuals.

## INDIANA SUPREME COURT

The five justices of the Indiana Supreme Court are chosen using the assisted appointment method, with a judicial nominating commission comprising six members who represent three geographical districts selecting a slate of candidates from which the governor chooses a finalist. Justices run in retention elections after serving for at least two years and run for additional 10-year terms to remain on the court. The terms of two justices are expiring in 2024, and both are running for additional terms. One recently appointed justice is running for a full term on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
<b>Chief Justice</b>	 <p><b>Loretta Rush</b> Incumbent Chief Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2012 by Gov. Mitch Daniels (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Tippecanoe Superior Court</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on civil litigation, family law, business, personal injury, corporate, probate and workers' compensation matters before becoming a judge</li> </ul>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Mark Massa</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2012 by Gov. Mitch Daniels (R)</li> <li>• Previously the executive director of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute</li> <li>• Also worked as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of Indiana, as general counsel to the office of Gov. Daniels, and in the Marion County prosecutor's office before joining the bench</li> </ul>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Derek Molter</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2022 by Gov. Eric Holcomb (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Indiana Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Worked in private practice as an intellectual property litigator before joining the bench</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

The Indiana Supreme Court made several important rulings in 2023. The court **denied an injunction** to Planned Parenthood and the ACLU of Indiana while they filed another lawsuit challenging the state's abortion ban on behalf of abortion providers in the lower courts, re-affirming the state's near total abortion ban. The court also expanded the rights of Indiana residents accused of criminal activity, ruling that law enforcement agencies **must convince a jury** that the state is entitled to seize a person's assets in cases involving civil asset forfeitures. Justices Massa and Molter and Chief Justice Rush all joined the court's majority in these opinions. And in a **public reprimand**, the court ruled that Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita violated professional conduct rules when he criticized a doctor who provided an abortion for a 10-year-old rape victim, writing in a public reprimand that Rokita's comments served no other purpose than to embarrass the doctor and exert improper influence. Justices Massa and Molter joined the court's majority in the reprimand, but Chief Justice Rush did not join the majority, writing that she believed the reprimand was too lenient given Rokita's position and the severity of the misconduct.

In an important upcoming decision, attorneys for a death row inmate convicted of murdering four people in 1997 asked the Indiana Supreme Court to block the execution of their client, Joseph Corcoran. They argue Corcoran's paranoid schizophrenia should bar him from the receiving death penalty. Gov. Eric Holcomb and Attorney General Todd Rokita, both Republicans, have requested an execution date, stating that Corcoran's appeals are exhausted and the state has the necessary drugs for lethal injection. The court has not yet decided Corcoran's fate.

## IOWA SUPREME COURT

Iowa's seven supreme court justices are appointed using the assisted appointment method via a 17-member judicial nominating commission, some of whom are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate, and others of whom are chosen by members of the state bar. The commission selects a slate of candidates from which the governor chooses a finalist. Justices run in retention elections after serving at least one year and run for additional eight-year terms to remain on the court. The term of one justice is expiring in 2024, with the justice seeking a second full term on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.



Justices	
<p><b>Associate Justice</b></p>	 <p><b>David May</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2012 by Gov. Kim Reynolds (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Iowa Court of Appeals and a district court judge · Practiced commercial litigation and insurance defense before becoming a judge</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

Last year, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in a unanimous decision that a municipality was not liable for damages after a police officer responding to an emergency call proceeded through an intersection with his lights and sirens on and collided with a motorist, seriously injuring him. This year, the court ruled that the state's constitution prohibits virtual testimony in criminal trials in a case that revolved around a defendant facing charges of child endangerment who had two children testify against him through a one-way closed video system. The ruling means children in these situations will now have to testify in person. The court also declined a request from Planned Parenthood of Iowa that asked the court to rehear its challenge to a state law that bans abortion after six weeks' gestation with limited exceptions. Justice May joined the court's majority in all of these rulings and wrote the majority's opinion in the case that struck down the constitutionality of virtual testimony by minors.

## KENTUCKY SUPREME COURT

Kentucky's seven supreme court justices are elected in nonpartisan elections. In the event of a vacancy, the governor appoints a replacement from a list of finalists furnished by the state's judicial nominating commission. The replacement serves at least three months and then must stand for nonpartisan election to fill the remainder of the term. In 2024, the term of one justice is expiring and the incumbent justice cannot seek reelection due to the state's mandatory retirement age. Two candidates are seeking the seat in the nonpartisan general election on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Candidates		
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> District</b></p>	 <p><b>Erin Izzo</b> Private Practice Attorney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works in private practice on civil rights, labor and employment law, workers' compensation, and personal injury matters</li> <li>• Works as an arbitrator and third-party mediator</li> <li>• Previously worked as an assistant prosecutor</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Pamela Goodwine</b> Judge of the 5th Appellate District Court of Appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the appeals court in 2018</li> <li>• Previously a circuit court and district court judge</li> <li>• Served as commissioner and later chair of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights prior to her election to the bench</li> </ul>


## THE STAKES

In 2023, in an opinion in which six of seven justices joined in full or in part, the Kentucky Supreme Court rejected a challenge to the state's legislative district maps that accused Republicans in the state house of drawing the maps to favor their party in violation of the state's constitution. The court's majority agreed that the maps were gerrymandered but disagreed that the state's constitution forbids the consideration of partisan interests.

In an important upcoming decision, the court will court is set to hear a case that will determine if text messages on personal cell phones used for government business are considered public records under the state's open records law. The court's eventual ruling could have significant implications for the state's public records laws.

## LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT

The seven justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court are chosen in partisan elections. Justices elected to the court serve 10-year terms. In the event of a vacancy, the supreme court nominates a replacement, who may not run in the subsequent election to fill the remainder of the term. Louisiana is one of only a few states that elects its supreme court justices in geographical judicial districts. This spring, the court asked the legislature to redraw the districts to create a second majority-minority district. The new seat is up for election in 2024. One candidate is running unopposed in the partisan general election to fill the seat. The general election is Saturday, December 7, 2024.




	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
1 <sup>st</sup> District	 <p><b>John Michael Guidry</b> Judge of the Louisiana 1st Circuit Court of Appeal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the Court of Appeal in 1997</li> <li>• Previously a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1991 to 1993 and the state Senate from 1993 to 1997</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>

## THE STAKES

This spring, the Louisiana Supreme Court issued a 4-3 ruling allowing the organizers of a controversial effort to incorporate a new city in an affluent, majority-white area of Baton Rouge to proceed, allowing the organizers to formally incorporate the new City of St. George over the objections of leaders of Baton Rouge, including the mayor and a member of the city council, who argued that the move would divert tens of millions of dollars in tax revenue from the city of Baton Rouge and would legally segregate Baton Rouge, which is 54% Black, from the new city, which is 87% white. The opponents of the decision have asked the court to reconsider the case.

## MARYLAND SUPREME COURT

Maryland's seven supreme court justices are elected through the assisted appointment method. The state's judicial nomination commission forwards a list to the governor, who selects a finalist from the list. The state senate must confirm the nominee. Replacements serve for at least one year and then stand for retention election to full eight-year terms. Vacancies are filled as though a term has expired on the court. In 2024, the terms of three justices are expiring. All three justices are seeking new terms on the court and will stand for retention election. The election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Justices
Chief Justice	 <p><b>Matthew Fader</b> Incumbent Chief Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2022 by Gov. Larry Hogan (R)</li> <li>• Previously chief judge of the Court of Special Appeals</li> <li>• Worked in the Civil Litigation Division of the Office of Attorney General and as a trial attorney in the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice before becoming a judge</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Angela Eaves</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2022 by Gov. Larry Hogan (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Third Circuit Court and an associate judge of the Ninth District Court of Maryland</li> <li>• Previously worked as assistant attorney general for the state of Maryland and staff attorney at the Legal Aid Bureau</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Shirley Marie Watts</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2013 by Gov. Martin O'Malley (D)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Maryland Court of Special Appeals and an associate judge of the Maryland Eighth Circuit Court</li> <li>• Previously worked as an administrative law judge in the Office of Hearing and Appeals of the Social Security Administration, as a public defender, and as an assistant state's attorney</li> </ul>



## THE STAKES

In two important rulings that expanded the rights of people accused of crimes, the Maryland Supreme Court **ruled that** firearms experts will no longer be permitted to testify that a specific gun fired a specific bullet, making the state one of the first jurisdictions in the country to recognize the shortcomings in this longstanding forensics practice. Justice Fader wrote the opinion for the majority and was joined by Justice Watts while Justice Eaves dissented. The court also **held in a unanimous opinion that** a person who allowed investigators to seize his laptop and make a copy of its hard drive was entitled to withdraw his consent to a search before the data was examined and that the government's subsequent decision to examine the data without a warrant constituted an unreasonable search. But in a blow to LGBTQ+ rights in the state, the court **held that** the parts of the state's fair employment laws applying to sex-based discrimination do not also apply to discrimination based on sexual orientation, a decision is directly at odds with the 2020 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, which held that discrimination based on sexual orientation cannot be separated from sex-based discrimination. Chief Justice Fader joined the majority's opinions, while Justices Eaves and Watts dissented.

The Maryland Supreme Court will soon deliver an important ruling: The court has agreed to review the constitutionality of the Child Victims Act of 2023, an act that eliminates the statute of limitations for survivors of abuse, allowing survivors to file lawsuits regardless of when the abuse occurred.

## MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT

**Michigan's method** for choosing its supreme court justices is unique among the states. At their respective state party conventions, delegates to the state's major political parties nominate candidates for seats on the Michigan Supreme Court. Despite being selected by their respective political parties, candidates appear in the nonpartisan judicial section of the ballot, with sitting justices receiving an incumbency designation. In the event of a midterm vacancy, the governor appoints a replacement, who must run to fill the remainder of the term in the next general election. In 2024, one incumbent justice who was appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) to a partial term in 2022 is running to fill the remainder of the term, which expires in 2028. Democrats nominated the incumbent to seek the remainder of her term, and Republicans nominated a candidate to challenge her. An open seat is also on the ballot, with one candidate nominated by Democrats and one candidate nominated by Republicans seeking the seat. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Candidates	
<p><b>Associate Justice</b> (Partial Term)</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Kyra Harris Bolden</b> <b>Incumbent Associate Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D)</li> <li>• Previously a member of the Michigan House of Representatives</li> <li>• Worked as a criminal defense and private practice attorney before joining the legislature</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Judge Patrick O'Grady</b> <b>Judge of the 15th Circuit Court</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the bench in 2008 and reelected in 2014 and 2020</li> <li>• Previously an assistant prosecuting attorney</li> <li>• Served as a Michigan State Police officer and in the Army Reserves before entering law school</li> </ul> </div> </div>
<p><b>Associate Justice</b></p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Kimberly Thomas</b> <b>Professor at the University of Michigan Law School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor of law at UM Law School since 2003</li> <li>• Co-founder and director of the law school's Juvenile Justice Clinic</li> <li>• Served as a legal education expert for the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative in Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey</li> <li>• Worked at the Defender Association of Philadelphia before joining the UM Law faculty</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Andrew Fink</b> <b>Member of the Michigan House of Representatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the Michigan House in 2020</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on real estate, landlord-tenant, small business, and local government matters at family firm since 2014</li> <li>• Served in active duty and as a judge advocate for U.S. Marine Corps from 2011 to 2014</li> </ul> </div> </div>

## THE STAKES

In 2023, the Michigan Supreme Court issued important decisions that impacted the rights of tenants, parents, and people injured in auto accidents. The court [ruled in a 5-2 opinion](#) that the state's equitable parent doctrine extends to non-biological parents in former same-sex relationships who had been prevented from marrying their child's legal parent by Michigan's unconstitutional past prohibition on same-sex marriage and were blocked from seeking custody consideration because they were unmarried. The court also [ruled that](#) 18,000 individuals who were injured prior to the passage of a 2019 law overhauling the state's auto insurance system have both contractual and statutory protections that shield them from the law's key cost-saving fee cuts. The court also [issued an administrative order](#) making some rules implemented during the pandemic-era eviction moratorium permanent. And in an unprecedented decision, the court [ordered a married couple](#) to stand trial on four counts each of involuntary manslaughter in connection with four murders their son committed during a school shooting. The parents, both of whom were convicted in early 2024, are the first in the nation to face charges that their negligence contributed to a school shooting committed by their child.



This year, the court [set new standards](#) that determine when authorities may consider a person a suspect. The court ruled that a suspect who fled after authorities attempted to detain him had done nothing to suggest he might have committed a crime. As a result, the court ruled that authorities had no basis to attempt to detain him and overturned his convictions for fleeing and resisting arrest. In a split 4-3 ruling, the Michigan Supreme Court [found](#) that Republican lawmakers violated the rights of voters when they used the state's "adopt-and-amend" legislative practice to significantly change a citizen-initiated ballot proposal to overhaul the state's minimum wage, tipped wage, and sick leave policies. Per the practice, the legislature is permitted to adopt a citizen-initiated ballot proposal rather than allowing it to go before voters. Once proposals are adopted, the legislature is permitted to amend the proposals. But the court found the legislature exceeded its authority by making changes to the wage and sick-leave proposal that significantly weakened the proposal's effects. The court's ruling ordered the legislature to instead adopt the original proposal. The ruling will have massive implications for the state's workers, and [the state has asked](#) the court to clarify how the ruling should be implemented.


## OUR RECOMMENDATION

In all of these decisions, Justice Kyra Harris Bolden joined the court's majority, which has consistently issued rulings that have protected the rights of tenants, parents, voters, and workers and sought justice for victims of gun violence and people wrongfully accused of crimes. Kimberly Thomas has spent her career fighting for marginalized groups and will join Bolden in protecting the rights of all Michiganders. AFJ Action recommends Justice Kyra Harris Bolden and Kimberly Thomas.

## MINNESOTA SUPREME COURT

Justices of the Minnesota Supreme Court are elected in nonpartisan elections. Vacancies on the court are filled by the governor. Justices who are appointed to the court serve for at least one year and run in nonpartisan elections for a full six-year term. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Candidates	
<p><b>Chief Justice</b></p> 	<p><b>Chief Justice Natalie Hudson</b> <b>Incumbent Chief Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed chief justice in 2023 Gov. Tim Walz (D), appointed to the court in 2015 by Gov. Mark Dayton (D)</li> <li>Previously a judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals</li> <li>Worked at the Minnesota Attorney General, St. Paul City Attorney's Office</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Stephen Emery</b> <b>Legal Writer and Analyst</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ran for Yellow Medicine County attorney in 2022 and won by 158 votes but refused to assume the position</li> <li>Campaign website for that election challenged election integrity and encouraged people to vote only on Election Day</li> <li>Ran unsuccessfully for Minnesota's 7th Congressional District in 2020 and for U.S. Senate in 2018</li> </ul>
<p><b>Associate Justice</b> (Partial Term)</p> 	<p><b>Justice Karl Procaccini</b> <b>Incumbent Associate Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed chief justice in 2023 Gov. Tim Walz (D), appointed to the court in 2015 by Gov. Mark Dayton (D)</li> <li>Previously a judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals</li> <li>Worked at the Minnesota Attorney General, St. Paul City Attorney's Office</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Matthew Hanson</b> <b>Trusts and Estates Attorney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practices trusts and estates and wealth management law</li> <li>Earned endorsements from Republicans in two state senate districts in unsuccessful run for district court judge in 2022</li> </ul>

Candidates		
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Justice Anne McKeig</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2016 by Gov. Mark Dayton (D)</li> <li>• Judge, Hennepin County</li> <li>• Assistant Hennepin County attorney</li> <li>• Previously worked at the American Prosecutors Research Institute</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>

## THE STAKES

In recent years, the Minnesota Supreme Court has ruled that the smell of marijuana alone is not enough to create probable cause as grounds for a search when there are no other reasons to believe an individual is under the influence. The court held that people who are barred from possessing firearms can be convicted of a felony if they are found to be in possession of incomplete or disassembled parts of a firearm. The ruling confirms that parts or pieces of a gun are considered to be a firearm under the state's statute that bans people convicted of a felony from possessing firearms.






This year, the court upheld a 2023 state law that restored voting rights to people with felony convictions. The court upheld a lower court's rejection of a challenge to the law by the conservative group Minnesota Voters Alliance, finding that the challengers lacked standing and failed to prove the legislature overstepped its authority when it passed the measure. The ruling will make approximately 55,000 people eligible to vote in the November election. The court also ruled that plaintiffs may file claims against entities that negligently hire workers as independent contractors, recognizing a novel common law tort action in Minnesota. In the case, which stemmed from a claim filed against a company that failed to perform a background check on a contracted driver who caused an automobile accident, the court ruled that business entities who fail to exercise reasonable care during hiring may be liable for the negligent actions of independent contractors.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

Chief Justice Natalie Hudson has consistently joined opinions that have protected the rights of workers, voters, and those accused of crimes. Associate Justices Karl Procaccini and Anne McKeig have joined Hudson in protecting these fundamental rights. AFJ Action recommends Chief Justice Natalie Hudson, Associate Justice Karl Procaccini, and Associate Justice Anne McKeig. AFJ Action recommends Chief Justice Natalie Hudson and Associate Justice Karl Procaccini.

## MISSISSIPPI SUPREME COURT

Mississippi's nine supreme court justices are selected in nonpartisan elections. Justices serve eight-year terms and run for re-election to additional terms on the court. Justices are elected to the court from three districts, with three justices representing each district. The state does not hold primaries in judicial races. Vacancies are filled by the governor, with the appointee running in a nonpartisan election to serve the remainder of their term after serving for two years. The terms of four justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court are expiring in 2024 and all four incumbent justices will seek re-election. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024. In the five-way race for the Central District, Place 3 seat, a runoff election will take place on Tuesday, November 26 if no candidate receives a majority of all votes cast in the November 5 election.

Candidates		
<b>Central District Place 3</b>	 <p><b>Jim Kitchens</b> Incumbent Chief Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected in 2008</li> <li>• Previously worked as a district attorney and in private practice</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Jenifer Branning</b> Member of the Mississippi State Senate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the state Senate in 2018</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Byron Carter</b> Private Practice Attorney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles workers' compensation claims, trusts and estates, family, and criminal matters</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Ceola James</b> Former Judge of the Mississippi Court of Appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously a chancery judge and a justice court judge · Practices civil and criminal law</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Abby Robinson</b> Private Practice Attorney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practices elder and family law</li> </ul>	



## Candidates

### Southern District Place 3



#### **Dawn Beam** Incumbent Associate Justice

- Appointed to the court in 2016 by Gov. Phil Byrant (R)
- Previously a prosecutor for Lamar County
- Chancellor for the 10th Chancery District
- Worked in private practice and as a support attorney for the Mississippi Department of Human Services



#### **David Sullivan** Judge of the City of D'Iberville Municipal Court

- Became the municipal court judge for the City of D'Iberville in 2019
- Works as a criminal defense attorney

### Northern District Place 1



#### **Robert Chamberlin** Incumbent Associate Justice

- Elected to the supreme court in 2016
- Circuit judge, 17th Circuit District
- Member of the Mississippi Senate
- Municipal court judge for the City of Hernando
- Municipal prosecutor for the City of Horn Lake
- Worked in private practice

**No Candidate**

### Northern District Place 2



#### **James Maxwell** Incumbent Associate Justice

- Appointed in 2016 by Gov. Phil Bryant (R)
- Previously a judge on the Mississippi Court of Appeals
- Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi
- Worked in private practice

**No Candidate**

## MISSOURI SUPREME COURT

Missouri's supreme court justices are appointed by the state's governor and run in retention elections to remain on the court. In 2024, two associate justices recently appointed by Gov. Mike Parson (R) are running to be retained to the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

## Justices

### Associate Justice



#### **Ginger Gooch** Incumbent Associate Justice

- Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Mike Parson (R)
- Judge, Missouri Court of Appeals
- Worked in private practice

### Associate Justice



#### **Kelly Broniec** Incumbent Associate Justice

- Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Mike Parson (R)
- Judge, Eastern District Court of Appeals; circuit judge, Montgomery County
- Prosecuting attorney for Montgomery County
- Worked as a prosecutor for Warren County and in private practice

## THE STAKES



In a unanimous [en banc opinion](#), the Missouri Supreme Court ordered Attorney General Andrew Bailey to comply with a lower court order to certify language for a ballot initiative that would amend the constitution to restore abortion rights in the state. In a later ruling, the court [also denied](#) the Missouri secretary of state's efforts to appeal rulings against language he wrote summarizing initiative petitions seeking to enshrine the right to abortion in the state's constitution, in which he asserted that the initiatives would allow for "dangerous, unregulated, and unrestricted abortions" and would "nullify long-standing Missouri law protecting the right to life." The state's highest court agreed with lower courts that the summaries contained impermissible politically partisan language. The court also [ruled that](#) a provision in a new state law that bans sleeping on public land and restricts state funding for permanent supportive housing is unconstitutional. And the court [vacated](#) the 1990 murder conviction of Christopher Dunn and ordered him to be released from prison after he had served 34 years for a murder he did not commit. Justices Gooch and Broniec joined a unanimous court in these decisions.

## THE STAKES

The Mississippi Supreme Court issued an en banc order that [strengthened the rights](#) of defendants in criminal cases by finding a protection in Mississippi's constitution that requires the state to provide defendants with representation by a public defender through all stages of a criminal case.

## MONTANA SUPREME COURT

Montana elects its state supreme court justices to eight-year terms in nonpartisan elections, meaning candidates do not have a partisan designation next to their name. Chief Justice Mike McGrath and Associate Justice Dirk Sandefur are not seeking reelection to their current seats and there is an open contest to replace them. Two candidates for each seat advanced from the primary election. Though Montana elects its supreme court justices in nonpartisan elections, Jerry Lynch and Katherine Bidegaray are receiving support from progressive groups while Cory Swanson and Dan Wilson are being supported by conservative groups. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Candidates	
<p><b>Chief Justice</b></p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Jerry Lynch</b> <b>Former Federal Magistrate Judge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Served as the federal magistrate judge in the Montana District of the U.S. District Court for 13 years</li> <li>• Worked in private practice for 10 years before becoming a judge</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Cory Swanson</b> <b>Legal Writer and Analyst</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected Broadwater County attorney in 2014</li> <li>• Previously a deputy attorney general in the Montana Department of Justice</li> <li>• Works in private practice on government affairs, federal and state environmental litigation, election law, land use, water, and administrative law matters</li> <li>• Colonel in the Montana Army National Guard</li> </ul> </div> </div>
<p><b>Associate Justice</b></p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Katherine Bidegaray</b> <b>Judge of the 7th Judicial District Court</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed chief justice in 2023</li> <li>• Gov. Tim Walz (D), appointed to the court in 2015 by Gov. Mark Dayton (D)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Worked at the Minnesota Attorney General, St. Paul City Attorney's Office</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 48%;">  <p><b>Dan Wilson</b> <b>Judge of the Montana 11th Judicial District Court</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected to the Montana 11th Judicial District Court in 2016</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on contract disputes, estate planning, property and easements, and criminal defense matters before becoming a judge</li> <li>• Also worked an assistant county prosecutor</li> </ul> </div> </div>

## THE STAKES

Montana's constitution prescribes more rights than the U.S. Constitution. It is the responsibility of state judges and justices to uphold those constitutional freedoms. For example, the Montana constitution mandates: "The state and each person shall maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations." As a result of this, young people sued the state government for failing to preserve that right. The court allowed their case to move forward by **ordering** state agencies to analyze climate impacts in its permitting decisions. The court has also ensured protected access to public lands and all of Montana's natural resources across many of its decisions. The Montana Supreme Court **unanimously ruled to halt** the expansion of the Rosebud Coal Mine after environmental groups sued to block the expansion. In a case that was appealed to the Montana Supreme Court from the Montana Water Court, the supreme court **unanimously affirmed** the water court's ruling that the state can retain an ownership interest in water rights granted to owners of private property. Due to the dry, arid nature of Montana's climate, the court determined that water rights are included in the state's property rights and affirmed the state's obligation to ensure that the proceeds of lands, including water, that are held in trust by the state are directed to the proper beneficiary, which is the state's public school system.

The court has previously found a right to "procreative autonomy" under the Montana Constitution. This is critical for access to reproductive care across the state and in a landscape where access to reproductive healthcare is strained more and more every day. In a **unanimous decision**, the Montana Supreme Court issued a ruling that allowed nurse practitioners and clinicians to continue providing abortion care to patients in Montana. Beyond protecting providers, the supreme court also protected minors' ability to access abortion. The court **ruled that** a 2013 law prohibiting minors from obtaining abortion care without parental consent is unconstitutional. This decision protected a minor's fundamental right to make decisions about their own body by finding that right outweighs a parent's right to consent to their child's private health care decision and that the law attempted to restrict the rights of minors to make their own health care decisions without apparent justification. The court blocked the state attorney general's attempts to throw out a ballot initiative seeking to enshrine the right to abortion in the state. The court ruled against the attorney general and held that the proposal is compliant with the constitution's requirements for proposed amendments and may appear before voters on ballots this fall.


Lastly, the court has been instrumental in ensuring every Montanan has equal access to the ballot. In a unanimous ruling, the Montana Supreme Court **blocked an effort** by the state’s attorney general to keep a proposed ballot initiative to amend the state’s constitution off the 2024 ballot. The initiative aims to replace the state’s partisan primary system with one in which all candidates run in one primary regardless of party affiliation, with the top four vote-getters advancing to an instant-runoff general election. The Montana Supreme Court **overturned** four recently enacted laws that eliminated voter registration on Election Day, limited methods for assisting people in returning their absentee ballots, prohibited election clerks from mailing ballots to new voters who will turn 18 before the next election, and restricted the use of student identification cards as a method of voter identification. The court ruled that the laws disparately impacted young, Native American, and disabled voters in violation of the state constitution’s voting rights protections. The Montana Supreme Court **denied a request** by the Montana secretary of state that had asked the court to vacate a lower court order that required the signatures of inactive voters be counted for ballot initiatives. The unanimous court stated that the secretary of state failed to convince the court that the lower court order was made in error.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

Montana needs justices that will uphold the state’s constitution and protect all Montanans’ constitutional freedoms. AFJ Action recommends former magistrate judge Jerry Lynch for chief justice and Judge Katherine Bidegaray for associate justice.

## NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT

Nebraska’s seven supreme court justices are appointed using the assisted appointment method. Nebraska has six judicial districts, with each district represented on the supreme court by one associate justice. The six associate justices join the court’s chief justice to make up the seven-member court. The state’s Judicial Nominating Commission has separate committees for each seat, including the chief judgeship. Justices run in retention elections after serving at least three years and run for additional six-year terms to remain on the court. The term of one justice is expiring in 2024, with the justice seeking a second full term on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
<p><b>Associate Justice</b></p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div> <p><b>Stephanie Stacy</b>  <b>Incumbent Associate Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incumbent Associate Justice</li> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2015 by Gov. Pete Ricketts (R)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Third Judicial District</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on matters concerning defense of personal injury and wrongful death case and insurance coverage disputes before becoming a judge</li> </ul> </div> </div>


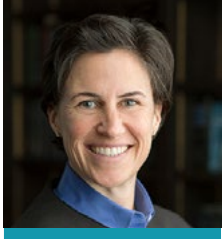

## THE STAKES

This year, the Nebraska Supreme Court **unanimously ruled** that a bill that restricts access to abortion and gender-affirming care for minors does not violate the single subject clause of the state’s constitution, which requires bills to address only one subject. The court ruled that abortions and gender-affirming care are both forms of medical care, allowing the bill to address both types of care. The court also **ruled that** Nebraska’s delinquent tax sale process — in which the state seizes homes that are delinquent on property taxes and transfers ownership of the homes to private investors who can satisfy the tax debt — violates the federal and state constitutions. Justice Stacy did not participate in the decision.

In an upcoming decision, the court will determine if the state has the power to order unionized state government employees to return to in-person work or if the state will be required to negotiate with the union before requiring the workers to return to in-person working conditions.

## NEVADA SUPREME COURT

Justices of the Nevada Supreme Court are elected in nonpartisan elections. No candidates filed to challenge the three incumbent justices seeking reelection, and all three justices are presumed to return to the court for full terms. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Candidates		
<b>Chief Justice</b>	 <p><b>Elissa Cadish</b> Incumbent Chief Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously a judge of the Eighth Judicial District Court</li> <li>• Practiced commercial litigation and employment law before joining the bench</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Lidia Stiglich</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously served as a judge of the Second Judicial District Court, the Second Judicial Probate Court, and the Youth Offender Drug Court</li> <li>• Worked in private practice before joining the bench</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Patricia Lee</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Black woman and the first Asian American to sit on the Nevada Supreme Court</li> <li>• Worked in private practice prior to joining the court</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>

## THE STAKES

Last year, the Nevada Supreme Court [upheld a lower court injunction](#) and ruled against the Clark County Education Association, finding the CCEA's rolling sickouts were equivalent to a strike, which is illegal for teachers in Nevada. In 2024, the court [overturned a lower court's ruling](#) that struck down a law passed in 2021 and signed by the state's previous governor, Steve Sisolak (D), which placed a statewide ban on the sale of "ghost guns," which are components of firearms that have no serial numbers and allow buyers to assemble their own firearms that are unregulated and untraceable. The lower court sided with the plaintiff gun manufacturer's assertion that the language of the statute was unconstitutionally vague, but the state's highest court ruled that terms applied in the statute are commonly used and understood despite being broadly applied and do not violate the state constitution.

In a 5-2 decision, the court [struck down](#) a proposed ballot measure that sought to allow voters to decide whether the state could spend public funding on a new Major League Baseball stadium in Las Vegas. The ballot initiative was supported by the state teachers' union, which has opposed public funding for professional sports teams at the expense of the state's public school system. A [unanimous ruling](#) by the Nevada Supreme Court rejected a challenge to a proposed constitutional amendment that would require voters to present identification to vote. The court [declined to consider](#) a request from the state's attorney general and top election official and attorney general after election officials from its second-largest county initially refused to certify recount results from the June primary election. The state officials asked the court to reaffirm that county officials have no authority to determine whether or not to certify election results, but the court said the matter was moot because the county officials had voted to certify the results after voting against certification the previous week. The court also clarified that it may exercise its authority to clarify the state officials' sole authority to certify election results if it becomes an issue again.

## NEW MEXICO SUPREME COURT

New Mexico's five supreme court justices are selected in partisan elections. After serving for one year on the court, justices must win the first partisan general election after their appointment to serve the remainder of their unexpired term. To serve additional eight-year terms, justices must receive at least 57% of the vote in a retention election. One justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court is running for election to a full eight-year term on the court in 2024. Justice Briana Zamora was appointed to the court in 2021 and successfully ran as a Democrat to fill the remainder of the term in 2022. She will stand for retention election in 2024 for a full term. The election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	<p><b>Briana Zamora</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2021 by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D)</li> <li>• Judge, Bernalillo County District Court and Metropolitan Court</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> <li>• Previously served as assistant state attorney general and assistant district attorney</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

In a unanimous 2023 decision, the New Mexico Supreme Court **upheld** the state's congressional district map, which was drawn by Democratic lawmakers, after Republican legislators had challenged the map in a lawsuit alleging it was unconstitutionally gerrymandered to favor Democrats. The court also **ruled that** tribal courts hold sole authority to hear tort claims brought by visitors to casinos that are situated on tribal land and owned by tribes. Justice Zamora joined the court's majority in both opinions.

In an important reproductive rights case, the court will soon decide if local county ordinances that restrict residents' ability to receive abortion pills or abortion related materials in the mail is constitutional and whether a right to abortion can be found in the state's constitution.

## NORTH CAROLINA SUPREME COURT

North Carolina's supreme court justices are elected in partisan elections to eight-year terms. For interim vacancies, the governor appoints a justice to the court. That individual must stand for election for a full term to the bench. Gov. Roy Cooper (D) appointed Justice Allison Riggs to the state supreme court in 2023. Riggs (D) is running for a full term on the court and is being challenged by court of appeals Judge Jefferson Griffin. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
Associate Justice	<p><b>Allison Riggs</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Roy Cooper (D)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the North Carolina Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Worked as co-executive director and chief voting rights counsel for the Southern Coalition for Social Justice before becoming a judge</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jefferson Griffin</b> Judge of the North Carolina Court of Appeals</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the North Carolina Court of Appeals in 2020</li> <li>• Appointed to the Wake County District Court in 2015 by Gov. Pat McCrory (R) and reelected in 2016</li> <li>• Worked in the Wake County District Attorney's Office before becoming a judge</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

Under the North Carolina Supreme Court's new conservative majority, the state supreme court shockingly reheard multiple decisions it had recently delivered in late 2022 under a Democratic majority, **overruling its previous decision** blocking partisan gerrymandered congressional maps and **also overruling** a recent decision from late 2022 that had blocked a racially discriminatory voter ID law. Also under the Democratic majority, the court mandated public school funding increases, ensuring all students' constitutional right to a sound basic education. However, the court, under its new conservative majority, is set to rehear a case that could reverse that 2022 decision. During the rehearing, Justice Phil Berger Jr. was challenged and asked to recuse himself. The majority, however, **found** that Berger did not have to recuse himself despite his father, Senate Majority Leader Phil Berger Sr., leading the effort to stop the funding increases.

The court has also been embroiled in ethics scandals. The North Carolina Judicial Standards Commission previously **launched** an ethics investigation into Justice Anita Earls, the court's only Black justice, following an interview she gave where she discussed the diversity of the court and its employees. In her comments, Earls said a lack of diversity may lead to certain implicit biases. The commission claimed Earls' comments undermined public trust in the judiciary. Earls disagreed and said her comments were First Amendment protected speech. She then filed a federal lawsuit challenging the investigation. A federal judge denied Earls' request for an injunction against the investigation, while ultimately the commission **dropped** the investigation against Earls. Following the investigation, some Democrats pointed to Republican Chief Justice Paul Newby, saying Newby had orchestrated campaign. This is due to the chief justice's oversight and discretionary powers over the commission. The chief justice, Newby, appoints a judge to chair the commission. The chair hires an executive director and helps guide the commission's disciplinary processes. Ultimately the supreme court controls and mandates judicial discipline should the commission recommend this. Newby exercised this discretion in June 2024 when the supreme court declined to discipline two Republican judges, despite the commission finding misconduct and two judges admitted violating ethical standards.

The court most recently has been subject to increased scrutiny in light of these recent decisions. While the court feels the need to discipline Democratic justices, it sees no need to enforce ethics on its conservative judges. Most recently, the conservative majority allowed Justice Phil Berger Jr. to participate and rule in a case directly involving his father, North Carolina Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger Sr., despite his father having a direct political stake and reputation at risk. The legislature changed the state's election commission makeup by stripping the governor, Gov. Roy Cooper (D), of his power to appoint commissioners and gave themselves that power instead. Legislators attempted to give themselves this power once before, but the state supreme court's liberal majority in 2018 **blocked** them from doing so. Under their current rule, conservative leaders in the state are attempting to entrench their power across all levels of government, putting rule of law and separation of powers at risk for political control.

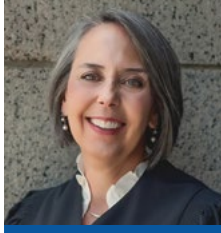

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

AFJ Action recommends Allison Riggs for the North Carolina Supreme Court. Riggs has been a voice of dissent against the ultraconservative majority. She gives a voice to the people and will ensure equal justice for all individuals, not just the wealthy and powerful.

## OHIO SUPREME COURT

Justices of the Ohio Supreme Court are selected in partisan elections. Vacancies on the court are filled through appointment by the governor. The court's seven seats were considered nonpartisan offices until 2020, when legislation was enacted that requires candidates to run with a partisan designation. A majority of seats on the Ohio Supreme Court have been controlled by Republicans since 1986. Republicans currently hold four of the seven seats on the court, and with three seats on the ballot in 2024, the balance of the court could shift from Republicans to Democrats for the first time in nearly 40 years. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Melody Stewart</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected in 2018</li> <li>• Judge, Eighth District Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Previously worked in academia, as a civil defense litigator, and assistant law director for Cleveland and East Cleveland</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Joe Deters</b> Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Mike DeWine (R)</li> <li>• Prosecutor for Hamilton County</li> <li>• Previously served as Ohio treasurer and Hamilton County Clerk of Courts</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Michael Donnelly</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected in 2018</li> <li>• Judge, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas and Mental Health and Developmental Disability Court</li> <li>• Former assistant Cuyahoga County prosecutor</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Megan Shanahan</b> Judge of the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the common pleas court in 2015 and elected in 2016 and 2022</li> <li>• Elected to the Hamilton County Municipal Court in 2011 and reelected in 2013</li> <li>• Formerly a felony-level criminal prosecutor</li> <li>• Member of the Federalist Society</li> </ul>

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
<b>Associate Justice</b> (Partial Term)	 <p><b>Lisa Forbes</b>  <b>Judge of the Eighth District Court of Appeals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected to the court in 2020</li> <li>• Previously worked in private practice on complex commercial litigation, consumer class actions, and other matters</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Dan Hawkins</b>  <b>Judge of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected to the common pleas court in 2018</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court from 2013 to 2018</li> <li>• Worked in the Franklin County prosecutor's office before becoming a judge</li> <li>• Member of the Federalist Society</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

Last summer, Republicans in the Ohio legislature passed a legislatively-referred proposed constitutional amendment that asked voters to change the threshold for passage of future proposed constitutional amendments to 60% instead of a simple majority of 50% plus one vote. The Republicans sought to present the question to voters during a special August election in which the question would be the only item on the ballot. The legislators had passed the proposal and referred it to the Ohio Ballot Board to make efforts to amend the state's constitution more difficult. This move was made in anticipation of another ballot proposal being promoted in Ohio that sought to ask voters to enshrine reproductive rights in the state's constitution. Organizers were seeking to place the reproductive rights proposal on the ballot in the November 2023 general election, so Republicans rushed to place their own proposal to raise the threshold for a proposed amendment's passage before voters in an August special election in an effort to stymie the passage of the reproductive rights proposal later that fall. Opponents filed challenges to the legislature's effort to make sweeping changes to the state's process for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments on such a short timeline, but the Republican-led majority on the Ohio Supreme Court [allowed the state](#) to hold the special election in August 2023. Voters rejected the proposal, and the threshold for passage of proposed constitutional amendments in Ohio remains at 50% plus one vote.

A few weeks later, the court [approved the language](#) proposed by Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose to describe the reproductive rights initiative, including allowing the term "unborn child" to remain in the description over the objections of the initiative's supporters, who argued that the term would inject ethical judgment into the question before voters. LaRose, a Republican, was an avowed opponent of the proposal. Despite these efforts from Republicans across Ohio to hinder or block the reproductive rights proposal, voters approved the amendment in November 2023 by a margin of 56% to 44%. The passage of the amendment forced the court to [strike down](#) and remand the state's near-total abortion ban that [had been stayed](#) by a lower court since the previous year. That court [recently affirmed](#) the unconstitutionality of the ban in the wake of the amendment's passage.

Late last year, the court [dismissed a series of lawsuits](#) that had challenged the constitutionality of the state's new legislative redistricting plan on the grounds that the plan's maps were intentionally drawn to favor Republicans in violation of the state's constitution. The complaint had initially been filed in 2021 and had been tied up in the courts for several years, allowing legislative and congressional maps that Democrats had argued diluted the strength of votes in liberal and minority communities across the state to remain in place for the 2022 elections. With the court's ruling, these maps will remain in place until after the 2030 census. Frustrated by Republicans' successful efforts to enact gerrymandered district maps for nearly the next decade, liberal and progressive groups launched an effort to create an independent citizens' redistricting committee that would comprise ordinary Ohio citizens without political ties or interests who would be empowered to draw the state's legislative and congressional district maps. Earlier this summer, proponents of the proposal collected the required number of signatures to place the proposed amendment before voters in November and submitted the proposal to the Ohio Ballot Board which approved the proposal. Then, LaRose drafted language for the proposal's ballot description that supporters say is a patently false misrepresentation of the proposal's effect and is intended to mislead voters. The proposal's supporters filed a challenge to LaRose's language, but the court [approved the controversial language](#) in a party-line ruling. As a result, the proposal will be described as "required to gerrymander the boundaries of state legislative and congressional districts" to produce "partisan outcomes"; "repeal constitutional protections against gerrymandering"; and "eliminate the longstanding ability of Ohio citizens to hold their representatives accountable for establishing fair state legislative and congressional districts." Additionally, the court approved the proposed title for the ballot initiative: "to create an appointed redistricting commission not elected by or subject to removal by the voters of the state." In approving the language and title, the court appeared to ignore state law preventing ballot language from attempting to sway voters for or against the initiative being described.

And in a decision so baffling it made [international headlines](#), the court [ruled](#) in July along party lines that a restaurant patron could not bring a negligence cause of action against a restaurant that served him chicken advertised and sold as “boneless wings,” which nonetheless contained a piece of bone that punctured the man’s esophagus and caused an infection that required surgery and weeks of intensive care to treat. The court reasoned that restaurant patrons should expect chicken meat to contain pieces of bone because chickens have bones, and reasoned that boneless food is designated as such based on its cooking method rather than the perceived presence or absence of bones. Commentators decried the decision and its author, Justice Joe Deters, for making Ohio consumers less safe in favor of protecting the financial interests of large corporations.




Deters was appointed to the court in early 2023 by Gov. Mike DeWine (R), whose family are longtime friends of Deters’s family. Deters was previously the Ohio state treasurer but was forced to resign in 2005 when a corruption scandal in his office became public. He worked as the prosecutor for Hamilton County until DeWine appointed him to the state’s highest court. Rather than running to fill the remainder of his partial term in 2024, Deters is challenging fellow incumbent Justice Melody Stewart for a full term on the court.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

Democratic Justices Melody Stewart and Michael Donnelly have consistently voted to oppose rulings issued by the Ohio Supreme Court’s Republican majority that have attacked the fundamental rights of Ohio residents and favored the interests of big businesses and Republican lawmakers. Republican Justice Joe Deters is a reliable member of this Republican majority. With the Republicans currently holding just a 4-3 majority on the court and with three seats on the ballot, Democrats have the opportunity to flip the court and become a check on the corruption of Republican lawmakers in Ohio. AFJ Action Campaign recommends returning Justice Melody Stewart and Justice Michael Donnelly to full terms on the court and choosing Court of Appeals Judge Lisa Forbes for the partial term.

## OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT

Oklahoma’s nine supreme court justices are appointed using the assisted appointment method, with a judicial nominating commission selecting a slate of candidates from which the governor chooses a finalist. Justices run in retention elections after serving at least one year on the court and run for additional six-year terms to remain on the court. Three justices whose terms are expiring are running to serve additional terms on the court. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>James Edmondson</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2003 by Gov. Brad Henry (D)</li> <li>• Previously served as a district court judge</li> <li>• Worked as an acting U.S. attorney and assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Oklahoma and as an assistant district attorney in Muskogee County before joining the bench</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Noma Gurich</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 2011 by Gov. Brad Henry (D)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Oklahoma Workers’ Compensation Court and a district court judge</li> <li>• Worked in private practice on matters concerning defense of negligence and tort cases, product liability, antitrust, securities fraud, and workers’ compensation cases before joining the court</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Yvonne Kauger</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed to the court in 1984 by Gov. George Nigh (D)</li> <li>• Previously a staff attorney for the Oklahoma Supreme Court for nearly 12 years</li> </ul>



## THE STAKES

In 2023, the Oklahoma Supreme Court **ruled that** two bills passed by the state's legislature to limit abortion access in the state are unconstitutional. The bills prohibited physicians from performing abortions at any point in a pregnancy with limited exceptions and created a provision for private citizens to take legal action against physicians found to have performed an abortion in violation of this law. The state's highest court **narrowly protected** abortion access in the state when a doctor believes a woman's life is at risk. Justices Edmonson and Kauger and Chief Justice Gurich concurred in both opinions.

In 2024, the court **dismissed a lawsuit** that sought reparations in response to the 1921 Tulsa race massacre, when a white mob murdered 300 Black Tulsans and razed their neighborhood, Greenwood. The court unanimously ruled that no legal remedy is available to the plaintiffs — the last two living survivors of the massacre, who are 109 and 110 years old — effectively ending any chance that they will receive justice for the atrocities committed against them, their families, and their community 103 years ago. The court also **ruled** that the state department of education does not have the authority to force local schools to change the books in their library. The case arose after the Oklahoma State Department of Education ordered a school to remove two books from its library and threatened to rescind the school's accreditation if it did not comply. And the court **ruled** that a proposed Catholic charter school that would be funded by public education dollars was a violation of the U.S. Constitution, the Oklahoma Constitution, and several state statutes. The ruling blocked what would have been the creation of the nation's first religious public charter school. All three of these decisions were unanimous.

## OKLAHOMA COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

Oklahoma is one of two states that has a court of last resort for civil appeals and a separate one for criminal appeals. The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals is the court of last resort for criminal matters in Oklahoma. Judges of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals are appointed to the court by the governor and stand in retention elections. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>David Lewis</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2005 by Gov. Brad Henry (D)</li> <li>• District judge and special judge</li> <li>• Prosecutor, Comanche County</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>William Musseman</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2022 by Gov. Keith Stitt (R)</li> <li>• Previously a special judge, district judge, and presiding judge on Oklahoma's 14th Judicial District</li> <li>• Worked as special assistant U.S. attorney and assistant district attorney for the Tulsa County District Attorney's Office</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Scott Rowland</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2017 by Gov. Mary Fallin (R)</li> <li>• Previously assistant attorney general for Oklahoma</li> <li>• General counsel to the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs</li> <li>• Assistant district attorney, Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES




In 2021, 65 members of the Oklahoma legislature, both Republicans and Democrats, sent a letter to Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt and the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board that called for an investigation into the conviction and death sentence of Richard Glossip, who had been convicted of murder with questionable evidence and sentenced to death row in 1997, and who has always maintained his innocence. In 2022, newly elected Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond assumed office and initiated a review of several dozen of the state's death row cases. Glossip's case stood out due to the weakness of the prosecution's theory of the case, and further investigation revealed that prosecutors had concealed and destroyed evidence that would have given the jury reason to believe Glossip was not guilty. Drummond hired an independent counsel to investigate further, who concluded that, regardless of questions surrounding his possible innocence, Glossip was denied a fair trial.


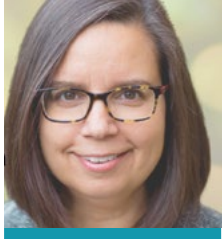
The legislature conducted its own investigation following the attorney general's investigation, which reached similar conclusions. In spite of the state's admission that the prosecution had withheld and destroyed evidence, depriving Glossip of a fair trial, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals **unanimously denied** Glossip's latest appeal for post-conviction relief, ruling that state law did not allow Glossip to receive a new trial because his lawyers "knew or should have known" that evidence was being withheld from them. Prior to this ruling, the state's highest court for criminal matters had considered Glossip's case **seven other times** since he was convicted in 1997 and had denied him relief each time.

The state of Oklahoma appealed the court of criminal appeals's ruling to the United States Supreme Court, which **heard oral arguments** in the case on Wednesday, October 9. The attorney representing the state of Oklahoma, which had appealed both on behalf of itself and of Glossip, argued against a lawyer retained to defend the court of criminal appeals's ruling by the court itself. The state's lawyer argued that the court of criminal appeals is clinging to a conviction that is based on false evidence and testimony to deny Glossip a new trial that he has a constitutional right to receive. Only eight of the supreme court's nine justices heard the case, as Justice Neil Gorsuch was a member of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals when that court decided one of Glossip's prior appeals and recused himself from hearing the case. If the Court splits evenly on the decision, the decision by the court of criminal appeals that denied Glossip a new trial will stand, and — unless he receives a pardon from Oklahoma's governor or pardon and parole board — Glossip will be facing execution once more.

## OREGON SUPREME COURT

The seven justices of the Oregon Supreme Court are chosen in nonpartisan elections. Justices serve six-year terms and run in nonpartisan elections to serve additional terms. In the case of a vacancy, the governor appoints a replacement who must stand for nonpartisan election in the next general election. The terms of five justices are expiring in 2024. All five incumbent justices are running for reelection and have no general election opponents. The election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Candidates	
<b>Chief Justice</b>	 <p><b>Meagan Flynn</b> <b>Incumbent Chief Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2017 by Gov. Kate Brown (D)</li> <li>• Judge, Oregon Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Rebecca Duncan</b> <b>Incumbent Associate Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2017 by Gov. Kate Brown (D)</li> <li>• Judge, Oregon Court of Appeals</li> <li>• Previously worked for the Office of Public Defense Services and Metropolitan Public Defender for Washington and Multnomah Counties</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Stephen Bushong</b> <b>Incumbent Associate Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Tina Kotek (D)</li> <li>• Circuit court judge, Multnomah County; chief civil judge and presiding judge</li> <li>• Oregon Department of Justice</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>

Candidates		
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Bronson James</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Tina Kotek (D)</li> <li>• Previously a judge of the Oregon Court of Appeals and the Multnomah County Circuit Court</li> <li>• Worked in private practice focused on criminal defense, civil rights, and immigration; as chief of the Oregon Office of Public Defense Services Appellate Division; and at the Metropolitan Public Defender before becoming a judge</li> </ul>	No Candidate
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Aruna Masih</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2023 by Gov. Tina Kotek (D)</li> <li>• Previously worked in private practice on workers' rights matters</li> </ul>	No Candidate

## THE STAKES

In 2023, the Oregon Supreme Court [issued a preliminary ruling](#) that a judge wrongly forced a public defender to take on a new client. The ruling comes amidst a crisis in the state's public defense system that has seen public defenders argue that their workloads are so excessive that they are violating their clients' constitutional right to effective legal counsel. The court later dismissed the case because the plaintiff had left the public defender's office but agreed to hear a similar case. Oral arguments will be heard in December 2024.

## SOUTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

Judges of the South Dakota Supreme Court are appointed to the court by the governor with the assistance of a judicial nominating commission that recommends candidates to the governor. Justices stand in retention elections after serving at least three years on the court and stand for retention to subsequent full terms lasting eight years. In 2024, one justice appointed in 2020 is running for retention elections. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Scott Myren</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2020 by Kristi Noem (R)</li> <li>• Presiding judge, Fifth Judicial Circuit; administrative judge, Office of Administrative Hearings; magistrate judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit</li> <li>• Staff attorney, South Dakota Supreme Court</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

In 2023, the South Dakota Supreme Court [issued an advisory opinion](#) clarifying questions surrounding language in the state's constitution regarding conflicts of interest for legislators who receive state contracts. After South Dakota's governor, Kristi Noem, asked the court to issue the advisory opinion, the court determined that legislators are only prohibited from entering into contracts with the state that were authorized during the period in which they were serving as a legislator or for one year after the expiration of their term. Noem said the clarification would allow her to make appointments for two vacant seats in the state's legislature.






This year, the court reversed a lower court's decision that dismissed a challenge to a ballot proposal to enshrine the right to an abortion in the state's constitution. Pro-life group Life Defense Fund had filed a challenge that alleged numerous inconsistencies in the signature-gathering process. The supreme court's ruling remanded the case back to the circuit court to reconsider whether the proposal meets constitutional requirements to appear on ballots. Secretary of State Monae Johnson has already [certified the proposal](#) to appear on ballots this fall, but the supreme court's ruling is allowing Life Defense Fund's motion to disqualify the ballot proposal to proceed in circuit court, with arguments scheduled for December 2024. It is not clear how the lawsuit may be affected by the possible passage of the ballot measure this November.

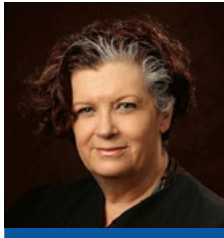


The court [sided with landowners](#) in their dispute with a company that aims to build an \$8 billion carbon capture pipeline through several states. The company conducted surveys on private land without securing permission from landowners, intending to take possession of the land through eminent domain. The landowners sued to prohibit the company from trespassing on their land, and the company argued that it should be entitled to acquire private land for its pipeline due to its status as a common carrier, a company that transports goods such as public utilities for a fee. But the state's highest court disagreed that the company has shown that it qualifies as a common carrier and remanded the case back to a lower court to determine whether the company meets the criteria.

The court also rejected a complaint brought by an unsuccessful Republican candidate for the state legislature seeking to exclude absentee ballots that were initially rejected but later counted in the state's June primary election. The suit urged the court to "revert to the unofficial vote count totals" and "to conduct a thorough review" of registered voters in two voting precincts after a local precinct board rejected 132 challenged ballots in one of the precincts. Secretary of State Monae Johnson's office advised county officials that state law would prohibit the rejection of the challenged ballots and the court affirmed her interpretation of state election law by dismissing the complaint.

## TEXAS SUPREME COURT

Texas is one of two states that has a court of last resort for civil appeals and one for criminal appeals. The Texas Supreme Court is the court of last resort for civil matters in Texas. Judges of the Texas Supreme Court are chosen in partisan elections. In the event of a vacancy on the court, the governor appoints a replacement. In 2024, three incumbent Republican justices are being challenged by Democratic candidates, and Libertarian candidates are running to replace incumbents in two of the three seats. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
Place 2	 <p><b>DaSean Jones</b> Judge of the 180th Criminal District Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the Criminal District Court in 2018</li> <li>• Previously served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves</li> <li>• Served as a judge advocate in the U.S. Army Reserve since 2012</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Justice Jimmy Blacklock</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2018 by Gov. Greg Abbott (R)</li> <li>• General Counsel, Abbott Attorney General's Office</li> <li>• U.S. Department of Justice</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>
	Libertarian Candidates	
	No Candidate	
Place 4	 <p><b>Christine Weems</b> Judge of the 180th Criminal District Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously worked as a personal injury and complex civil litigator</li> <li>• Board certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in personal injury and civil trial law</li> </ul>	 <p><b>John Devine</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected in 2012</li> <li>• Judge, 190th State District Court, Harris County; special judge, Harris County Justice of the Peace Courts</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> <li>• Worked at Shell Oil Co.</li> </ul>
	Libertarian Candidates	
	 <p><b>Matthew Sercely</b> Judge of the 180th Criminal District Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has worked as a personal injury attorney for 15 years</li> <li>• Also works as a tax advisor</li> </ul>	

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
Place 6	 <p><b>Bonnie Lee Goldstein</b>  <b>Judge of the 5th District Court of Appeals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously presiding judge of the 44th Civil District Court</li> <li>• Served as a municipal court judge</li> <li>• Litigated construction, education law, and contracts cases before becoming a judge</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Justice Jane Bland</b>  <b>Incumbent Associate Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2019 by Gov. Greg Abbott (R)</li> <li>• Justice, First Court of Appeals; state district judge</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Libertarian Candidates</b></p>  <p><b>David Roberson</b>  <b>Tax and Litigation Attorney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specializes in tax incentives, credits and deductions</li> <li>• Certified third-party mediator</li> </ul>


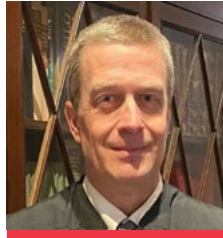


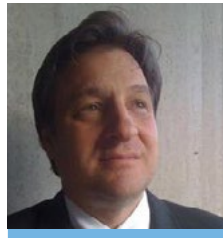
## THE STAKES

In recent years, the Supreme Court of Texas **overturned** a lower court's temporary block on a bill prohibiting minors from receiving gender-affirming care and forcing patients already receiving care to "wean off" of their treatments. The bill also revokes the licenses of any healthcare provider that prescribes gender-affirming care. The ruling allowed the ban to take effect while a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the ban was litigated in lower courts. The court also **denied a request** from the Attorney General Ken Paxton to dismiss a whistleblower lawsuit brought against him by four of his former top deputies, who are suing their former boss for wrongful termination and retaliation after they reported him to the FBI for abusing his office as part of a political kickback scheme. And the court **issued an order** clarifying that federal law requires migrants arrested and charged with jailable misdemeanors be provided with a defense lawyer if they are arrested in any of the 58 counties designated a "state of disaster" regarding border security.

This year, the court **rejected a challenge** to the state's abortion ban that had asked the court to clarify the circumstances in which it is legal for doctors in Texas to perform abortions to save the life or health of the mother and refused to clarify the questions presented by the suit, affirming its belief that the circumstances in which the law permits an exception to the abortion ban are clear and unambiguous. Bland wrote for the majority, which Blacklock and Devine joined. In a final resolution to the previous year's lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a ban on gender affirming care for transgender minors, which was ultimately appealed to the state's highest court, the court ruled 8-1 to **affirm** the legality of the gender affirming care ban. Approximately 29,000 Texas children aged 13-17 who identify as transgender have lost access to gender affirming care because of the ruling. Blacklock, Devine, and Bland joined the court's majority. Justice Debra Lehrman, the ruling's lone dissenter, wrote that the law illegally takes the rights of Texas parents to choose medical care for their children.

## TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals is the court of last resort for criminal matters in Texas. Judges of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals are chosen in partisan elections. In the event of a vacancy on the court, the governor appoints a replacement. In 2024, three full term seats are on the ballot after incumbents were defeated in the primary election. Republican and Democratic candidates are seeking each of the three seats and Libertarian candidates are seeking two of the three seats. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
Presiding Judge	 <p><b>Holly Taylor</b>  <b>Assistant District Attorney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works to remedy wrongful convictions as assistant director in the Civil Rights Division of the Travis County District Attorney's Office</li> <li>• Previously staff attorney and rules attorney for the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals</li> </ul>	 <p><b>David Schenck</b>  <b>Private Practice Attorney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judge of the Texas Fifth District Court of Appeals from 2015 to 2022</li> <li>• Affiliated with the Federalist Society</li> <li>• Endorsed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Libertarian Candidates</b></p> <p><b>No Candidate</b></p>
Place 7	 <p><b>Nancy Mulder</b>  <b>Judge of the Dallas County Criminal District Court No. 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First elected to the Dallas County Criminal District Court in 2014</li> <li>• Worked as a criminal defense attorney from 2007 to 2014</li> <li>• Worked as an assistant Dallas County district attorney from 1995 to 2007</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Gina Parker</b>  <b>Private Practice Attorney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked as both a prosecutor and criminal defense attorney</li> <li>• Affiliated with the Federalist Society and the NRA</li> <li>• Endorsed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Libertarian Candidates</b></p>  <p><b>Mark Ash</b>  <b>Criminal Defense Attorney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal defense attorney for over 25 years</li> <li>• Strong supporter of cannabis legalization</li> </ul>

## Democratic Candidates

Place 8



### **Chika Anyiam** Judge of the Dallas County

- Criminal District Court No. 7
- First elected to the Dallas County Criminal District Court in 2018
- Previously a criminal defense attorney for 20 years
- Board certified in criminal law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization

## Republican Candidates



### **Lee Finley** Criminal Defense Attorney

- Criminal defense attorney for over 20 years
- Former U.S. Marine
- Endorsed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton

## Libertarian Candidates



### **Stephen Kinsella** Commercial Litigator

- Patent, intellectual property and commercial litigator
- Author of numerous legal practitioner guides and Libertarian-related legal theory publications

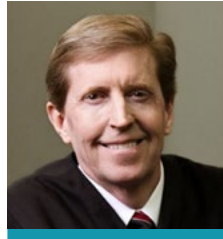
## THE STAKES

In 2021, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals held that a Texas law passed years ago that gave the state's attorney general the power to prosecute election crimes was unconstitutional and determined that the attorney general's office must obtain a referral or consent from a local prosecutor before pursuing election fraud charges. The ruling threw a wrench in a years-long crusade against alleged election fraud in Texas waged by Attorney General Ken Paxton, despite his office having gathered little concrete evidence to support these accusations over the years. Paxton's office has brought charges against nearly 170 people and has obtained a judgment in just one of these cases. The cases overwhelmingly targeted Black and Latino activists and voters. Paxton's efforts to target these voters have caused confusion and fear amongst community organizations and activists who have worked to expand voter registration and turnout in predominantly minority communities in Texas for decades.

Since the ruling from the court of criminal appeals, many of these cases have been dismissed. Angered by the court's ruling, Paxton personally targeted three of its long-time judges who were up for reelection in 2024 and who had joined the majority opinion that stripped him of the authority to pursue election fraud cases: Barbara Hervey, Michelle Slaughter, and the court's presiding judge, Sharon Keller. Paxton recruited personal friends and acquaintances who share his view — which is not supported by evidence — that election fraud is rampant in Texas to run against the three incumbent judges in the Republican primary election. Paxton endorsed his three handpicked candidates, and his campaign committee donated to each of their campaigns. The candidates also received endorsements and financial support from other political allies and organizations that have supported Paxton. On Tuesday, March 5, 2024, all three of the incumbent judges were defeated by Paxton's challengers, ensuring that the state's highest court for criminal matters will have three new judges early next year. Paxton's handpicked Republican candidates will each face a Democratic candidate, and two of the three will face a Libertarian candidate. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

## UTAH SUPREME COURT

Utah's seven supreme court justices are selected through the assisted appointment method, in which a judicial nominating commission provides a list of candidates from which the governor chooses a finalist. Justices serve for at least one year and then run in retention elections to serve the remainder of the term. Justices run in retention elections for additional eight-year terms on the court. In 2024, the term of one justice is expiring. Justice Matthew Durrant will stand for retention election to a fifth eight-year term. The election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
<b>Chief Justice</b>	 <p><b>Matthew Durant</b> Incumbent Chief Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2000 by Gov. Michael Leavitt (R)</li> <li>• Previously a trial judge in the Third Judicial District</li> <li>• Worked in private practice before becoming a judge</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

The Utah Supreme Court upheld an injunction blocking the enforcement of a state law that bans abortions in nearly all cases in a 4-1 decision in which all three of the court's female justices joined the majority. The injunction will allow residents to access abortion care until the 18th week of pregnancy and will remain in place until a lower court can rule on the constitutionality of the near-total abortion ban. Chief Justice Durant dissented.

In an important upcoming decision, the court will decide if ballots postmarked after election day due to delays in mail processing should be counted.

## WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT

Washington's supreme court justices are chosen in nonpartisan elections. The terms of three justices expire in 2025. Justice Steven Gonzalez and Justice Sheryl McCloud are seeking reelection and are unopposed in the general election. Justice Susan Owens could not seek reelection due to reaching the mandatory retirement age. Two attorneys are running for the open seat created by Owens's impending retirement. The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Candidates		
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Steven Gonzalez</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2012 by Gov. Christine Gregoire (D)</li> <li>• Trial judge, King County Superior Court</li> <li>• Assistant U.S. Attorney, Western District of Washington</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Prosecutor, City of Seattle</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Sheryl McCloud</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected in 2012</li> <li>• Staff attorney, Seattle-King County Public Defender Association</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>	<b>No Candidate</b>
<b>Associate Justice</b>	 <p><b>Sal Mungia</b> Personal Injury Attorney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practices medical malpractice, serious injury, personal injury, real estate, business and general litigation</li> <li>• Does pro bono work through the ACLU</li> </ul>	 <p><b>David Larson</b> Judge of the Federal Way Municipal Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Way Municipal Court judge since 2008; reelected in 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021</li> <li>• Previously worked in private practice for 23 years</li> <li>• Ran unsuccessfully for Supreme Court in 2016 and 2020.</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

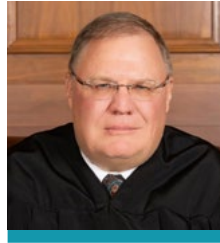
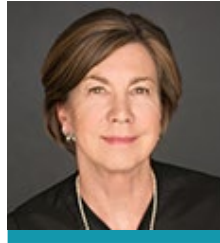
In a [unanimous decision](#) last year, the court ruled against a school district seeking additional funding from the state to supplement the cost of construction and building maintenance. This decision disparately impacts rural communities with less tax revenue, and ultimately comes at the cost of students' quality of education and facilities. The Washington State Supreme Court [ruled in a 5-4 decision](#) that the state's governor did not exceed his emergency authority or violate the property rights of landlords when he ordered a statewide moratorium on evictions between March 2020 and November 2021, which prevented landlords from raising rents or evicting tenants for nonpayment of rent during the height of the pandemic.

The Washington State Supreme Court [ruled that](#) a school district violated a student's due process rights when it expelled him due to his alleged gang association. The school later converted the expulsion to a long-term suspension despite the student's efforts to appeal the expulsion and documentation that his alternative online learning program was not meeting his needs. The court's ruling will require school districts to provide an education to students they expel. In a 7-2 decision, the court [overturned](#) a century-old conviction of a Yakama Nation citizen who was convicted for hunting despite treaties that allowed hunting and fishing on indigenous lands. The case represents a continuation of efforts to right past wrongs in Washington's judicial history and highlights the state's extensive history of racism against its indigenous people.

The court [upheld](#) a temporary ban on the sale of high-capacity magazines until the conclusion of litigation to determine whether the ban violates the Second Amendment. The court [ruled](#) that a municipal ordinance that restricted public parking of recreational vehicles to four hours was constitutional, ruling that the law did not affect the plaintiff's right to travel and live as he chooses. The case will continue to the 9th Ninth Federal Circuit Court to determine whether the law violates Fourth Amendment. The court also [ruled in favor](#) of consumers seeking to move forward with a class action lawsuit after they were victims of price gouging on Amazon during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The court did not rule on the merits of the plaintiffs' claims that Amazon took advantage of the emergency caused by the pandemic but will allow the consumers to move forward with a class action lawsuit that may allow a jury to conclude that Amazon excessively raised prices during the early days of the pandemic.

## WYOMING SUPREME COURT

Wyoming's supreme court justices are selected using the assisted appointment method. A judicial nominating commission recommends a list of candidates to the governor, who chooses a finalist. Justices serve at least one year before standing for retention election to fill the remainder of the term. Justices run in retention elections to serve additional eight-year terms. The terms of two justices are expiring in 2025, and both justices are running for retention election in 2024. The election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Justices	
Associate Justice	 <p><b>John Fenn</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2021 by Gov. Mark Gordon (R)</li> <li>• Previously a Fourth Judicial District Court judge</li> <li>• Worked in private practice in construction law, insurance defense, and personal Injury matters before becoming a judge</li> </ul>
Associate Justice	 <p><b>Kate Fox</b> Incumbent Associate Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointed in 2014 by Gov. Matthew Mead (R)</li> <li>• Worked in private practice</li> </ul>

## THE STAKES

The Wyoming Supreme Court [unanimously upheld a lower court's ruling](#) to deny a petition that had asked a school district to construct, maintain, and staff a one-room schoolhouse on the ranch of a family living 40 miles from the nearest paved road in an extremely remote area of the state. The lawsuit was brought after the district had agreed to build the school but was overruled by the Wyoming Department of Education, which determined that the benefit to the children was outweighed by the burden on taxpayers.



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