



## LIBERTY JUSTICE CENTER

*Honoring liberty's legacy through progress and purpose; defending rights,  
protecting freedom, and preserving the enduring spirit of America.*

# *Annual* REPORT *2025*



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*\*Reader's Notice: Throughout this publication, text set in blue/navy signifies linked records, filings, and related materials and may be clicked to open the source online.*

*In these pages, our steadfast pursuit. —*

## Leadership A LEADER'S PREAMBLE



**Sara Albrecht**  
LJC CHAIRMAN

**TO OUR FRIENDS, PARTNERS, AND SUPPORTERS,**

As we close the chapter on 2025, we do so at a moment that invites both reflection and resolve.

Our nation stands on the threshold of the 250th anniversary of its founding—a milestone that calls us to consider not only where America has been, but where it is headed. At the same time, the Liberty Justice Center marks its own important anniversary: fifteen years of defending freedom, advancing constitutional liberty, and ensuring that the promises of our Founders remain real and enforceable in the everyday lives of Americans.

These two milestones, though separated by centuries, are bound by a common thread. The commitment to liberty that animated the Founders in 1776 is the same commitment that gave rise to the Liberty Justice Center in 2011—and it continues to guide our work today.

### A YEAR THAT TESTED CONSTITUTIONAL RESOLVE

The past year reminded us that constitutional principles, while enduring, are never self-executing. Liberty depends on citizens willing to assert their rights and institutions prepared to defend them.

In 2025, we saw how quickly constitutional limits can be strained when government power expands unchecked. We also saw how difficult it can be for individuals, workers, and small businesses to stand alone against that power.

*The Liberty Justice Center met those challenges head-on.*

We defended free speech in schools, universities, and the public square when disfavored viewpoints were targeted for suppression. We protected families and entrepreneurs facing unlawful regulatory overreach. And we continued to stand with workers and public employees, reaffirming that the freedom to choose whether to associate—and whether to financially support a union—is a fundamental constitutional right.

Each case we undertake carries consequences far beyond the parties involved. Our work is not simply about resolving individual disputes or overturning isolated policies. It is about vindicating the principle that the Constitution means what it says, and that government remains bound by those limits.

When we secure a victory—whether through litigation

*AT LJC,  
EVERY CASE  
WE TAKE  
IS MORE THAN  
A LEGAL BATTLE,  
IT'S A STAND  
FOR THE  
AMERICAN  
PROMISE  
OF LIBERTY AND  
JUSTICE FOR ALL.*

## Leadership

### LEADER'S PREAMBLE CONTINUED...

or settlement—we are not just prevailing for one client. We are strengthening the structural safeguards of liberty that protect all Americans.

#### FIFTEEN YEARS OF CONSTITUTIONAL ADVOCACY

The start of 2026 marks the beginning of Liberty Justice Center's fifteenth year—a moment to reflect on how far this organization has come in a relatively short time.

What began as a bold vision—to build a legal institution dedicated wholly to defending individual rights and limited government—has grown into a nationally recognized force for constitutional litigation.

Over the past decade and a half, we have helped reshape the legal landscape of free speech and free association, particularly for workers and public-sector employees. We have built a record of precedent-setting victories that safeguard not only our clients, but millions of Americans whose freedoms depend on the rulings we help secure.

Yet anniversaries are not endpoints. They are calls to recommit.

The threats to liberty evolve with time, but the central question endures: Will we remain a nation faithful to the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the constraints of the Constitution?

#### APPROACHING AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

As the United States approaches its semiquincentennial in 2026, we are reminded of the extraordinary courage and clarity of the Founding generation.

They declared that all men are created equal and endowed with unalienable rights. They established that government derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed. And they designed a constitutional system that divides and restrains power so that liberty might flourish.

But they also understood a sobering truth: rights written on parchment are not enough. Liberty survives only when citizens remain vigilant and when courts are willing to enforce constitutional boundaries—even in the face of political pressure.

In that sense, the work of the Liberty Justice Center is an extension of the Founders' project. Our attorneys, clients, and supporters serve as modern stewards of the constitutional order. Each case we bring reflects a belief that the rule of law still matters—and that the courtroom remains a place where individuals can stand as equals against the state.

As our nation commemorates 250 years of independence, we intend to seize this moment to

highlight the continued relevance of constitutional protections for free speech, educational freedom, economic liberty, and limited government. We will expand public understanding of these rights and advance cases that confront some of the most pressing threats to liberty in our time.

#### THE ROAD AHEAD

The years to come will introduce new technologies, new policy debates, and new assertions of government authority. Yet the core questions will remain unchanged: Who decides? Does the individual retain the freedom to think, speak, work, and live according to conscience—or will that freedom be narrowed by expanding state power?

At the Liberty Justice Center, our answer is unequivocal.

We will continue to defend the individual against unlawful government action. We will insist that constitutional limits be taken seriously. And we will champion the freedoms that form the foundation of American self-government.

We undertake this mission with humility, gratitude, and determination—humility in recognizing the sacrifices of those who secured these freedoms before us; gratitude for the supporters who make our work possible; and determination because the stakes for our country and future generations could not be higher.

#### GRATITUDE AND PARTNERSHIP

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my deepest thanks to our donors, partners, and clients. Your trust and commitment enable the Liberty Justice Center to take on powerful interests, sustain long legal battles, and secure victories whose impact reaches far beyond any single case.

As we look toward 2026 and the 250th anniversary of America's founding, I am filled with both pride and optimism—pride in what we have accomplished together over the past fifteen years, and optimism that, with your continued partnership, we can help ensure that the next 250 years are defined not by the erosion of liberty, but by its renewal.

The Founders entrusted their experiment in self-government to future generations. Today, we accept that charge. Together, we will honor their vision by defending the freedoms they fought to secure—so that the promise of America endures as a living reality for generations to come.

With gratitude and resolve,  
*Sara Albrecht*



*George Washington at Princeton Charles  
by Willson Peale (1741–1827)*

# LJC PUBLIC RECORD

AN

AN ACCOUNT OF THE YEAR'S MOST NOTABLE HEADLINES



NOV 14, 2025

**LEGAL GROUP ACCUSES VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT OF FELONY AFTER HOSTING DEM POLITICAL RALLY FOR FREE**  
*Liberty Justice Center alleges Portsmouth Schools violated Virginia Law.*

AUGUST 1, 2025

**COURT APPROVES SETTLEMENT AFTER NORTH CAROLINA STUDENT SUSPENDED FOR 'ILLEGAL ALIENS' COMMENT**  
*Federal court approves settlement after student's three-day suspension sparked free speech lawsuit.*

AUGUST 1, 2025

**FEDERAL PROBE DEMANDS CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION EXPLAIN MISSING FINANCIAL AUDITS SINCE 2020**  
*Every dollar paid by workers should serve their interests, not those of a select few operating in the shadows, the letter to CTU stated.*

MAY 10, 2025

**STATES SUPPORT PARENTS IN LEGAL CASE OVER SCHOOL'S SECRET GENDER TRANSITION OF CHILD**  
*In amicus brief, attorneys general from 20 states call disregard for parental rights 'disturbing.'*

MARCH 31, 2025

**CALIFORNIA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRAISE TRUMP ADMIN'S PROBE INTO STATE ALLEGEDLY HIDING KID'S GENDER IDENTITY**  
*The Department of Education launched an investigation into the state over alleged violations of the Family Educational Rights Act.*



OCTOBER 24, 2025

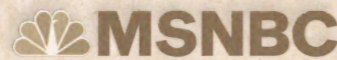
**YOUR UNION BOSS CAN'T TREAT YOU LIKE AN ATM**  
*The best remedy for such abuse: resign. Op-Ed by Mark Janus*

AUG. 29, 2025

**STANFORD'S GRADUATE STUDENT UNION TRIES TO STIFLE DISSENT**  
*The university may fire me because I won't pay dues to a labor organization whose views I find repugnant.*

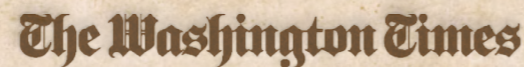
MAY 30, 2025

**WHERE THE LANDMARK TARIFFS LAWSUIT STARTED**  
*Victor Owen Schwartz is an unlikely face of tariff resistance. A small wine importer and distributor, Schwartz is the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit that was filed in April by the Liberty Justice Center...*



SEPTEMBER 10, 2025  
**SUPREME COURT TO DECIDE WHETHER TRUMP'S TARIFFS ARE LEGAL (MSNBC VIDEO INTERVIEW)**

*The Supreme Court is fast-tracking the Trump administration's appeal of lower court rulings that the president exceeded his authority by issuing his sweeping global tariffs.*



NOVEMBER 11, 2025  
**POLITICALLY UNSTABLE: COLLEGE ADMISSION DISCRIMINATION STILL EXISTS (VIDEO INTERVIEW)**

*The White House has released new levies for dozens of countries, all of which will come into effect on Thursday.*



MARCH 12, 2025

**LEGAL GROUP SUES PUBLIC-SECTOR UNIONS OVER WORKERS' RIGHTS ISSUES**  
*The Liberty Justice Center filed three lawsuits on behalf of government employees against their public sector unions.*

MAY 5, 2025

**CHICAGO-BASED CASINOS AGREES TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATORY QUOTAS FROM PUBLIC OFFERING**  
*A federal lawsuit against Bally's Casino, the city of Chicago and the Illinois Gaming Board has been dropped after Bally's agreed to revise its initial public offering to potential investors.*

DEC 17, 2025

**CABARRUS COMMISSIONERS SETTLE FIRST AMENDMENT LITIGATION WITH RESIDENT**  
*"The settlement does well to protect the First Amendment rights of all Cabarrus County residents." said Brendan Philbin, Senior Counsel at Liberty Justice Center.*



JULY 15, 2025

**FREE SPEECH TRIUMPH FOR SCHOOL CHOICE ADVOCATE IN FEDERAL CASE**  
*Ex-UIC prof files lawsuit saying he was fired for opposing racial hiring preferences.*



KOLN•KGIN NEWS

AUG 29, 2025

**LINCOLN GUN OWNERS TO CONTINUE SUING CITY OVER FIREARM ORDINANCES**  
*Nebraska Supreme Court affirms plaintiff's claim, in part*



AUGUST 1, 2025

**STUDENT SUSPENDED FOR SAYING 'ILLEGAL ALIEN' WINS SUIT-LAWYER TALKS SETTLEMENT WITH NEWSMAX**  
*LJC Director of Educational Freedom Dean Mcgee discuss the fight for First Amendment Rights of a North Carolina student suspended and branded racist for saying 'illegal Alien' in class.*

FEBRUARY 17, 2025

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO FIRES PROFESSOR FOR CRITICIZING RACE-BASED HIRING PRACTICES**  
*Professor Stephen Kleinschmit and his attorney Reilly Stephens discuss the Liberty Justice Center's lawsuit against the University of Illinois Chicago*



AUGUST 1, 2025

**LEGAL GROUPS SUE CALIFORNIA OVER CENSORSHIP LAW**  
*Liberty Justice Center Jumps Into fight for California School's Parental Rights Policy*



JAN.23, 2025

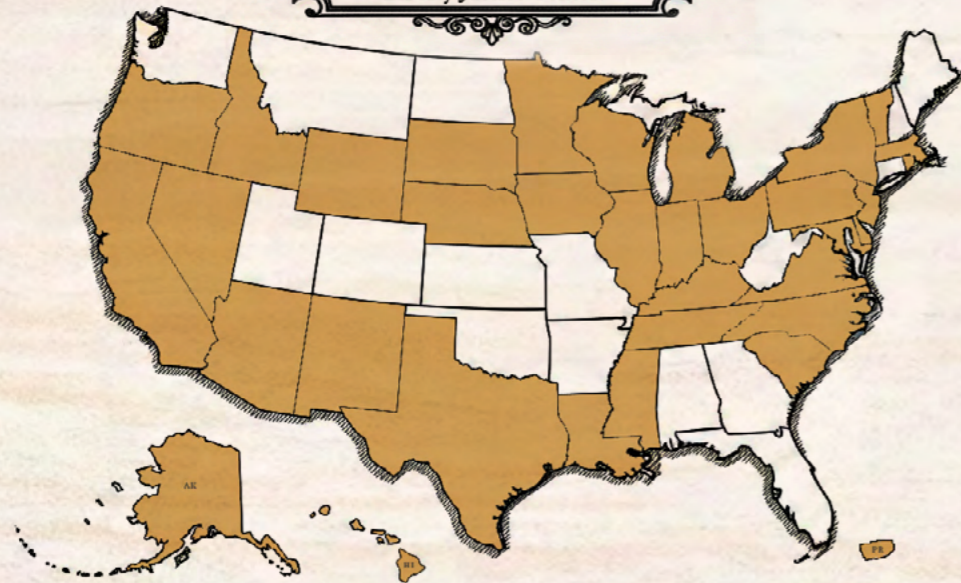
**TRUCKERS FILE LAWSUIT ARGUING THEY SHOULDN'T LOSE SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS JUST BECAUSE THEY CROSS STATE LINES**  
*A complaint challenges Minnesota's refusal to recognize lawfully issued firearms permits of 29 other states.*

MARCH 19, 2025

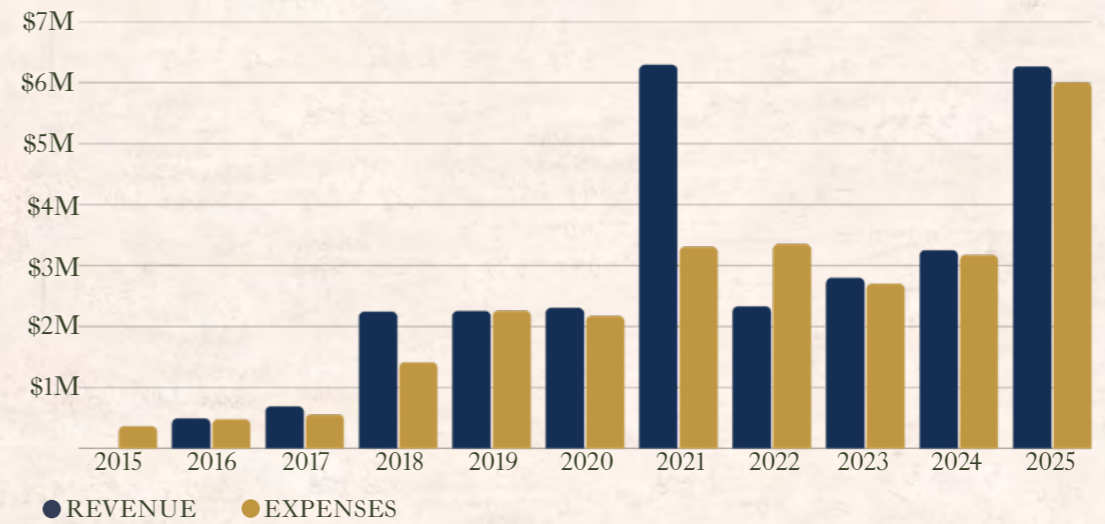
**COMPLAINT: ILLINOIS EDUCATION BOARD VIOLATES TITLE IX BY FORCING STUDENTS TO SHARE RESTROOMS WITH OPPOSITE SEX**  
*The Defense Freedom Institute for Policy and the Liberty Justice Center filed the Title IX complaint with the US Department of Education*

# Liberty Justice Center By the Numbers

A Map of the United States of America showing which states (shaded) in 2025 had cases pursued by Liberty Justice Center.



## HISTORICAL GROWTH IN REVENUE & IMPACT



2025 MEDIA HITS  
4447

2025 MEDIA APPEARANCES  
31

PETITIONS FOR LEGAL HELP  
550+

# STATES WITH CASES  
36

2025 PRESS RELEASES & MEDIA ALERTS  
53

CASES SINCE INCEPTION  
146

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS  
57K+

2025 PUBLISHED OP-EDS  
18

2025 AMICUS BRIEFS  
20

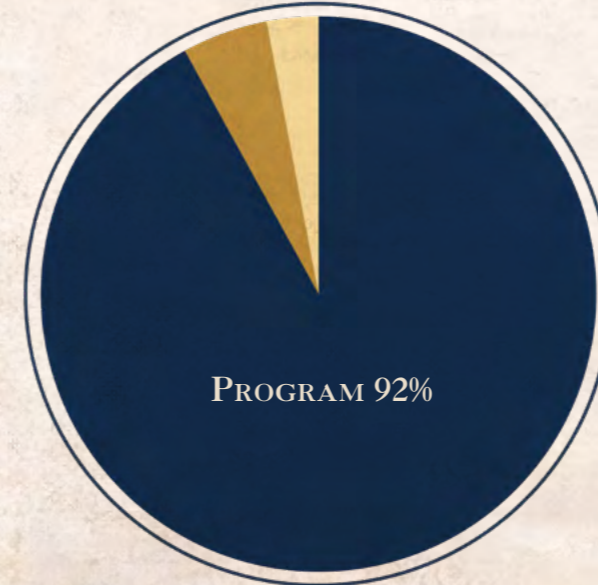
\$5 Billion  
Loss in Revenue for Public Unions

**JANUS**  
v.  
**AFSCME**

1.3 Million  
# of Employees Opted Out of Public Unions

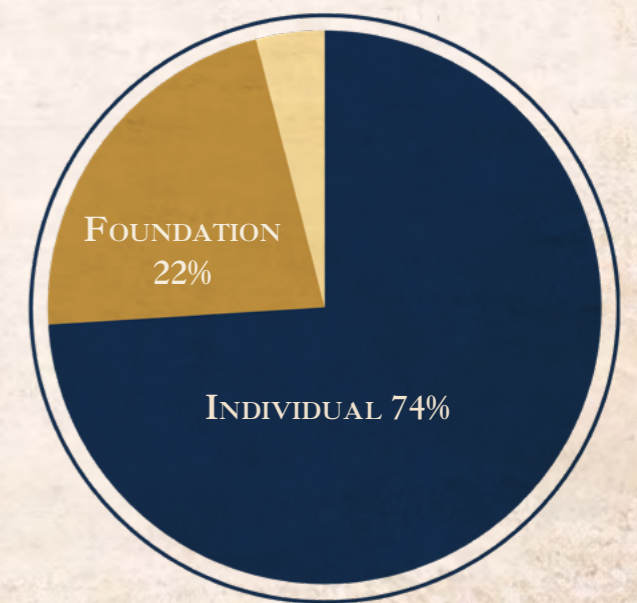
## 2025 EXPENSE ALLOCATION

ADMINISTRATIVE 5%    3% FUNDRAISING



## 2025 REVENUE BREAKDOWN

4% OTHER





*The Battle of Lexington by William Barnes Wollen (1910)*

*Across states, time zones, and courtrooms,  
our people share one unshakable belief:  
Freedom is worth fighting for!*

## FORGING TOMORROW'S LIBERTY DEFENDERS

*Each year, 8-10 Rising Legal Minds Join  
Liberty Justice Center as Interns.*

The Liberty Justice Center's legal internship program offers law students a front-row seat to the modern defense of America's founding principles. Interns work alongside our attorneys and staff on real cases that safeguard individual liberty, free speech, economic opportunity, and limited government—the very ideals enshrined in our Constitution and Declaration of Independence. Rather than making copies or fetching

after the internship ends.

Beyond skill-building, the internship is designed to foster professional growth and a deeper understanding of the courts' role in protecting the natural rights and civil liberties at the heart of the American experiment. Interns receive regular feedback, mentorship, and guidance from experienced professionals who are committed to helping them. By the end of the internship, participants leave with tangible work product, stronger analytical and writing skills, a clearer sense of how they can carry forward the cause of liberty and justice in their future careers, and a lifelong mentor.

\*\*\*\*\*

*"The Liberty Justice Center Internship Program gave me the opportunity to do meaningful work on substantive, groundbreaking cases. I felt like I was a part of a bigger mission, while still building foundational legal skills I would not have been trusted to work on elsewhere."*

*-LJC Summer Intern Caroline Martin (NC)*

\*\*\*\*\*

In 2026, LJC looks forward to building on the contributions of our outstanding former interns by launching a robust, intentional alumni network—creating a lasting community of liberty-minded advocates who stay connected, support one another's careers, and continue to advance our shared mission long after their internships end.

*Learn more about the Liberty Justice Center Internship Program [here](#).*

coffee, interns are fully integrated into the day-to-day work.

Throughout the program, interns gain hands-on experience conducting legal research, drafting memos, preparing case materials, and crafting substantive legal briefs and motions that help keep government power in check. They also have opportunities to contribute to op-eds and our Substack, translating complex legal battles into clear, compelling arguments that make the stakes for freedom understandable to the broader public. Interns participate in internal trainings and team meetings, gaining an inside look at how complex cases are built, how constitutional arguments are developed, and how the rule of law is used to protect liberty in practice. Each intern is paired with an attorney mentor, building relationships that provide guidance, support, and professional connections long

## OUR FRONT-LINE DEFENDERS

*"Each victory won in defense of liberty strengthens  
the resolve of every patriot in LJC's ranks."*

At the Liberty Justice Center, our staff is more than a team—we are a modern regiment of constitutional defenders, united across state lines to protect the freedoms promised at America's founding.

Today, LJC's legal corps is composed of twelve skilled attorneys living in nine different states, allowing us to engage on multiple fronts simultaneously. Like the revolutionaries before us, every member of the LJC staff carries a commitment to principle over convenience, duty over comfort, and courage over conformity.

We are researchers, communicators, strategists, litigators, and advocates—working shoulder to shoulder to ensure that the promise of liberty remains alive for the next generation.

# CONTINUING THE FIGHT OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The American Fundamentals—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—remain the foundation of our constitutional order. The Liberty Justice Center carries the responsibility of defending these enduring principles. As we enter the fifteenth year since our founding, we remain committed to advancing this mission. We will continue to pursue cases that protect free speech, defend against federal government overreach, promote educational freedom, and safeguard the constitutional liberties of Americans across the country.

—~~~~—  
*In 2025, the Liberty Justice Center defended Americans' First Amendment rights to speak, associate, and advocate without fear of retaliation or government-backed "naming and shaming."*  
 —~~~~—

Our efforts ranged from fighting back against illegal retaliation of universities against professors for engaging in criticism of race-based hiring practices in *Abraham v. Arizona Board of Regents* and *Kleinschmit v. University of Illinois Chicago*, to protecting whistleblowers who exposed ethics violations in county government in *Peyton v. Barnes*.

In *Abraham v. Arizona Board of Regents*, the Liberty Justice Center represents Dr. Matthew Abraham, a tenured University of Arizona professor who was "blacklisted" from key faculty governance roles after he opposed and sought records about what he reasonably believed were unlawful, race-based hiring practices tied to DEI initiatives. Filed November 25th in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, the lawsuit contends the University retaliated against protected speech and petitioning activity in violation of Title VII and maintained discriminatory selection practices.

Similarly, in *Kleinschmit v. University of Illinois Chicago*, the Liberty Justice Center filed suit against the University of Illinois Chicago on behalf of Professor Stephen Kleinschmit after the university violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause and unlawfully retaliated

against him for criticizing UIC's race-based hiring and retention practices. Filed in the Northern District of Illinois on February 10th, the complaint details how Kleinschmit was the only faculty member laid off under purported budget cuts. Shortly thereafter, then his department reposted his position while emphasizing diversity preferences in the hiring process.

Whistleblowers also deserve to have their free speech protected and should not face retaliation when calling out ethics violations of government officials. LJC represented Joel Peyton in *Peyton v. Barnes*, filed March 12th, when Joel discovered questionable credit card charges which ultimately led to Simpson County Judge Executive Mason Barnes' resignation and an ethics board finding that Barnes violated the county code. Barnes retaliated by blocking Joel from his official social media page and attacking him publicly, clearly violating established precedent governing public officials' use of social media as public forums, and ultimately, LJC's litigation resolved the case and restored Joel's First Amendment rights.

Beyond our victory for Joel Peyton, LJC experienced several wins this year in North Carolina. LJC successfully required the City of Monroe to remove new rules compelling speakers to state their full home addresses on the record as a condition of speaking and implemented vague bans on "yelling," "insulting," "rude," "abusive," "personal" remarks, and "public ridicule" in *Metzger v. City of Monroe*.

—~~~~—  
*Resolved in a mere matter of months, LJC achieved swift results, restoring proper First Amendment rights to plaintiff, Lisa Metzger, and all the residents of Monroe.*  
 —~~~~—

Also in North Carolina, in July 2024, LJC filed *C.M. v. Davidson County Board of Education*, representing Christian McGhee, a sixteen-year-old Davidson County resident who's free speech was violated when he was unfairly suspended and publicly branded a racist for asking in his English class whether "aliens" meant "space aliens, or

illegal aliens who need green cards." LJC filed a complaint, developed a factual record including administrative statements and a recording, and sustained negotiations alongside litigation. After more than a year of work, LJC secured a court-approved settlement in July 2025. The federal court found the agreement "fair, reasonable, and in the best interest" of the minor, paving the way for removal of the suspension from his record and formal acknowledgment of the violation of his rights.

Students, like Christian, are often the victims of unconstitutional practices implemented by educational entities, as they feel they have no recourse. LJC fights on their behalf in primary, secondary, and post-secondary education experiences. In *Jakiche v. Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico*, the Liberty Justice Center represents Michael Jakiche after he was overlooked multiple times by the School of Medicine's admissions team due to unlawful diversity-based admissions practices. Despite an exceptional record—top grades and test scores, research, publications, and new clinical roles—Jakiche was denied admission in both 2024 and 2025, with UNM's advisement materials and official

letters expressly citing "diversity" and "soft" factors to outweigh his academic merit. LJC is fighting back.

Government overreach is not confined to the classroom. The Liberty Justice Center is litigating cases against federal, state, and local abuses of power—challenging unchecked regulatory mandates, defending constitutional guarantees such as due process, protecting Fourth and Second Amendment rights, and opposing discriminatory procurement and labor rulings.

Government authority should not stand in the way of individuals and businesses striving to succeed, and the Liberty Justice Center fights on their behalf.

While these examples represent only a handful of the 18 cases filed by LJC in 2025, they reflect the extraordinary individuals we have the honor to represent. We remain committed to defending their rights—and the rights of others like them—in the years ahead.

So long as government entities continue to overstep their lawful authority, the Liberty Justice Center will be there to hold the line.



*Washington Crossing the Delaware by Emanuel Leutze, 1851*

# FROM 1776 TO JANUS: ENDING FORCED UNION FEES *RESTORING THE RIGHTS OUR FOUNDERS FOUGHT FOR*

Before *Janus v. AFSCME* Agency fees were described as payment for union representation, but nonmembers may not want that representation at all—and may believe the union is bargaining and advocating in ways that directly cut against their interests. Janus was therefore not simply about being forced to subsidize speech one disagrees with; it was also about being forced to fund an organization that claims to speak for you, while pursuing positions that may harm you.

Before Janus, millions of public workers were required to pay “agency fees” to a union as a condition of employment—even if they never joined, never consented, and disagreed with the union’s political advocacy. It was government compelled support for third-party speech. LJC argued that this violated the First Amendment, echoing the Founders’ warning that government has no rightful power to force citizens to finance a message they oppose.

## A Landmark Victory for Free Speech

In 2018, the Supreme Court issued a decisive ruling: mandatory agency fees in the public sector are unconstitutional. The Court held that no dues or fees may be deducted unless a worker clearly and voluntarily opts in. This restored First Amendment protections to roughly five million public employees—teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other state and local workers—giving each one a real choice over union membership and financial support.

## A Continuing Fight

But, as the Founders knew, victories for liberty must be guarded. After Janus, many unions adjusted—

and some have tried to test the ruling’s limits. They have used confusing dues forms, narrow resignation windows, and other tactics aimed at undermining workers’ rights. In some cases they simply ignore the ruling altogether.

*The Liberty Justice Center views Janus not as the end of the story, but the beginning of a new era of enforcement. Our ongoing work focuses on:*

- *Education and outreach so workers understand their Janus rights;*
- *Direct legal assistance when those rights are violated; and*
- *Active litigation to stop unlawful union practices wherever they appear.*

In 2025, LJC advanced these protections through cases around the country, protecting the Janus rights of public workers who are the backbone of this country.

LJC’s recent cases span transit workers, school employees, and legal aid attorneys, targeting dues taken after resignations, compelled payments under different labels, transparency failures, and blatant ignoring of Janus. Over the last several years, the scope of our cases has expanded, representing plaintiffs from Chicago, Illinois all the way to San Juan, Puerto Rico with the addition of our newest team member, Ángel J. Valencia, who is licensed to practice law in Puerto Rico.

LJC launched two cases in Puerto Rico in 2025, including *Rigau v. Puerto Rico Industrial Commission*. Filed November 18, the Liberty Justice Center represents longtime public employee Luis



Rigau in a federal civil rights suit challenging the Puerto Rico Industrial Commission and UFCW Local 481 for deducting union dues from his paycheck without consent—despite his clear, written objections following the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2018 decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*.

*“The Constitution is clear after Janus: the government cannot take union dues from a public employee without his or her consent,” said Ángel J. Valencia,*

*“PRIC and UFCW Local 481 are ignoring that rule and are seizing Mr. Rigau’s wages anyway. We’re asking the court to put a stop to this violation.”*

LJC also swiftly closed several cases ensuring resolution for a number of public workers, including Andre Sneed in Illinois. When the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways continued to deduct union dues under their “irrevocable while employed” policy, LJC stepped in to ensure a swift settlement in *Sneed v. Laborers’ International Union of North America*, securing relief for Andre and reinforcing that unions cannot contract around Janus to extract dues from nonmembers.

In *Uniatowski v. OAPSE Local 579*, LJC fought to protect the First Amendment and Janus rights of Martine Uniatowski, a part-time Bay Village City School District employee in Ohio who was pressured by Union representatives into signing a membership agreement she could not read, due to visual impairments, and then refused to stop dues deductions when she resigned. Through swift federal litigation in the Northern District of Ohio and sustained pressure on the defendants, LJC secured a practical resolution, closing the case following a settlement by both parties.

Holding unions accountable requires proactiveness and agility in strategy. Last year, LJC filed a lawsuit against the Chicago Teachers Union, on behalf of four CTU members, demanding that the union produce an audit after failing to do so for four years. In May of this year, Judge David B. Atkins of the Circuit Court of Cook County ruled in favor of the Liberty Justice Center. When the Union still failed to produce the audits, the U.S. House Committee on Education & Workforce sent a letter demanding CTU’s legally required documents and financial audits.

# A MODERN STAMP ACT

HOW THE LIBERTY JUSTICE CENTER IS HOLDING THE LINE AGAINST UNCHECKED EXECUTIVE TAXATION



When the American colonists protested the Stamp Act, the Tea Act, and other taxes placed on them without their approval, they were fighting for something bigger than money. They were standing up for the idea that only the people's representatives have the right to tax the nation. That belief helped spark the American Revolution and shaped the founding of our country.

In 2025, the Liberty Justice Center faced a similar question:

*Can a president act alone and tax the entire nation without Congress?*

That question was at the center of *V.O.S. Selections, Inc. v. Trump*.

## A NEW TARIFF EDICT

In April 2025, the Trump Administration announced what it called the "Liberation Day" tariffs. These were massive, across-the-board taxes: a 10 percent tariff on almost all imports, and even higher tariffs on dozens of countries.

There were no hearings, no public debate, and no vote in Congress—much like when the British government suddenly

issued new taxes on the colonies centuries ago.

Small businesses felt the damage first. LJC represents five of them—on behalf of all small businesses—directly harmed by the sudden increase in costs.

The Administration tried to justify the tariffs by invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). But IEEPA was created for real emergencies, not ordinary policy disagreements. A trade deficit—a situation the U.S. has had for decades—does not count as an "unusual and extraordinary threat." Even more, several countries hit with higher tariffs did not even have a trade deficit with the United States.

Just as colonists once asked how Parliament across the ocean could tax them without consent, this case asked: who gave the President this power?

## WHERE THE CONSTITUTION DRAWS THE LINE

The Founders were firm about this: Only Congress can levy taxes. They placed this power in Article I of the Constitution to prevent exactly the sort of one-sided action the colonists faced under the Stamp Act and Tea Act. LJC's lawsuit makes two key points:

1. IEEPA does not allow a President to impose tariffs. Even if it did, letting a president tax the nation alone would violate the separation of powers the Founders carefully designed.
2. In short, the President cannot create nationwide taxes through emergency claims. That power belongs to Congress—and only Congress.

## A STEADY MARCH TO THE SUPREME COURT

In May 2025, the U.S. Court of International Trade unanimously ruled the tariffs illegal and issued a permanent injunction blocking them.

The government appealed, and after a temporary pause, the case moved to the Federal Circuit.

At this stage, two leading legal figures—Michael McConnell and Neal Katyal—joined LJC as co-counsel, highlighting the significance of the case.

After oral arguments in July, the government asked the U.S. Supreme Court to take the case. The Court agreed.

On November 5, 2025, the Justices heard arguments.

On February 20, 2026, The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 6-3 decision that the President lacks the authority to unilaterally impose tariffs via IEEPA.

## Why it Matters

Unilateral taxation—taxes imposed by a single ruler without the consent of the people—was one of the central sparks of the American Revolution. Long before independence was declared, colonists had grown weary of duties and tariffs handed down without representation. The Founders took these lessons seriously. They wanted to ensure that no Executive, present or future, could repeat the pattern that pushed the colonies toward revolt.



*Their answer was intentional:  
Only Congress may levy taxes  
on the nation.*



That safeguard is more than a procedural detail—it is a cornerstone of the constitutional system. If any President can declare an "emergency" and then use that declaration to impose sweeping taxes on Americans, one of the most essential protections in our Republic is lost: the right to be taxed only by elected representatives who are directly accountable to the people.

The Liberty Justice Center brought this case to defend that principle. Small businesses across the country were hit with sudden tariff increases issued without congressional approval, forcing many to absorb unexpected and often devastating costs. LJC stepped in to challenge not just the tariffs themselves but the broader constitutional danger of allowing an executive to sidestep Congress in matters of taxation.

At stake is a structural protection the Founders considered vital. By advancing this case, the Liberty Justice Center preserved the separation of powers, protected small businesses from unlawful burdens, and ensured that taxation remains where the Constitution requires it—in the hands of the people's representatives, just as the Founders intended.

## V.O.S. Timeline



2025

April 14

LJC filed *V.O.S. Selections, Inc. v. Trump* in the U.S. Court of International Trade, challenging the "Liberation Day" tariffs.

May 13

The CIT hears arguments on plaintiff motions (summary judgment, injunctions, etc.).

May 28

A unanimous Court of International Trade rules the tariffs illegal and issues a permanent injunction.

July 8

LJC files its response brief at the Federal Circuit.

July 31

Oral arguments held at the Federal Circuit. Michael McConnell and Neal Katyal join the case as co-counsel.

Aug. 29

The Federal Circuit, sitting en banc, affirms the underlying legal judgment that IEEPA did not authorize the tariffs.

Sept. 9

The Supreme Court granted certiorari.

Nov. 5

Supreme Court hears oral arguments.

2026

Feb. 20

Supreme Court ruled in a 6-3 decision that the President lacks the authority to unilaterally impose tariffs via IEEPA.

Feb. 24

LJC files motions to enforce Supreme Court Tariff ruling and trigger immediate refunds.

# LJC IN FRONT OF THE SUPREME COURT

## *TAKING THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE TO THE COURT*

From history-making Supreme Court cases to critical litigation in the lower courts, the Liberty Justice Center works to uphold the Founding promise that all Americans are endowed with certain unalienable rights. One of the most consequential ways we advance that mission is through our amicus curiae practice.

**AMICUS BRIEF** (def.): noun [from Latin *amicus curiae*, meaning "friend of the court"] A legal document filed by non-parties in cases whose outcome is of great importance to certain groups; provides legal analysis, data, or specialized expertise to aid the court and hopefully help get the outcome desired.

Amicus briefs are rarely the most visible part of constitutional litigation—but they are often among the most important. At the Supreme Court, where roughly 7,000 petitions are filed each year and only a small fraction are granted review, amicus briefs play a critical role in helping the justices and their clerks identify cases of national significance. At the certiorari stage, they underscore why a case matters. At the merits stage, they provide additional legal, historical, and practical perspectives that can shape the Court's analysis.

For the Liberty Justice Center, amicus advocacy is not episodic—it is strategic and sustained. We frequently support cases we believe in at multiple stages of review: filing in the lower courts, again at the certiorari stage, and again on the merits if the Court grants review. In many instances, we stand alongside a case from its earliest appeals through final resolution, reinforcing the constitutional principles at stake every step of the way.

In 2025 alone, the Liberty Justice Center filed 23 amicus briefs in cases involving educational freedom, First Amendment protections, workers' rights, and limits on government power. This work is now led by our Director of Amicus Practice, Reilly Stephens—a role created to deepen our engagement, strengthen partnerships across the liberty legal network, and ensure that critical cases receive the support they need.

A significant portion of our 2025 docket focused on free speech. Seventy-five percent of our Supreme Court amicus filings at the certiorari stage urged the Court to grant review in cases raising serious First Amendment concerns.

In *Olivier v. City of Brandon*, we filed briefs supporting the right of a Mississippi resident to seek relief after being prosecuted for evangelizing under a municipal ordinance restricting speech. In *Chiles v. Salazar*, we urged the Court to hear a challenge to a Colorado law limiting the speech of mental health professionals. The Court's decision to grant certiorari in *Chiles* underscored the importance of sustained amicus engagement in shaping which constitutional questions the Court ultimately resolves.

Our amicus work also reinforces workers' First Amendment rights. In *Todd v. AFSCME*, we supported a Minnesota employee challenging union dues deductions he alleged were authorized through a forged signature. Our brief argued that unions act as state actors when using government payroll systems to collect dues and warned that the lower court's ruling created a circuit split warranting Supreme Court review.



*Patrick Henry Before the Virginia House of Burgesses, by Peter F. Rothermel (1817-1895)*

Educational freedom and parental rights likewise remained a major focus. In 2025, we filed six amicus briefs addressing these issues, including three on behalf of Dr. Erica Anderson, a clinical psychologist emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in decisions affecting children experiencing gender incongruence. Our briefs in cases such as *Littlejohn v. School Board of Leon County*, *Heaps v. Delaware Valley Regional High School Board of Education*, and *Foote v. Ludlow School Committee* challenged school policies that withheld critical information from parents.

We also continued to confront structural constitutional overreach through amicus advocacy. In *Buckeye Institute v. Internal Revenue Service*, our brief argued that compelled disclosure of nonprofit donor information violates First Amendment associational privacy protections and improperly shifts the burden away from the government to justify such intrusions.

This work reflects a broader institutional

commitment: when constitutional principles are at stake, we do not remain on the sidelines. Even where we are not counsel of record, we lend our voice, expertise, and resources to ensure the Court hears the full constitutional implications of a case.

As Reilly Stephens, Director of Amicus Practice, explains:

*“Filing briefs that encourage the Supreme Court to take a case, contributing additional perspective in lower court litigation, and supporting organizations advancing similar constitutional principles—this is what strengthens the broader liberty legal movement.”*

Amicus advocacy may not always draw headlines. But it can shape which cases are heard, how they are argued, and ultimately how the Constitution is interpreted. For the Liberty Justice Center and our partners across the country, that makes it one of the most consequential tools we have to defend freedom before the nation's highest court.



*Declaration of Independence by John Trumbull, 1819*

## *The Charge:* OUR ENDURING COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM

From the first petitions drafted in colonial meeting halls to the landmark cases argued in today's courts, the defense of liberty has always depended on ordinary people who were willing to stand firm when the moment demanded it. That legacy continues at the Liberty Justice Center. Every case we bring, every client we represent, and every law we challenge is another link in the long chain of work that began at America's founding. The tools and forums may have changed over the centuries, but the purpose remains the same. We safeguard the freedoms that generations before us fought to secure.

As we look toward the coming year, new battles are already taking shape. Some will test the limits of government authority. Others will defend the right to speak, work, and live freely. Still others will protect Americans from the kind of overreach that can quietly take root if it goes unanswered. These cases will require steady resolve and thoughtful strategy, along with the partnership of citizens who believe, just as the Founders did, that liberty survives only when it is guarded with vigilance.

Your support strengthens every part of this mission. When you share our cases with your

community, stand publicly with our clients, connect students to our internship program, or help expand our network of local counsel, you become part of a growing circle of people who refuse to let freedom dim. You help carry forward a tradition that is older than the nation itself: the conviction that self-government is worth protecting.

The charge before us is clear. We will continue the work of securing justice for all Americans, quietly when the moment allows, boldly when the situation demands, and always with the awareness that the rights we defend today will shape the opportunities of those who come after us.

Together, we press on. The cause of liberty endures because free people choose, again and again, to protect it.

*To support the cause of Liberty, and stand for freedom use the below QR code.*



