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Review of Key Supreme Court Rulings: Business & Industry Impacts

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## Supreme Court Decisions: Overview



The **AxAdvocacy team** prepared the following presentation deck to break down key decisions the Court released for its October 2024 term.



This past October term featured oral arguments spanning the scope of high-profile cases, culminating in decisions released this June that will have lasting effects on both the policy and political landscapes.



Cases in this deck have been organized by when the Court heard oral arguments.

**ABOUT AXADVOCACY** AxAdvocacy is not just another government relations and public affairs firm—we are the go-to force for winning high-stakes battles in Washington and beyond. With a team forged in the trenches of Capitol Hill, the White House, and presidential campaigns, we don't just navigate government—we move it.

From Fortune 500 companies to trade associations and investment firms, our clients trust us to cut through the noise, influence decision-makers, and shape policy with precision. When industries need results, they call AxAdvocacy. Why? Because we WIN.



## Impact and Issues

Environmental Protection Agency v. Calumet Shreveport Refining, LLC

Clean Water Act & Clean Air Act

Food and Drug Administration v. R.J. Reynolds Vapor Co.

Forum shopping

Louisiana v. Callais

Congressional redistricting

FCC v. Consumers' Research

#### **Federal Agency Power**



FCC v. Consumers' Research could have far-reaching effects. In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court upheld the FCC's Universal Service Fun, preserving broadband access for rural and low-income communities.

While recent rulings, such as **Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo**, have limited agency power, this decision signals that well-established programs with clear congressional backing remain on solid ground.

Thompson v. U.S.

False claims to federal regulators Catholic Charities
Bureau v. Wisconsin
Labor & Industry
Review Commission

Tax exemption for religious organizations

Ames v. Ohio
Department of Youth
Services

Reverse discrimination //

Stanley v. City of Sanford, Florida

Employer obligations under ADA

Smith & Wesson Brands v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Liability for gun makers

Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board v. Drummond

Public funds for religious schools

Mahmoud v. Taylor

Parental control over school content

CC/Devas (Mauritius) Limited v. Antrix Corp. Ltd.

Foreign country use of U.S. legal system

## Cases Argued Through December 2024

Below are a handful of notable cases argued before the Court before the end of 2024 and their outcome.

Case	Outcome
Williams v. Reed	State courts may not deny challenges under civil code on failure to exhaust grounds.
	(Argued: October 7, 2024   Decided: February 21, 2025)
Royal Canin U.S.A. v. Wullschleger	Federal courts lose jurisdiction if a plaintiff amends the complaint to remove the federal claim but leaves the state claim.
8	(Argued: October 7, 2024   Decided: January 15, 2025)
Garland v. VanDerStok	Upheld Biden Admin regulation of "ghost guns" to classify certain weapon parts kits as firearms under the Gun Control Act of 1968.
	(Argued: October 8, 2024   Decided: March 26, 2025)
Lackey v. Stinney	Injunctive relief for plaintiffs.
	(Argued: October 8, 2024   Decided February 25, 2025)
Glossip v. Oklahoma	Richard Glossip was granted a new trial in capital punishment case.
	(Argued: October 9, 2024   Decided: February 25, 2025)
City and County of San	Curbed powers of the EPA to enforce the Clean Water Act.
Francisco v. EPA	(Argued: October 16, 2024   Decided: March 4, 2025)
Wisconsin Bell v. U.S., ex rel. Todd Heath	E-Rate reimbursement requests at issue are "claims" under the False Claims Act because the government "provided" a "portion" of the money applied for by transferring more than \$100 million from the Treasury into the fund.  (Argued: November 4, 2024   Decided: February 21, 2025)
E.M.D. Sales v. Carrera	The preponderance of the evidence standard applies when an employer wants to determine if an employee is exempt from the minimum wage and overtime pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
	(Argued: November 5, 2024   Decided: January 15, 2025)

## Notable Cases Argued In 2024

A snapshot of notable cases that were argued before the end of 2024 and recently decided by the Court in 2025.

#### Velazquez v. Bondi

#### **ISSUE**

Is filing a motion to reopen a noncitizen's voluntary departure period on the next business day if the period ends on a weekend sufficient to avoid the penalties for failing to depart?

**ARGUED:** 11/12/24

**DECISION:** Court ruled that if a voluntary-departure period falls on a weekend or holiday, it extends to the next business day on 4/22/25.

#### U.S. v. Skrmetti

#### **ISSUE**

Whether Tennessee's SB 1, which prohibits medical treatment intended to allow a minor to identify as something other than their sex, violates the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment?

**ARGUED:** 12/4/24

DECISION: Court ruled that SB

1 is not subject to heightened
scrutiny under the equal
protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup>
Amendment on 6/18/25.

#### Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado

#### **ISSUE**

Whether NEPA requires an agency to study environmental impacts beyond the proximate effects of the action over which the agency has regulatory authority?

**ARGUED:** 12/10/24

**DECISION:** The Court ruled that NEPA does not require an agency to consider the environmental impacts beyond the effects of the action of the immediate project on 5/29/25.

## Stanley v. City of Sanford, Florida

Argued: January 13, 2025

8-1 decision on June 20, 2025, found that an employee must plead and prove they held and could perform a job's essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation at the time of the employer's alleged act of disability-based discrimination.

USA Today – June 20, 2025

Supreme Court sides against disabled firefighter suing for health benefits discrimination

National Law Review – June 23, 2025

United States Supreme Court ruling significantly narrows Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act

ISSUE: Employee rights under Americans with Disabilities Act

**CASE BRIEF:** Karyn Stanley sued the city of Sanford, FL, after the city made a change to retirement benefits that differentiated between disabled and non-disabled retirees for the purpose of health care subsidies. The city made the changes before Stanley's retirement due to Parkinson's. The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Stanley could not sue the city under the Americans with Disabilities Act because she was no longer a city employee. There have been differing rulings on this issue by other circuit courts, which is why the Supreme Court took up the case to eliminate the discrepancy around the issue.

**DECISION:** The lower court decision is affirmed.



WHY IT MATTERS: Employees must prove they held and could perform a job's essential function with or without reasonable accommodation at the time of the employer's alleged disability-based discrimination.

## Thompson v. U.S.

Argued: January 14, 2025

9-0 decision on March 21, 2025, held that Title 18 U.S.C. § 1014, which prohibits "knowingly mak[ing] any false statement," does not criminalize statements that are misleading but not false.

SCOTUS Blog – March 21, 2025

Court rules for former Chicago alderman on "false statement" charges

SCOTUS BLOG – January 14, 2025

Supreme Court considers Chicago alderman's "false statement" charges

**ISSUE**: What constitutes a "false statement"

**CASE BRIEF**: Former Chicago Alderman Patrick Daley Thompson was convicted of making false statements to bank regulators about loans he took out and did not repay. Thompson argued that the law he was convicted under should not apply since his statements were misleading but not outright false.



WHY IT MATTERS: The Court held that Section 1014 does not criminalize statements that are misleading but not false. The case was remanded back to the Court of Appeals to determine if Thompson's statements fit this new definition. Prosecutors seeking to convict defendants under this law must now prove that the person knowingly made a false statement—not just a misleading one—with the intent to influence the FDIC's decision on a loan.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

Mayer Brown: "The Supreme Court Continues Its Recent Trend of Rejecting DOJ's Broad Reading of Federal Criminal Law in Thompson v. United States" (3/28/25)

## Food and Drug Administration v. R.J. Reynolds Vapor Co.

Argued: January 21, 2025

7-2 decision on June 20, 2025, ruled that retailers who sell a new tobacco product, if not for the FDA's denial, may seek judicial review.

SCOTUS BLOG – January 24, 2025

Supreme Court Rules for Vaping Industry in Dispute Over Where Product Denials May Be Challenged

**ISSUE**: Forum shopping to challenge FDA rulings

CASE BRIEF: The FDA rejected RJ Reynolds Vapor's application to sell Vuse brand e-cigarettes. In response, RJ Reynolds appealed the decision in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals—despite the fact that regulations only permitted appeals in the DC Circuit or the circuit where the company is based. The Fifth Circuit ruled against the FDA, prompting the agency to challenge the decision



WHY IT MATTERS: This decision cracks the door on the practice of forum shopping. The Court's ruling exposes regulators to suits filed by third party proxies in favorable courts when challenging agency actions.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

New Civil Liberties Alliance: "A pending Supreme Court case threatens the right of many citizens to challenge agency actions that unlawfully harm them." (2/7/2025)

## Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services

Argued: February 26, 2025

9-0 decision on June 5, 2025, held that the "background circumstances" rule, which requires members of a majority group to satisfy a heightened evidentiary standard to prevail on a Title VII discrimination claim, cannot be squared with either the text of Title VII or the Supreme Court's precedents.

SCOTUS BLOG – June 5, 2025

Supreme Court rules for straight woman who claims she was subjected to reverse discrimination

**CBS NEWS – June 5, 2025** 

Supreme Court sides with Ohio woman in reverse discrimination case

**ISSUE**: Employment Discrimination

**CASE BRIEF**: Marlean Ames alleged that she lost out on a promotion that she wanted, and was then demoted, simply because she is straight. Ames is asking the Court to clarify the current standards employees must meet to prove they are victims of discrimination.

Currently, people in majority groups (i.e., White, straight, or male) must prove "background circumstances" that their employer discriminated against that group. People in minority groups do not need to reach that same threshold for their case to move forward.



WHY IT MATTERS: Reverse discrimination cases now have to meet the same and lesser threshold as standard discrimination cases to move forward, rather than forcing plaintiffs to establish "background circumstances."



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

<u>Judicial Crisis Network</u>: "For years, institutions in America have overlooked the clear language of the Civil Rights Act to pursue the DEI ends they seek — even when this has meant overt discrimination." 2/14/25

Heritage: "The Supreme Court got it right in Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act does not allow for differing, politically-driven standards of proof for employees facing discrimination." (6/9/25)

## CC/Devas (Mauritius) Limited v. Antrix Corp. Ltd.

Argued: March 3, 2025

9-0 decision on June 5, 2025, held that the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act does not require proof of "minimum contacts" over and above the contacts already required by the act's enumerated exceptions to foreign sovereign immunity.

National Law Review - June 10, 2025

Supreme Court Rejects Minimum Contacts Requirement to Subject Foreign States to Suits in the U.S. Under FSIA

**ISSUE**: Foreign companies use of U.S. Legal System

CASE BRIEF: This case dealt with two Indian satellite-launching companies who entered arbitration after the Indian government decided to take over the spectrum from some of the launched satellites. Devas filed suit in U.S. federal court to confirm the arbitration award, which the lower court confirmed while the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals overturned.

The question of the case dealt with whether plaintiffs must prove minimum contacts before federal courts may assert personal jurisdiction over foreign states sued under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.



WHY IT MATTERS: The Court held companies do not need to prove minimum contacts in U.S. federal court before those courts assert personal jurisdiction over foreign states sued under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.

## Smith & Wesson Brands v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Argued: March 4, 2025

9-0 decision on June 5, 2025, held that Mexico's complaint does not plausibly allege that the defendant gun manufacturers aided and abetted gun dealers' unlawful sales of firearms to Mexican traffickers, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act bars the lawsuit.

PBS - June 5, 2025

Supreme Court blocks Mexico's lawsuit against U.S. gunmakers over cartel violence

CBS NEWS-June 5, 2025

Supreme Court block Mexico's lawsuit against major U.S. gunmakers in win for firearms industry

**ISSUE**: Liability for gun makers

**CASE BRIEF**: The Mexican government filed suit against seven major U.S. gun makers and gun wholesalers it deems responsible for the violence committed by Mexican drug cartels with U.S.-made weapons.

The case centered on a 2005 law, *The Protecting Lawful Commerce in Arms Act*, which was intended to shield the gun industry from lawsuits in U.S. courts for the misuse of guns by others. Mexico initially filed the case in 2021, seeking billions of dollars and an end to the marketing and trafficking of illegal guns to Mexico.



WHY IT MATTERS: Gun makers are still shielded from some liability lawsuits due to the Protecting Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

<u>Fair and Justice Prosecution</u>: The Supreme Court should affirm the First Circuit's decision to protect "ordinary and longstanding conceptions of aiding and abetting liability." (1/21/2025)

Smith & Wesson: ""Today's unanimous Supreme Court decision shutting down this ridiculous lawsuit against our company represents not only a big win for Smith & Wesson, but our industry, American sovereignty and, most importantly, every American who wishes to exercise his or her Second Amendment rights." (6/5/25)

## Louisiana v. Callais

Argued: March 24, 2025

The case will be reargued next term.

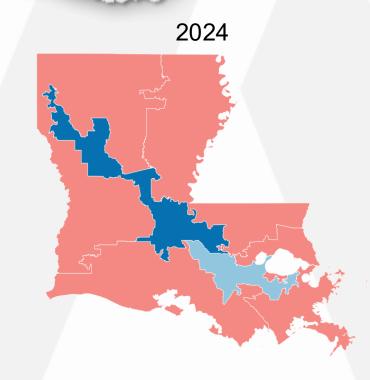
SCOTUS Blog – June 27, 2025

Supreme Court punts decision on Louisiana's congressional map to next term

ALABAMA POLITICAL REPORTER – March 17, 2025

Louisiana redistricting case may upturn interpretation of Voting Rights Act





STATUS:
Reargued next

term

**ISSUE**: Redistricting

CASE BRIEF: In 2022, a federal judge ruled that Louisiana drew a congressional map that violated the Voting Rights Act and was ordered to draw a new map that included another majority-minority district. A separate lawsuit then challenged that new map, arguing it was also flawed. As a result, Louisiana faced two conflicting court orders about which map to use. Both cases have been merged into one case.



WHY IT MATTERS: This case will decide if Louisiana is required to stay with its congressional map that was used in 2024, which includes a second majority-minority district, or if it will be permitted to redraw its congressional maps ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

National Republican Redistricting Trust: "Plaintiffs brought this case after Louisiana enacted a super proportional racial gerrymander to appease a district court judge they were afraid of losing in front of." (3/24/25)

Rep. Troy Carter (D-LA): "The courts have been clear: Louisiana's congressional map should reflect the diversity of our state and ensure fair representation for all citizens. Math is Math! Both the Middle District and the Fifth Circuit Court ruled that Louisiana must have two majorityminority districts. The map enacted by the legislature honors that ruling. The idea that this map is unconstitutional ignores the fact that it was drawn as a direct response to previous violations of the Voting Rights Act." (3/24/25)

# Environmental Protection Agency v. Calumet Shreveport Refining, LLC

Argued: March 25, 2025

7-2 decision on June 18, 2025, held that the EPA's denial of small refinery exemptions are applicable actions that fall within the "nationwide scope or effect" exemption, requiring venue in the DC Circuit.

# Oklahoma v. Environmental Protection Agency

Argued: March 25, 2025

8-0 decision on June 18, 2025, held that the EPA's disapproval of certain states' plans are locally or regionally applicable actions reviewable in a regional court of appeals.

ISSUE: Clean Air Act Challenge Venue

**CASE BRIEF**: These cases both dealt with where the correct venue is for certain challenges under the Clean Air Act.

In Oklahoma v. EPA, the court considered whether the D.C. Circuit is the only venue where challenges to the "good neighbor" provision of the Clean Air Act can occur.

In EPA v. Calumet, the court considered if challenges to the Clean Air Act's Renewable Fuel Standards program can only be heard in the D.C. Circuit and not regional circuits.



WHY IT MATTERS: Certain challenges to the Clean Air Act may be heard in regional circuit courts, while others will still be heard in the DC Circuit.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

Renewable Fuels Association: "Challenges to @EPA's small refinery exemption denials should be adjudicated solely in the DC Circuit because SRE policy is nationally applicable." (12/16/24)

<u>Accountable.US</u>: "Accountable.US Sounds Alarm on Supreme Court Cases That Threaten to Greenlight Judge Shopping, Weaken Environmental Protections." (3/25/25)

<u>UT AG Derek Brown</u>: "I was at the Supreme Court today for oral arguments in the case Oklahoma v. EPA – Utah is a co-party with Oklahoma. It was incredible to see the hard work of our attorneys and Oklahoma's attorneys in a critical part of our challenge to the EPA's prior overreach of state authority." (3/25/25)

# Federal Communications Commission v. Consumers' Research

Argued: March 26, 2025

6-3 decision on June 27, 2025, held that the universal service contribution setup does not violate the Constitution's nondelegation doctrine.

**Politico – June 26, 2025** 

**Supreme Court upholds FCC broadband fund** 

NPR- June 27, 2025

Supreme Court upholds program providing internet access to rural Americans

#### ONE TO WATCH

**ISSUE:** Federal Agency Power

CASE BRIEF: The FCC has asked the Court to uphold the Universal Services Fund, arguing that the fund is a constitutional delegation of congressional power. The Fund, which supports access to telecommunications services across the country, is funded by telecom providers based on an assessment of their revenues. However, the Fifth Circuit ruled that the FCC's method of funding the Universal Services Fun is an unconstitutional tax.



WHY IT MATTERS: The Court ruled that the funding mechanism for the Universal Services Fund does not violate the Constitution's nondelegation doctrine. The ruling will also not impact access to telecommunications and broadband services, especially for those in rural and low-income communities that rely on support from the Fund.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

AAFLegal: "Today, the Supreme Court, on a 6-3 vote, upheld Congress's delegation of taxing power to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). ... The Court's decision allows for the continuation of a program that, while likely beneficial, conservative constitutionalists believe is beyond the scope of Congress to create." (6/27/25)

Constitutional Accountability Center: "Today, #SCOTUS is hearing a case about expanding the nondelegation doctrine, which could undermine the federal government's ability to do its job effectively." 3/26/25

# Catholic Charities Bureau v. Wisconsin Labor & Industry Review Commission

Argued: March 31, 2025

9-0 decision on June 5, 2025, held that the WI Supreme Court's decision denying Catholic Charities Bureau a tax exemption available to religious entities under WI law because the Catholic Charities Bureau neither engaged in proselytization nor limited their charitable services to Catholics violated the First Amendment.

New York Times – June 5, 2025

Supreme Court back Catholic charity denied exemption in tax case

National Law Review - June 18, 2025

Supreme Court unanimously sides with Catholic charities in Wisconsin unemployment tax exemption case

**ISSUE**: Tax-exempt status for religious non-profits

CASE BRIEF: The Catholic Charities Bureau branch of the Diocese of Superior challenged a Wisconsin State Supreme Court ruling that the organization's activities aren't primarily religious. This ruling from the state would deny the Bureau from qualifying for a religious exemption from paying into the state's unemployment compensation program and prevent the Bureau from joining the Wisconsin Bishop's own unemployment compensation program.



WHY IT MATTERS: With this ruling the Court opened the door to expanded tax-exempt status for other religiously affiliated organizations.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

Alliance for Defending Freedom: "Government has no business second-guessing a faith organization's purpose. To do so would unconstitutionally entangle church and state—all at the expense of ministries that live out their faith, at least in part, through serving their communities." 9/12/24)

**Vox**: "The Supreme Court's new religion case could devastate American workers." 3/24/25

## Mahmoud v. Taylor

Argued: April 22, 2025

6-3 decision on June 27, 2025, ruling that parents challenging the Montgomery County Board of Education's introduction of certain books are granted an injunction.

SCOTUS BLOG – January 17, 2025

Justices take up Maryland parents' challenge to LGBTQ books in schools

FOX NEWS – February 6, 2025

Maryland mom taking fight to opt child out of LGBTQ story books before Supreme Court

**ISSUE**: Parental notification over certain education subjects for elementary school students

**CASE BRIEF**: A group of parents in Montgomery County, Maryland, objected to rules barring them from taking their children out of lessons that used storybooks with LGBTQ+ characters and themes.



WHY IT MATTERS: The Court ruled that public schools must give parents of elementary school children a chance to opt out of instruction on gender and sexuality that goes against their religious convictions.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

<u>Defense of Freedom Institute</u>: "Teaching children the tolerance and respect for others that are required in a civil society is different from indoctrinating them with new ideologies." (3/11/2025)

Secretary Linda McMahon: "The Supreme Court's ruling in Mahmoud v. Taylor is a major win for religious liberty and parental rights. The Court rightfully held that schools can't shut parents out or disregard their religious obligations to their children. A great day for parents and education champions!" (6/27/25)

## Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board v. Drummond

Argued: April 30, 2025

4-4 decision that left in place an OK Supreme Court ruling blocking the first religious charter school in the country. Case decided on May 22, 2025.

SCOTUS BLOG – January 24, 2025

Supreme Court will weigh in on effort to found nation's first religious charter school

**ISSUE**: State funding for religious charter schools and First Amendment questions around religious schools receiving state education funding.

CASE BRIEF: St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School, a proposed taxpayer-funded charter school, was initially approved to participate in Oklahoma's charter school program. However, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that school could not participate. The Alliance for Defending Freedom (ADF) appealed that decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.



WHY IT MATTERS: The Court, for now, is not requiring that states include religious charter schools in funding considerations for education.



#### WHAT IS BEING SAID:

OK AG: "The Supreme Court has ruled in favor of my position that we should not allow taxpayer funding of radical Islamic schools here in Oklahoma. I am proud to have fought against this potential cancer in our state, and I will continue upholding the law, protecting our Christian values and defending religious liberty." (5/22/2025)

<u>ADF</u>: "Oklahoma parents and children are better off with more educational choices, not fewer. There's great irony in state officials who claim to be in favor of religious liberty discriminating against St. Isidore because of its Catholic beliefs." (1/24/2025)

## **Trump Admin Cases**

A small number of cases related to actions taken by the Trump administration have reached the Supreme Court as of April 2025.

The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to narrow orders issued by three district courts blocking the administration's directive denying citizenship to those born after February 19, 2025, whose parents are in the country illegally. It forbids U.S. agencies from issuing or accepting any documents recognizing citizenship for those children.

In early March, the Supreme Court denied a request by the Trump administration to lift an order requiring that the State Department pay nearly \$2 billion in foreign aid reimbursements for work already completed. This case could return to the Supreme Court.

In April, the Court ruled that the Trump administration can continue to deport suspected illegal immigrant gang members to El Salvador under the Alien Enemies Act. The Court held that detainees must be notified and have the chance to appeal deportation.

The other major challenge was declared moot by the Court after the head of the Office of Special Counsel ended his challenge in early March.

#### *NBC News – June 27, 2025*

Supreme Court curbs injunctions that blocked Trump's birthright citizenship plan

SCOTUS BLOG – March 5, 2025

A Supreme Court setback for Trump in the USAID dispute may not be the last word

NATIONAL REVIEW – April 7, 2025

Supreme Court Lifts Order Blocking Use of Alien Enemies Act for Deportations

BLOOMBURG – February 16, 2025

Trump asks Supreme Court to let him fire US agency head

## Influence Watch: 2025-26 Term

A snapshot of some of the most anticipated cases set for the next term.

National Republican
Senatorial Committee v.
Federal Election
Commission

#### **ISSUE**

Does the federal limit on how much political parties can spend in coordination with their candidates unconstitutionally violate political speech under the First Amendment?

#### POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

This case could significantly reshape the rules for campaign finance heading into the 2026 elections.

SCOTUS will hear arguments in October 2025.

## Cox Communications V. Sony Music Entertainment

#### **ISSUE**

Can an internet provider be held financially liable for copyright infringement committed by its customers if it knowingly fails to stop repeat offenders?

#### POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

The case could set major precedent by holding internet providers liable for repeat copyright infringement, potentially reshaping how they monitor user activity online.

SCOTUS will hear arguments in October 2025.

### Bost v. Illinois State Board of Elections

#### **ISSUE**

Do federal candidates have Article
III standing to challenge state time,
place, and manner regulations
concerning their federal elections?

#### POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

Federal candidates for office could challenge state laws regarding how elections are conducted.

SCOTUS will hear arguments in October 2025



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