



Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},

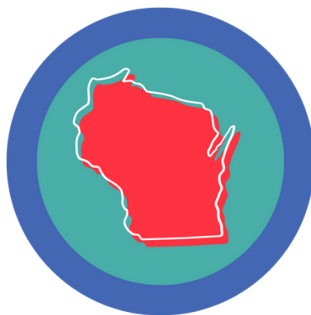
We've said it before, state supreme courts are one of the final battlegrounds to protect our most important constitutional rights. State courts hear 95% of all cases in the United States. From delivering critical decisions impacting abortion access to determining voters' political power and representation, the impact of these supreme courts has been on full display over the past year. However, many people are understandably unaware of the selection processes and what's happening in their court. These institutions depend on decisions made behind closed doors by a handful of people selected to represent their state and interpret its laws.

That's why we're releasing State of Justice, AFJ Action's monthly newsletter on all things state supreme courts and how AFJ Action is impacting them. We're monitoring key vacancies and elections, important state court cases, and the latest news around courts. We'll also help you become a courts activist.



## The Current State of Our Courts

State supreme court elections and appointments in 2022 largely kept incumbent justices in place, but in select states, state supreme courts were completely remade. [AFJ Action just released the first-of-its-kind report](#) summarizing the 2022 elections and upcoming changes to the court that we're closely monitoring. Especially as redistricting litigation makes its way through our state courts, these courts could have a profound impact on the next few elections. [Read the full report here.](#)



### Wisconsin Supreme Court Election on April 4th

Partisan control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court will be determined in a statewide election on April 4, 2023. Republicans currently hold a 4-3 majority on the court.

Justice Patience Roggensack (R) is retiring, and the results of the February 21 primary narrowed the race to two candidates: former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Daniel Kelly (R), and Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Janet Protasiewicz (D). Court watchers and election experts have noted that this race could become the most expensive judicial race in state and national history, with the potential for far-reaching consequences in the lives of Wisconsin residents and the country as a whole. If Judge Protasiewicz wins the race for Justice Roggensack's seat in the April 4 election, control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court will flip to Democrats for the first time in 15 years.

With several watershed cases prepared to go before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, including the potential for a fight over voting rights and access to the ballot in future elections, this race could impact the outcome in several upcoming decisions. Learn more [here](#).

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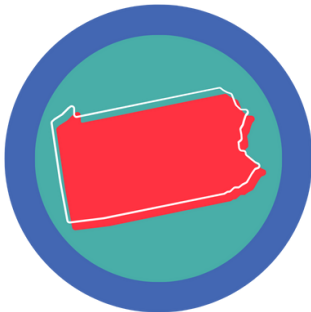


## New York Court of Appeals Chief Judge Appointment

Following the resounding rejection of conservative nominee Justice Hector LaSalle to the Court of Appeals, New York's highest court, by the NY Senate, Governor Hochul reopened the application process for Judge DiFiore's Chief Judge vacancy.

The Commission on Judicial Nomination just released their shortlist of seven candidates for Gov. Hochul's consideration on March 24. Two of the new nominees were featured on the original slate LaSalle's nomination came from, including career public interest lawyer Corey Stoughton's, who AFJ Action enthusiastically supported. Gov. Hochul is required to select her appointment from this shortlist between April 8 and April 23, 2023. The NY Senate has 30 days after receiving her selection to either confirm or reject the appointment. Learn more about the new slate [here](#).

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## Keep an Eye on Upcoming Pennsylvania Elections

Wisconsin isn't the only state holding state court elections. AFJ Action is closely monitoring developments in Pennsylvania. The commonwealth's supreme court has been essential for the protection of voters and ensuring fair elections across the state.

However, as a result, it has been the face of ultra partisan attacks by conservatives in the state legislature. In June, there will be a primary election to determine the candidates for state supreme court, Commonwealth Court, Superior Court, and more. Learn more about the stakes on AFJ Action's website and stay tuned for more information on each of the candidates!

# CASES IN THE COURTS

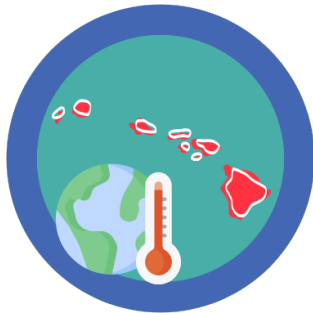
## Voting Rights & Criminal Justice



### **Minnesota** *Schroder v. Simon*

Minnesota's Supreme Court effectively disenfranchised tens of thousands of previously incarcerated individuals, ruling that the state can prohibit them from voting until they are released from probation, parole, or supervised release, even if they have finished prison or jail terms.

## Environmental Protections



### **Hawaii** *In re Hawai'i Elec. Light Co.*

Hawaii's highest court unanimously delivered a win for environmental advocates by blocking the development of a new power plant due to its greenhouse gas emissions and negative impact on the surrounding community and environment.

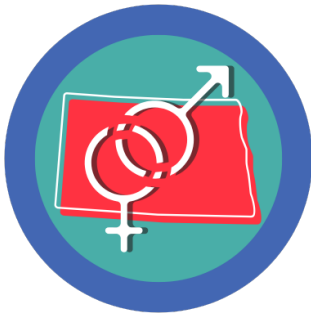


### **Pennsylvania** *Clean Air Council v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has ruled that environmental advocates and citizens affected by oil and gas companies' permits and industrial activity have the legal right to challenge them and receive compensation for legal fees. This decision holds both the government and corporations responsible for the environmental harm caused to communities.



# Reproductive Rights



## North Dakota [Wrigley v. Romanick](#)

In a significant win for all North Dakotans, the North Dakota Supreme Court upheld a lower court's block on the state's abortion ban and found a right to abortion in the state constitution.



## Oklahoma [Oklahoma Call for Reproductive Justice v. Drummond](#)

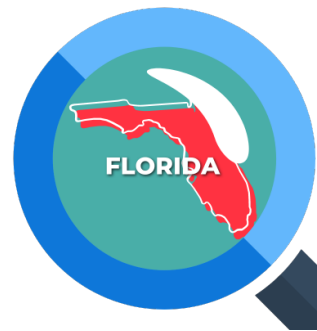
The state's highest court narrowly protected abortion access in the state when a doctor believes a woman's life is at risk.



[Primary election 2023: A complete guide to the candidates for Pennsylvania Supreme Court](#)



[North Carolina Supreme Court Rehears State-Level Redistricting Case Underlying Moore v. Harper](#)



[Gov. DeSantis to get 5th Supreme Court pick as Polston retires](#)

*Get to know a little more about each of the candidates that will be in the May Primary Election. As it stands, the current seven-member court is comprised of four Democrats and two Republicans.*

*After delivering a decision in December 2022 with a Democratic majority on the court, the NC Supreme Court's new conservative majority decided to reopen a political redistricting case, in addition to a voter ID decision, that could have extreme implications for congressional redistricting and voters' power at the ballot box.*

*Governor DeSantis has another opportunity to appoint a justice to the Florida Supreme Court, giving him the opportunity to completely remake and create a conservative court.*

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**SIGN OUR PLEDGE**

**Become a state courts voter today!**



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