

DEMOCRACY
FORWARD 

FREEDOM ON THE BRINK AND THE PATH FORWARD

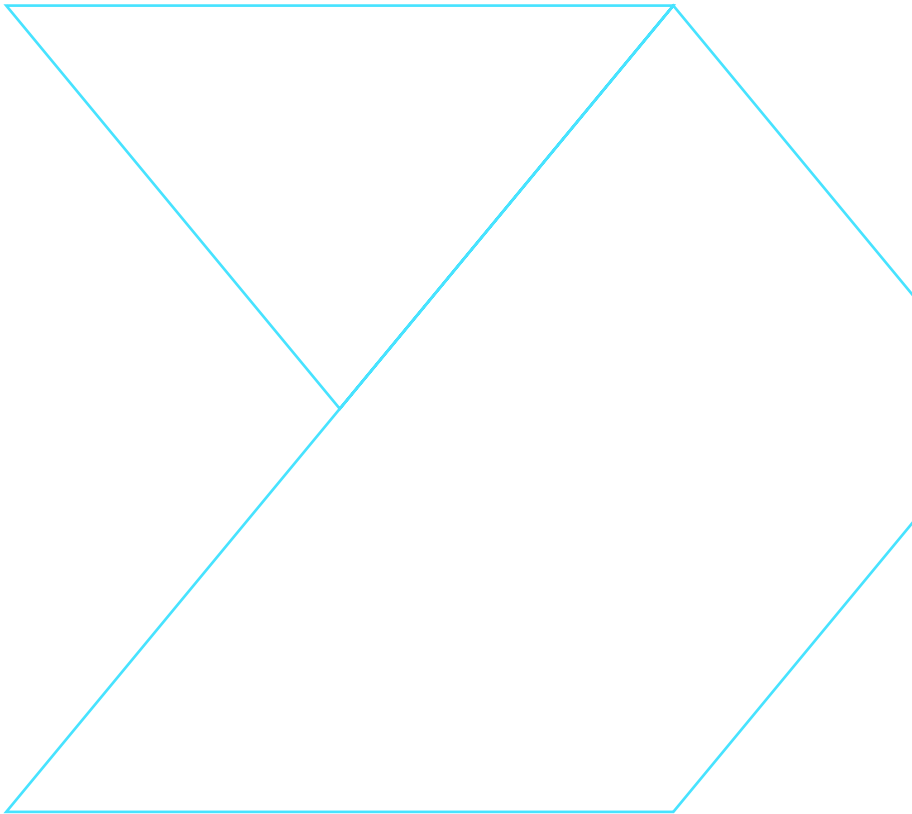
MIDYEAR IMPACT REPORT
SUMMER 2024



**“WITH FEAR
FOR OUR
DEMOCRACY,
I DISSENT.”**

Justice Sonia Sotomayor
Trump v. United States

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THE THREAT

EXTREMISTS HAVE A PLAN

Despite the vast majority of people in our country believing in freedom and the promise of our democracy, extremists are fast at work undermining our democratic values and attacking our rights.

They're invading local library boards, silencing people's voices, sowing misinformation and denouncing science, rolling back hard-won progress, and denying everything from election results to reproductive health care.

POLITICS

The Open Plot to Dismantle the Federal Government

I can't overstate my level of concern about the damage

He Worked for Years to Overturn Affirmative Action and Finally Won. He's Not Done.

Edward Blum's latest victory at the Supreme Court is the culmination

Leonard Leo Pushed the Courts Right. Now He's Aiming at American Society

After leading efforts to put conservative on the activist has quietly built a sprawling network of sums of money to ch

2024 ELECTIONS

Leader of the pro-Trump Project suggests there will be a new American Revolution

Kevin Roberts said the revolution will be bloodless "if the left alle

The Untold Story of the Network That Took Down Roe v. Wade

conservative Christian coalition's plan to end the federal protection of abortion began just days after Trump's 2016 election.

How would ending 'Chevron deference' impact federal agencies?

The same network behind the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* two years ago has continued to use the U.S. Supreme Court to advance its extremist agenda this term. These actors sought to secure a decision enabling presidents to evade accountability while at the same time undermining the ability of our federal government to work for all people. Threats of a new McCarthyism where our nation's civil servants would be purged from their service for not being partisan loyalists are being championed by extremists, as are plans to undermine NATO, a longstanding alliance in the fight against fascism.

These events, while unbelievable, should not be surprising.

In 2021, the U.S. was named a "backsliding democracy." Late last year, 13 presidential libraries across the political spectrum warned of the fragile state of democracy here at home.

The far-right legal movement, which has been working for decades to insert extreme ideology and judges into our courts, is supporting a broader far-right movement for political power. **Now, freedom is on the brink.** What we do today will determine whether our current crisis becomes a catalyst for building a bold and inclusive democracy for all people or we see accelerated backsliding of our freedoms and our democracy.

Join us in the journey forward – present and future generations will ask what you did when freedom was on the brink.

2025
merican

Wellness
The Roe v. Wade
Overturn Could Set
Back School
Desegregation
The Brown v. the Board of Education be next
block?

U.S. listed as a 'backsliding'
democracy for first time in re
European think tank

FREEDOM ON THE BRINK

THE BACKSLIDE

From reproductive rights to racial equity, the far right seeks to undermine hard-fought progress we've made for civil rights and liberties at every turn.

“Welcome to the end of democracy. We are here to overthrow it completely. We didn't get all the way there on January 6, but we will endeavor to get rid of it.”

Jack Posobiec, far-right activist, at the 2024 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC)

220 years since the first peaceful transition of presidential power by political adversaries in 1801,

the nation experienced a violent insurrection attempt on our nation's Capitol, and political violence continues to rise.

75 years after the publication of George Orwell's dystopian novel "1984"

warning of the harms of totalitarianism, misinformation, and censorship, there were more than 4,000 book bans this school year alone.



248 years since our nation was founded and overthrew a monarchy,

the U.S. Supreme Court has declared that, like a king, our president can be unaccountable to the law.

70 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*

opened up a pathway for equal education for all, the U.S. Supreme Court has reversed progress on equity in college admissions. Far-right state governments are forcing universities, state boards, and more to shut down racial equity programs.

51 years after *Roe v. Wade*,

27 states now have abortion bans between six and 24 weeks; another 14 have essentially banned abortion altogether. Extremists are denying people emergency abortion care and threatening to enforce a 150-year-old law that would criminalize delivering medication abortion through the mail.

170 sitting members of Congress

either voted to overturn the 2020 election or have pushed election lies.

100+ extreme organizations are proposing a "second American revolution"

with 900+ pages of anti-democratic proposals as part of Project 2025. These ideas threaten everything from abolishing the Department of Education to criminalizing abortion, to hiring partisan loyalists and discarding racial equity programs.

THE COUNTERWEIGHT

WE, THE PEOPLE

The counterweight to extremism already exists – it is we, the people. And, it is our time.

The majority of people in our nation believe in freedom and embrace the promise of a democracy where all can thrive. America is at its best when we don't merely tolerate diversity, but celebrate inclusion, progress, and belonging. We seek to achieve what no nation has before: a true multi-racial, bold, and vibrant democracy that serves all people.

Our work at Democracy Forward is about building a bold and vibrant democracy for all, one that protects our freedoms and our ability to thrive.

We represent people who make up the fabric of our nation: workers, parents, teachers, young people, researchers, voters, business owners, doctors and health care professionals, artists, authors, creators, caregivers, immigrants, faith communities, and so many more.

These are people and communities who may not agree on everything but all agree on the importance of our basic freedoms and the need for a democracy that works for all, not just some.

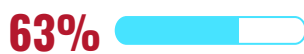


At Democracy Forward, we engage in courts and communities throughout the country on behalf of the people. No fight is too big and no threat is too small. **Wherever the people are, we'll be there too.**

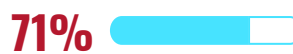
“Democracy Forward is doing a great service to America by creating something online that people can use to go through Project 2025 themselves.”

Joy-Ann Reid, ‘Moms for Liberty on steroids’: Project 2025’s brutal plan to blow up public schools, The ReidOut (July 9, 2024)

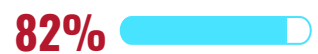
A majority of people in the U.S. believe:



Abortion should be legal in all or most cases.



Libraries should not remove books.



Diversity makes us stronger.

The headlines below provide a snapshot of how our clients, together with our team, are creating impact in communities across the country.

TIME

U.S. • EDUCATION

Why This Florida Mom Sued the Board of Education Over Book Bans

8 MINUTE READ

abc NEWS

Florida voters will get to consider abortion rights ballot measure in November, court rules

The proposal would need 60% support to pass.

AL.com

NEWS

Alabama real estate group fights against lawsuit that alleges racial quotas in board appointments

THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

Book Bans Get Pushback at SXSW

"We're organizing around this because who else is doing it?"

BY BRANT BINGAMON, 2:20PM, TUE, MAR. 12, 2024



Democracy Forward works to defend American values, disrupt Christian nationalists

Montgomery Advertiser

PROGRESS

Parents, advocates file federal lawsuit over Prattville library policies

"But there is no cavalry or institution that is coming to save the American people in this crisis. It is going to have to be we, the people."



Democracy Forward President and CEO Skye Perryman on MSNBC's Deadline: White House with Nicolle Wallace (July 3, 2024)

OUR MIDYEAR IMPACT

2024 was always going to be a critical year for the future of our freedom and our democracy. That's why our team scaled up and has been fast at work in courts and communities across the country defending progress, disrupting extremism, and building for the future. **Here is a glimpse of the ground we've covered so far in this pivotal year.**

DEFENDING PROGRESS AND A GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR ALL PEOPLE

Our work defending the well-being of people and communities through supporting a government that works for the people extended from the nation's highest Court and halls of government to our communities. We fought for economic opportunity, health care, and good government and made an impact across the range of issues that matter to people and communities, including:

Defending Access to Affordable Health Care

Making Prescription Medication

Affordable: We have mounted a nationwide defense of 65 million people's ability to access health care and prescription drugs by defending the Inflation Reduction Act's ("IRA") Medicare Drug Pricing Negotiation Program. This year, multiple courts have rejected challenges to the IRA's drug price negotiation provisions that work to make drug prices more affordable.

On behalf of the nation's leading medical organizations, we submitted friend of the court briefs in *eight* separate lawsuits challenging Medicare's ability to negotiate

drug prices and we were the primary voice emphasizing the impacts of the program on public health. This work has contributed to federal courts upholding the legality of the drug price negotiation program in all cases where they have ruled. We are continuing to follow all pending cases to defend this important program wherever needed.

Defending Workers' Rights

Expanding Overtime Pay: In April, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) implemented a policy that expanded access to overtime pay for more than four million workers. DOL relied on information we submitted on behalf of the worker advocacy organization Restaurant Opportunities Center United, which highlighted the policy change's potential beneficial impacts on workers. DOL also used a letter we sent outlining the government's legal authority to implement this critical change.

Since then, the rule has been challenged in court. And, so we are now in court continuing to defend the rule and the four million people it helps.

Increasing the Minimum Wage: When the Biden administration wanted to raise the minimum wage for people who contract with the federal government, the far-right immediately tried to intervene. We got involved in three cases spanning 18 states and two territories to protect this important policy – and we’ve already racked up wins, including in support of a \$15 per hour minimum wage. Disproportionately women, people of color, or both in many industries, these workers keep our government running, while sometimes being paid poverty wages. From janitors to call center workers, security guards to guides on federal lands, federal contractors are indispensable workers.

Ensuring Workers are Not Bound by Non-Competes: In June, after the Biden administration released a new policy that would free one in five workers from restrictive non-compete agreements, we stepped in to safeguard this new policy against special interests that immediately challenged it in court. Non-compete clauses – requirements written into a worker’s employment contract specifying that they cannot work for a similar employer – affect millions of workers. They trap workers in jobs they may not want and prevent them from getting better, higher paying jobs in similar industries. To protect this important relief for workers, we teamed up with a group of legal scholars specializing in this type of law to send a friend of the court brief to the court overseeing the special interests’ lawsuit against this policy. Our

brief emphasized the legality of the policy, and its importance for workers and the American economy.

Promoting Protections for Pregnant Workers: Following our work to secure a new policy from the Biden administration guaranteeing pregnant workers access to the accommodations they need at work, 19 state attorneys general quickly challenged the policy. In response, we represented a coalition of organizations that include more than 250,000 small businesses to fight back and protect these critical supports for pregnant workers. We filed friend of the court briefs defending the regulation in three cases, arguing that the policies provide clarity to small businesses – which are the backbone of the U.S. economy – and allow them the certainty they need to grow and thrive.





READ OUR REPORT:

Safeguarding and Strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives, demonstrating that the vast majority of DEI programs challenged in court remain on solid legal footing.

Democracy Forward staff and Alabama appraiser clients following oral arguments in their case. (Tory Nugent, Legal Director; Marcus Brown, AAREB; Brooke Menschel, Senior Counsel; Andreda Randleson, AAREB; Aleshadye Getachew, Senior Counsel)

Safeguarding LGBTQ+ Workers'

Dignity: In April, after 25 years, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) under President Biden updated the guidance it makes available to workplaces to detail a now long-standing federal policy against harassment of LGBTQ+ workers – which states led by extremist policymakers immediately challenged. On behalf of organizations representing tens of thousands of small businesses, we filed a brief defending the guidance and explaining that it is good for small businesses' bottom lines and their workers.

Strengthening Climate-Oriented Responsible Business Practices: Nearly three years after Democracy Forward first supported the Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) ability to require large companies to release information about their vulnerabilities to the financial effects of climate change, the SEC finalized the policy in March 2024. This final policy will ensure that people and investors have more of the information they need to

make responsible investment decisions, but it now faces lawsuits filed by far-right interests nearly immediately after the SEC announced it, and our team is bolstering its defense.

Defending Hard-Fought Civil Rights Progress

Countering Anti-Equity Actors in the States: In May, we successfully intervened in a lawsuit in Alabama on behalf of Black real estate appraisers in the state to defend critical protections that promote racial equity. At both the federal and state levels, anti-equity organizations that do not support civil rights or equality for all people are seeking to overturn and undermine hard-fought civil rights. In Alabama, one such organization sued the state to eradicate a three-decade-old state law ensuring that racial minorities are on the real estate appraisers board and that decision-making bodies reflect the communities who have to live with their decisions. This type of protection is found

in a number of Alabama’s laws. With our clients, we are ensuring that this important protection is fully defended in court.

Defending the Independence of our Civil Service

Protecting the Federal Workforce: The federal civil service is made up of 2.2 million nonpartisan workers who live and work in every state across the country. These workers are essential to keeping our food, medicine, transportation, and water safe; securing our public safety and our national security; supporting our education, financial, and health care systems; and working in our airports, courthouses, national parks, and so much more. Yet, in his final months in office, President Trump issued an Executive Order known as Schedule F with the goal of making it easier to fire civil servants and replace them with partisan loyalists.

To preserve the independence of the federal civil service, we organized a broad coalition of experts, organizations, and communities to support the creation of new federal policies to protect our federal workforce. This effort involved providing written submissions to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) detailing a panoply of reasons why protections for federal workers are critical to preserving the integrity of the civil service and rebutting bad faith arguments made by far-right

organizations that seek to impugn the reputation of the civil service. In response, in April of this year the Biden administration implemented new policies that help to ensure that the experienced, professional, mission-oriented civil service employees could not be the target of a future administration seeking to purge the government of the far-right’s perceived enemies. In implementing the new policies, OPM referenced our comment letters over 50 times, relying on the expertise we put forth to bolster the safeguards for the federal workforce.

© CBS NEWS

POLITICS

New rule could make it much harder for Trump to overhaul federal workforce if he wins in November

“Democracy Forward ... has led a coalition of nearly 30 advocacy organizations supporting the rule, called it ‘extraordinarily strong’ and said it can effectively counter the ‘highly resourced, anti-democratic groups’ behind Project 2025.”

CBS News, April 4, 2024



READ OUR REPORT:

The Impending Danger to the Nation's Civil Service, exposing some of the ways extremists are seeking to target the civil service.

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY & PROGRESS

AT THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

Democracy and progress were again on trial at the U.S. Supreme Court this term – and we made sure that people and communities were represented to push back on a regressive legal movement that is seeking to accelerate a backsliding of our rights. Our team filed briefs in 10 significant cases on behalf of diverse voices and also helped the American public understand what is at stake at the court. [Here is a glimpse of our docket.](#)

Our Supreme Court Docket

Defending Access to Medication

Abortion: We represented the nation's only generic manufacturer of the medication mifepristone – approved for the early termination of pregnancy – in briefs opposing extremist attacks on the drug's approval and accessibility in **FDA**



“This case should not be in the courts.” Skye Perryman in conversation with MSNBC's Katie Phang regarding *FDA v. AHM*, The Katie Phang Show (March 23, 2024)

v. AHM. The Court dismissed the extreme attacks in a 9-0 decision, but far-right attorneys general are seeking to continue to pursue this case back at the district court level in Texas.

Defending Access to Emergency Care:

We also represented the nation's leading professional medical associations comprising more than 350,000 doctors – from emergency physicians to obstetrician-gynecologists to general practitioners – in **Idaho v. United States** and **Moyle v. United States** where states that have banned abortion are seeking to deprive women of federally protected emergency care. The nation's medical community explained to the Court the devastating impacts of these bans. The Court has removed its prior order blocking care in Idaho but failed to

Ms.

HEALTH, JUSTICE & LAW, NATIONAL

Will the Supreme Court Dump Women's Lives and Futures *Again*?

By **SKYE PERRYMAN**, DEMOCRACY FORWARD

Ms. Magazine, April 24, 2024



By working with Democracy Forward, we were able to articulate our concerns as practicing physicians and researchers on the undue impacts on patients of relying on courts rather than scientific agencies like the FDA. It was incredible to hear these concerns that we had outlined within the amicus brief echoed by Justices Kagan and Jackson during oral arguments.



Reshma Ramachandran, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Yale School of Medicine and Co-Director of the Yale Collaboration for Regulatory Rigor, Integrity, and Transparency

resolve the case on the merits, putting access to emergency abortion care at risk for women in Texas, Florida, and other states. We continue to defend access to emergency care and medication abortion in challenges in courts across the country.

Combating Misinformation: Far-right attorneys general sought to stop the federal government from protecting the American people from anti-science misinformation in *Murthy v. Missouri*. We

brought the voices of medical doctors and professional societies to the Court, which issued a 6-3 decision rejecting the attorneys general challenge.

Protecting Consumers: In *CFPB v. CFSA*, the payday lending industry sought to disband the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) through claiming that the way Congress chose to fund the CFPB was unconstitutional. The argument threatened not just consumer protections we all rely on but also other services that Congress has funded in the same way like Social Security, Medicare, and the Farm Credit Administration. We represented a broad farmer and rural communities coalition in a brief explaining to the Court the harm that would result if it adopted this fringe and extreme argument. In a 7-2 decision, the Court affirmed the legality of the CFPB.





Photo: Lloyd DeGrane, via Wikimedia Commons

Knowledgeable *amici* have explained that the majority's approach to accrual of the statute of limitations for APA claims undermines the "[s]tability, predictability, and consistency [that] enable[s] small businesses to survive and thrive." **Brief for Small Business Associations as *Amici Curiae* 5.** And there is no question that long-term uncertainty "hinders the ability of businesses to plan effectively." *Id.*,

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's dissent in *Corner Post*, citing the small businesses Democracy Forward represented in the case

Protecting Sensible Economic

Policy: In *Moore v. United States*, special interests challenged a one-time transition tax included in the 2017 Trump-era tax bill designed to prevent accumulated earnings from going untaxed permanently. Our brief on behalf of organizations representing about 30,000 small businesses explained that a decision in favor of special interests would create years of tax uncertainty for small businesses, harming their ability to compete in the economy. The Court issued a 7-2 ruling rejecting the challenge.

Defending A Government That Works For

All People: In two combined cases, *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* and *Relentless v. Department of Commerce*, the Court considered whether to overturn *Chevron* deference – a 40-year-old legal doctrine that ensured that courts would not substitute their own policy preferences for those of experts at federal agencies.

We represented more than 250,000 small businesses highlighting the importance of regulatory predictability for the ability of small businesses to grow, thrive, and compete and urged the Court not to overturn *Chevron* deference. We also filed a brief on behalf of pharmaceutical and regulatory policy experts warning that because the FDA's regulation of drugs and medical devices is highly technical and requires scientific expertise, a decision to overturn *Chevron* could disrupt the FDA framework that safeguards public health. In a 6-3 decision, the Court overruled *Chevron*, fundamentally undermining the ability of the federal government to deliver for the American people. Our work on behalf of hundreds of thousands of small businesses was once again recognized in the Court's ruling in *Corner Post v. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System*, where in a 6-3 decision, the Court upended the statute of limitations for challenges to federal agency action. Justice Jackson cited our

work in her dissent outlining the harms of the Court's decision and the way that Congress could act to fix the problem the Court has created.

Defending Civil Servants: In **SEC v. Jarkesy**, we represented an originalist legal scholar in explaining the historical basis for the SEC's use of administrative law judges. Like in *Loper*, *Relentless*, and *Corner Post*, the majority of the Court upended another aspect of our federal system in a 6-3 decision.

Where We Go From Here

The U.S. Supreme Court is supposed to protect our democracy, our democratic institutions, and our freedoms. But as this term showed, at the invitation of the far-right legal movement, a majority of justices



From cases involving tax laws to reproductive health, **Democracy Forward has helped us ensure that small business needs are represented before our nation's highest courts.** Particularly in an era when there are so many legal cases that could have far-reaching impacts for entrepreneurs, Democracy Forward is an ideal partner for Small Business Majority.

Small Business Majority,

A network of small business owners



are propelling a regressive movement that is out of step with the American public. Founded in the wake of the 2016 election, our team at Democracy Forward has always known the threats that extremists present as exemplified in the Court's ruling in *Trump v. U.S.* and that is why over the past year we have exponentially grown our capacity to engage in defense of our freedoms and democracy in the long road ahead. As the pages that follow explain, we are actively opposing extremist agendas in states across the country and are also working to build innovative strategies to hold any future federal executive accountable if they fail to defend the Constitution and the American people.

In the wake of the Court's *Loper Bright*, *Relentless*, and *Corner Post* decisions, **we are supporting hundreds of organizations and communities in defending federal programs people rely on that are under attack.** We are tracking all cases in which litigants are seeking to use the new legal framework to undermine important benefits, protections, and programs and building robust legal defenses on behalf of people and communities. We are also using our legal expertise to help inform future policymaking and regulatory advocacy.

USE OUR RESOURCE:

Democracy Forward has curated resources for practitioners to respond offensively and defensively to this changed legal landscape.

[Visit our post-Chevron hub of resources to learn more.](#)

DISRUPTING UNLAWFUL, REGRESSIVE, AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC ACTIVITY

Anti-democratic movements are continuing to undermine the will of the people. Political violence is on the rise. Government leaders are abusing the power with which the people entrusted them and far-right organizations are mobilizing to impose their ideological agenda on the American people. Democracy Forward is disrupting their efforts at every turn in states and communities across the country.



Disrupting the “Big Lie”

Victory in Wisconsin: In February, we secured a victory against extremists who were promoting the “Big Lie” and then seeking to destroy the evidence. In the wake of the 2020 election, former President Trump and many of his supporters sought to sow disinformation and claim the election had been stolen. This strategy – known as the “Big Lie” – took hold across the country, including in Wisconsin. The official running Wisconsin’s partisan inquiry into the election results through the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) later testified in court that he deleted public documents from his investigation – even though the state has a law requiring the retention of these public records.

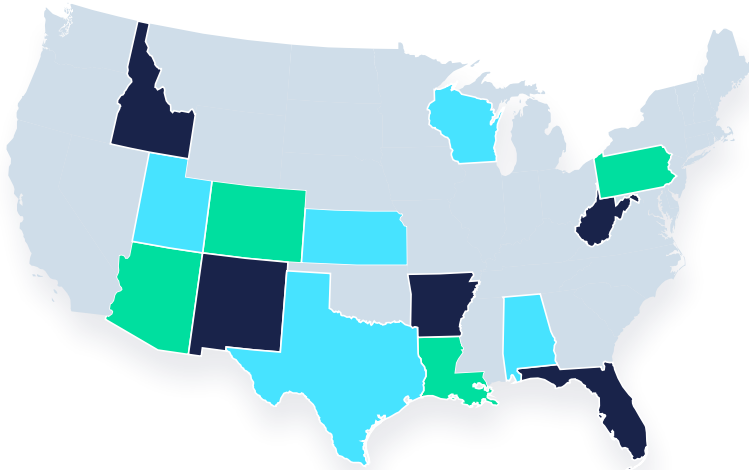
Democracy Forward took the OSC to court to require it to stop deleting these important records immediately. Our lawsuit was a success: the OSC acknowledged its fault and affirmed that it would not unlawfully delete records moving forward and will have to pay fees. Our lawsuit helped ensure that no one

InStyle

Young Women Could Be the Difference Makers This Election Cycle

“The stakes in the upcoming election couldn’t be higher,” says Skye Perryman, President and CEO of Democracy Forward and an advisory board member of Moms for a Fair Court. “The future of our freedoms and our democracy is on the line.”

InStyle, July 29, 2024



is above the law and that government is transparent and accountable.

Disrupting Anti-Abortion Extremism

Victory in Florida: In April, the Florida Supreme Court rejected an extremist attempt to deprive voters in the state of the chance to decide whether to expand abortion rights in the state constitution through a ballot measure. This decision came after we submitted a brief on behalf of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) highlighting how the Florida Attorney General was intentionally misusing ACOG’s expert medical guidance to justify her office’s opposition to the abortion ballot initiative. Now that the state supreme court sided with us and denied this manipulation of facts, Florida voters will rightfully be the ones making this important decision at the ballot box.

The public also firmly believes in access to care when pregnant patients are facing

emergencies. Yet, extremists continue to pass and enforce laws that are deeply harmful and unpopular. So far this year, we have continued the fight for abortion access through our work on behalf of the nation’s only manufacturer of generic mifepristone, GenBioPro. We serve as counsel to them in their challenge to West Virginia’s state abortion ban and associated restrictions on access to the medication. The case has been appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Exposing Extremists in New Mexico:

This year, we also exposed anti-abortion extremists’ meddling in New Mexico abortion policy, including nefarious interference from former Texas Solicitor General Jonathan Mitchell. Our work has exposed that anti-abortion extremism isn’t organic within communities or from the majority of the American people. Rather,

Source NM

ABORTION POLICY

GOV & POLITICS

HEALTH

Texas activists pushed abortion restrictions in NM cities and counties, records show

Emails reveal influence and control in exchange for promises of legal help

“Emails show former Texas Solicitor General Jonathan Mitchell and Mark Lee Dickson, founder of the ‘Sanctuary Cities for the Unborn’ initiative, succeeded in influencing local governments in rural parts of the state – despite warnings and hesitation from local officials. ... A legal nonprofit called Democracy Forward brought the emails to light”

Source NM, March 4, 2024

a small but powerful group of extremists who seek to polarize people and drive extremism within communities are pushing anti-abortion sentiments. In New Mexico, Mitchell and his allies succeeded in convincing local governments in rural areas to pass extreme abortion policies. But documents we uncovered suggested that local officials expressed skepticism of these plans and were pushed to adopt them, bringing Mitchell's influence to light.

This extremism has gone so far that women are being denied care even in dire emergencies. In the state of Texas, the near-total abortion ban chilled the provision of needed medical care, putting Texans who experience grave complications during pregnancy at risk. We represented doctors, nurse practitioners, and medical organizations highlighting the devastating impacts of these laws on people's health. On behalf of 10 organizations – including the American Medical Association, the Association of Black Cardiologists, and the National Association of Nurse

Practitioners in Women's Health – we made sure medical professionals' expert opinion was heard so that far-right ideology could not drown out the voice of science and medical evidence.

Disrupting Attacks on the Freedom to Read

The United States is experiencing a rise in book banning. According to Pen America, there were more book bans in the first half of the 2023-2024 school year than the entire previous school year.

So far this year, we've continued to challenge these bans on behalf of students, booksellers, and librarians. We have filed two lawsuits on behalf of concerned parents, students, booksellers, and librarians in Alabama and Florida.

In Prattville, Alabama, a far-right organization challenged 44 books under a new policy that allowed more challenged books to be removed from the library. Most of the challenged books featured



storylines or themes about LGBTQ+ people and people of color. To make sure parents, not politicians, decide what books their children read, we sued on behalf of parents and families to stop this harmful policy.

Extremists have already indicated they're hoping to make Prattville a model for a state-wide policy allowing state-sanctioned censorship. Our lawsuit seeks to show that book bans and censorship have no place anywhere.

In Florida, we sued the DeSantis administration's Department of Education for discriminating against parents who oppose censorship, seeking to address the more than 2,672 books that have been challenged. In the state, people with the most extreme positions get to decide what information is available for children. Meanwhile, the law we are challenging takes away parents' decision to discern which books their children read.

In Arkansas, the state's criminal law penalizing librarians remains blocked as a result of our lawsuit. The litigation is ongoing, and we are working to make the block permanent.



While Florida is my home, as a parent of public school children I'm often reminded that my views of an inclusive, pluralistic society are not welcome, nor respected here. It feels so far away from the promise we make to our fellow citizens when we recite the pledge: indivisible, with liberty and justice FOR ALL. Democracy Forward has not only helped to defend my family's rights here in Florida, **it has acted as a reminder that all is not lost so long as there are people willing to defend that promise.**



Stephana Ferrell, parent represented by Democracy Forward in a challenge to Florida's book ban policy



MSNBC's Velshi Banned Book Club featured an interview with a parent and a librarian represented by Democracy Forward in our lawsuit against Prattville, Alabama's policy restricting the freedom to read. (May 26, 2024)

BUILDING A PEOPLE-CENTERED DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

Democracy Forward has played a central role in bringing together people and communities in service of a bold, vibrant, democracy where all people can thrive. We're using this crisis in our communities, our institutions, and our values as a catalyst for change. We are using the brink to build for the future.

Here's a glimpse of how we've done it so far this year.

Building Community, Catalyzing Change

Our inaugural **Together for Democracy conference** brought over 180 leaders, nearly 100 organizations, and over 40 expert speakers – from the grassroots to the grand halls of our government – together to share strategies and action plans focused on a bold and vibrant future for all people.



Democracy Forward in conversation with U.S. Representative Joaquin Castro (D-TX) at the *Together for Democracy* conference

We also changed the conversation at **SXSW** making sure that those there to celebrate art, innovation, and creativity had information on how to oppose extremism that is banning books, threatening art, and shutting off conversation across the nation. To a standing-room only audience, Texas high school student Da'Taeveyon Daniels, CEO of Texas' largest independent bookstore Charley Rejsek, and Arkansas librarian Adam Webb shared their experiences from the front lines and how we can all play a role in making change.

At New York University, we encouraged collaboration across ideological differences by co-hosting **"Autocracy in**

The New York Times

"We are ensuring that people and communities that would be affected by a range of policies that we see with respect to Project 2025 know their legal rights and remedies and are able to access legal representation, should that be necessary," Ms. Perryman said, referring to a policy planning project developed by conservative think tanks for a second Trump administration."

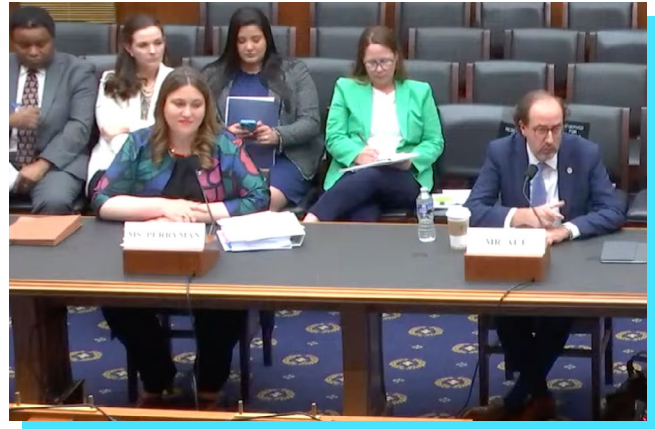
New York Times, June 16, 2024

America: A Warning and A Response,”

a conference with State Democracy Defenders and our conservative friends at Principles First.

Building For The Future

The work for our nation isn’t just about the present, it is about the future. Our legal work supports communities in shaping the law to be more inclusive and democratic and in ensuring our institutions live up to their promises. From supporting the launch of the Congressional Court Reform Now Taskforce, to launching core resources for everyone to understand what is happening in the courts and in our communities, to engaging with emerging leaders in the ongoing fight for democracy and progress, our focus is the future.



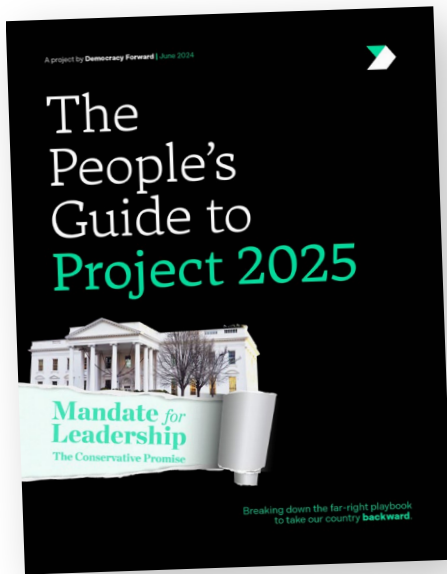
Skye Perryman testifies before a House Judiciary Subcommittee on the dangers of Project 2025 in the hearing, *Reining in the Administrative State: Agency Adjudication and Other Agency Action* (March 20, 2024)



Tennessee state representative Justin Jones - a member of the courageous “Tennessee Three” - addresses the Democracy Forward community in Washington, DC

Democracy Forward hosts SXSW panel in Austin, TX with panelists Adam Webb, Charley Rejsek, and Da’Taeveyon Daniels





Building a Bulwark Against Extremism

In the early days of 2024, we knew that exposing extreme threats and developing action plans for addressing them was going to be critical this year. In March, we began bringing together groups – now totaling more than 220 – across a full range of issues to launch Democracy 2025, a hub that produced immediate responses to extreme agendas such as Project 2025 and state-based equivalents as well as near- and longer-term planning for legal action and civic responses that could be needed in the future.

Today with hundreds of coalition members, diverse working groups, and innovative strategies we are pooling our resource to make sure people and communities are ready, agile, and able to counter efforts to undermine freedom and our democratic values.

We published The People’s Guide to Project 2025, an online resource that is continually updated that millions of Americans have used to understand extreme threats being proposed and we have supported efforts like the Stop Project 2025 Task Force in the U.S. Congress.

As we continue to expose and respond to far-right threats to our democracy, the infrastructure we are building to be a bulwark against extremism will pay dividends in the future.

Want to join us? Contact democracy2025@democracyforward.org.



“Democracy Forward, an organization that formed in 2017 and that brought more than 100 court cases during the first Trump term, has crafted a so-called ‘threat matrix’ to chart out a variety of far-right proposals, such as ending birthright citizenship, withholding Medicaid funding from states that require insurance plans to cover abortion and limiting adoption by same-sex couples. The matrix analyzes which federal agencies would likely be tasked with implementing the policies and whether they could be enacted without action of Congress.”

CNN, August 5, 2024

THE PATH FORWARD

THE ROAD TO 2025

The road to 2025 and beyond – the road to our freedom – runs through our communities across the country. **And that is where you will find us.**

With an expanded team and more than 400 partners, we are actively working in 38+ states to ensure that We, The People counter threats to our freedoms and our future.

We're investing in enhancing our capacity for work in the states, where some of the most egregious attacks on a fair and inclusive society are taking place. We will be harnessing the infrastructure we have built to **track where the far right is headed so we can beat them there**, and ensure that communities have the tools they need to thrive. And we have grown our capacity to be in more courts than ever across the nation – from local courts to the U.S. Supreme Court – ensuring that We, The people are represented.


We invite you to join us by signing up at democracyforward.org/join and to email us at info@democracyforward.org to tell us how you'd like to help in this time. There is something each of us can do to bring us back from the brink and propel us to a bold vibrant democracy for all people.


[Watch our Together for Democracy video.](#)





IN THE NEWS


Our team's strategic use of communications and storytelling enhances our impact and ensures the public is informed about the state of democracy and the work needed to advance it. Read some of our highlights and go to our website to see more coverage.

 Efforts to Convert Civil Servants to Political Appointees Would Gut the Civil Service and Harm America
FedWeek | January 26, 2024

 Trump wants to fire thousands of government workers. Liberals are preparing to fight back if he wins
AP | February 16, 2024


 Providers, Experts, Scholars File Briefs Supporting Appeal of W.Va. abortion ban
West Virginia Record | February 16, 2024


 Louisiana seeks to overturn court ruling of 'abhorrent' prison health care
Louisiana Illuminator | March 7, 2024


 Workplace DEI Programs Have a Path Forward in Face of Backlash
Bloomberg Law News | March 7, 2024


 Supreme Court medication abortion case threatens 'seismic shift' in FDA drug approval process, experts warn
CNN | March 26, 2024


 Feminists React to the SCOTUS Abortion Pill Case: 'Access to Mifepristone is Essential'
Ms. Magazine | March 26, 2024


 New rule strengthening federal job protections could counter Trump promises to remake the government
AP | April 4, 2024


 'The Fight Is Not Going To Be Over': Democracy Forward CEO Unpacks SCOTUS Idaho Abortion Ban Case
Forbes | April 27, 2024


 SEC Should Be Allowed To Equip Investors With Climate Info
Law360 | May 6, 2024


 Prattville library board sued over 'sledgehammer' policy that restricts LGBTQ books
AL.com | May 9, 2024


 AL Parents Sue Library Board For Restrictive Policies
MSNBC | May 26, 2024


 3 Florida parents file lawsuit over book ban policies
The Hill | June 10, 2024

 Trump walks fine line on abortion, but allies and activists have big plans for a second term
CNN | June 14, 2024

 Conservative-backed group is creating a list of federal workers it suspects could resist Trump plans
AP | June 24, 2024

 Supreme Court's Extremism Fuels Calls for Reform
MSNBC's The Saturday Show | July 6, 2024

 MAGA Threats Escalate as GOP Embraces "Trumpified" Agenda
MSNBC's The Beat with Ari Melber | July 9, 2024

 Project 2025 Exposed: The Plan to Target the Department of Education
MSNBC's The ReidOut with Joy Reid | July 9, 2024

INVEST IN FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, AND WE, THE PEOPLE

Dear Democracy Forward Community,

I hope these pages have inspired you and provided a window into the people, action, and strategies that are building in this time. Democracy Forward is able to do the work that it does because of generous support from those who believe democracy is worth the fight and that freedom is a good investment. We represent all of our clients – those who make up the fabric of our nation – free of charge. And, we take on hard fights that others would not attempt because we believe that our freedom and our future are too important to be deterred by long odds.

There is no more critical time than now to invest in the future of our country. If you are able, please consider donating to Democracy Forward as we continue to expand and power our work. And, if you are not able to financially contribute, please know we welcome you to our community and are appreciative of your amplification and engagement in our work.

An investment in Democracy Forward is an investment in all of us – and in building an America as good as its promise.

We hope you'll get involved by visiting <https://democracyforward.org/action/join-2025/>. To contribute to our work, please visit <http://democracyforward.org/giving-circle>.

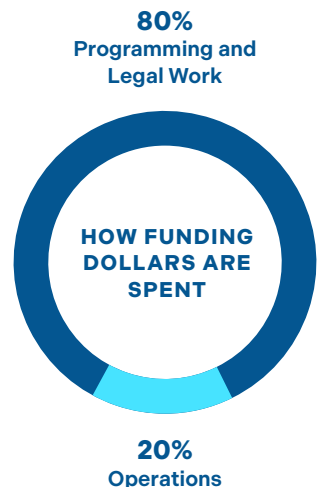
Onward,

Skye Perryman

Democracy Forward President and CEO

Join our inaugural giving circle by visiting democracyforward.org/giving-circle

FRIEND	\$500	Democracy Forward tote bag
SUPPORTER	\$1,000	Exclusive invitations to events and briefings, plus previous levels
SUSTAINER	\$2,500	Acknowledgment on website and donor materials (if interested), plus previous levels
ADVOCATE	\$5,000	Invitation to private dinners and collaboration pre- and post-election briefing on legal strategy, plus previous levels
CHAMPION	\$15,000	Private dinner with up to 10 guests with Democracy Forward leadership team featuring discussions of pressing issues in courts and democracy, plus previous levels



**NOW IS
THE TIME.
GET INVOLVED.**

**Join Us In The Generational Fight
for Our Freedom and Democracy**



WWW.DEMOCRACYFORWARD.ORG