



ANNUAL REPORT & FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

# Meeting the Moment

In these unpredictable times, we're not just witnesses to change—  
we're both architects and navigators of it.

**GENDER**  
**JUSTICE**

**GENDER**  
**JUSTICE**  
**ACTION**

**GENDER**  
**JUSTICE**  
**ACTION PAC**

# Dear Supporters,



MEGAN PETERSON, Executive Director  
(she/her/hers)

“

YOUR COMMITMENT HAS ENABLED US TO REMAIN AGILE AND RESILIENT IN THE FACE OF RISING CHALLENGES—AND THAT’S WHAT GIVES ME HOPE.

”

As we approach the upcoming presidential election, it’s easy to feel fatigued by the familiar refrain: “This is the most important election of our lifetimes.” But with the U.S. Supreme Court intent on rolling back our right to bodily autonomy and a presidential race that will determine the fate of our democracy, the stakes have—once again—never been higher.

This summer, in its first abortion case decisions since *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the Supreme Court maintained access to essential abortion medication but left troubling uncertainties. The Court not only suggested that religious objections could allow doctors to deny care but also punted on whether state abortion bans override the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA), leaving patients and providers in a dangerous limbo.

Beyond these abortion cases, **the Supreme Court’s broader agenda this term reveals a more troubling long game aimed at undermining federal regulatory power with potentially disastrous impacts on health care access, including reproductive care.**

In two separate rulings, the Supreme Court granted itself unprecedented power over the administrative state. First, by rolling back Chevron deference in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, the Court made it easier to challenge agency regulations—a move quickly used by a Mississippi judge to strike down new anti-discrimination rules for transgender health care. Then, in *Corner Post, Inc. v. Board of Governors*, the Court removed the six-year limit on challenging federal regulations potentially reopening rulings, like the FDA’s 2000 approval of mifepristone.

The Supreme Court also announced it would rule on health care for trans youth in its next term. While the ruling would not necessarily impact our challenge to North Dakota’s gender-affirming care ban, it could impact how North Dakota state courts analyze the case. This makes it that much more important that we’re working with community members to lay the groundwork to shift hearts and minds around trans issues in the state.

As the November election approaches, we know that regardless of the outcome, right-wing extremists will continue to push their Project 2025 agenda, which explicitly aims to eliminate abortion, criminalize trans people, and dismantle federal agencies. **In this climate, the state-level work that your support makes possible is more crucial than ever. It’s why we’re moving full-steam toward enshrining abortion and LGBTQ rights into Minnesota’s constitution through an Equal Rights Amendment**—ensuring we’re protected no matter who’s in power in state government.

As I reflect back on this past year, I’m inspired by how Gender Justice has grown in size and impact, thanks to supporters like you. **Your commitment has enabled us to remain agile and resilient in the face of rising challenges—and that’s what gives me hope.**

**We continue to win in the courts.** Our client, Hani Ali, won her breastfeeding discrimination case against Sun Country Airlines, and North Dakota’s extreme abortion ban was declared unconstitutional. The Minnesota Supreme Court agreed to hear *Cooper v. USA Powerlifting*, our landmark case on discrimination against transgender athletes. We also announced a new case seeking justice for a trans high school librarian who was fired under the guise of “religious freedom” after coming out at work.

**Your support also made it possible to achieve significant victories at the Minnesota Legislature.** Together, we enacted new laws requiring insurance providers to cover abortion and gender-affirming care. We also banned book bans, invested in LGBTQ workforce development, established a pathway toward second-parent adoption, addressed racial disparities in the child protective system, and secured funding for African American and American Indian birthing care.

In September, we launched Gender Justice Action PAC in Minnesota, endorsing a slate of candidates and making strategic investments in key races to secure another pro-equality legislative majority to continue our forward momentum. **This new PAC brings our work full circle, touching every part of how we work together to make change—from the courts to legislatures, grassroots and, now, the ballot box.**

Thank you for standing with us. Our ability to forge ahead and adapt to ever-shifting changes in today’s unsteady political climate is thanks to your support. Together, we are ready to face whatever comes our way this November and beyond.

With gratitude,



## Gender Justice Wins 2024 Nonprofit Mission Award for Advocacy

Gender Justice has been voted the recipient of the 2024 Minnesota Nonprofit Mission Award for Advocacy by the member organizations of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN)! Presented annually since 1987, these awards recognize and honor the contributions of nonprofits in the areas of Advocacy, Anti-Racism Initiative, Innovation, and Responsive Philanthropy.

The Advocacy Award celebrates nonprofit organizations that excel in implementing effective advocacy strategies, achieving measurable success, and making a significant impact on their constituencies.

Gender Justice received the award before more than 1,300 nonprofit professionals at the 2024 MCN & Minnesota Council on Foundations Joint Annual Conference in St. Paul on October 10-11.

**This recognition belongs to everyone in the Gender Justice community—everyone who has signed petitions, showed up at the Capitol, donated, contacted their legislators, and more.** Thank you! We’re grateful for this recognition, and together we will continue to advocate for a world where everyone can thrive regardless of their gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation.





NEW!

# GENDER JUSTICE ACTION PAC



LETTER FROM ERICA MAUTER, GENDER JUSTICE ACTION PAC BOARD CHAIR

## Hello Friends,

As we embark together on this exciting new chapter for Gender Justice, I am thrilled to introduce the Gender Justice Action PAC. This newly formed Political Action Committee represents a significant step forward in our mission to support and elect candidates who are dedicated to championing gender equity, reproductive freedom, and LGBTQ equality in Minnesota.

Our decision to establish the Gender Justice Action PAC comes at a crucial time. With the entire Minnesota House of Representatives and a critical state Senate seat up for election in 2024, we have an important opportunity to build on the momentum of the recent legislative victories that you made possible and ensure that Minnesota remains a beacon of hope and progress.

With your support, we've endorsed candidates for Minnesota Legislature who are unwavering in their commitment to reproductive freedom, LGBTQ equity, and comprehensive reproductive healthcare. Our team and dedicated volunteers and supporters like yourself have been hard at work knocking on doors, making phone calls, and organizing at community events to help get them elected.

Despite the significant strides we've made in Minnesota, the fight for gender justice is far from over. Unprecedented attacks on reproductive rights, LGBTQ equality, and gender justice in state legislatures nationwide remind us that we can never take our gains for granted. In Minnesota, there is still much work to do—from passing the state Equal Rights Amendment to removing roadblocks to affordable and accessible abortion care, and so much more.

Elections have profound consequences. The Supreme Court's decision to strike down *Roe v. Wade* has given state politicians the power to control abortion rights, making state legislatures key battlegrounds for reproductive freedom. This November, every vote counts in our fight to protect and advance our hard-won victories.

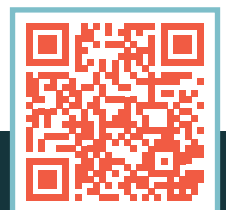
As we look to November and beyond, we need your support more than ever. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a difference in our ability to push our endorsed candidates across the finish line and equip them with the resources they need to be effective champions in the legislature.

Thank you for joining us in this fight. Together, we can ensure that Minnesota continues to lead the way in gender equity and reproductive freedom.



In solidarity,

Erica Mauter  
Board Chair, Gender Justice Action PAC








See our full list of endorsees at: [genderjusticeaction.us/gjapac](https://genderjusticeaction.us/gjapac)



# 2024 Legislative Wins

In Minnesota’s most recent legislative session, we saw big advancements in reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ rights, and bodily autonomy. We are grateful to our supporters, community members, coalition partners and allied legislators who made this year’s progress possible, including you! As we look ahead, your continued support will help us to advance an ambitious pro-equality agenda in the upcoming legislative session, including the strongest state Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the country.

## With your help and advocacy, here are some key wins for gender equity in 2024:

- 
**Mandating Insurance Coverage for Abortion**  
 In a major victory for abortion access, state law now requires private health insurance plans to cover abortion care.
- 
**Mandating Insurance Coverage for Gender Affirming Care**  
 Legislators continued to make Minnesota a more equitable home for trans people by passing the Gender Affirming Care Act ensuring that insurance plans in Minnesota cover gender affirming care.
- 
**Passing Logan's Law**  
 This law updates Minnesota’s parenting laws to treat LGBTQ+ families equitably, specifically around recognizing both same-sex parents as birth parents on legal documentation.
- 
**Setting Statewide Health Education Standards**  
 Gender Justice is part of a large coalition convened by Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault to advance comprehensive sex education. Our coalition advocated for a bill ensuring all students get access to education on crucial health topics, including CPR, substance use prevention, sexual health education, mental health, and violence prevention.
- 
**Achieved Funding to Support LGBTQ+ People Seeking Refuge**  
 Thanks to legislative champion Rep. Leigh Finke, and supporters like you, a one million dollar workforce development grant will assist LGBTQ+ people and families relocating to Minnesota from states with anti-LGBTQ laws.

We’ve accomplished a lot together, but our work is just getting started. In 2025, we invite you to continue fighting with us to truly make Minnesota a place where all people can thrive.

From passing the ERA, dismantling remaining roadblocks to affordable and accessible abortion care, and working for equity and inclusion for LGBTQ+ students we look forward to the progress we will make together in the year ahead.





# MINNESOTANS FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

## Passing Minnesota's Equal Rights Amendment in 2025

The Minnesotans for Equal Rights Campaign offers a powerful opportunity to enshrine robust protections for bodily autonomy and self-determination in our state constitution and ignite a movement that will cultivate the next generation of leaders in gender justice and equity.

Amid escalating national attacks on reproductive freedom and LGBTQ rights, Minnesota has the chance to solidify its role as a leader in human rights. By enshrining essential protections for reproductive freedom and LGBTQ equality into our state constitution—the most powerful tool we have—we will safeguard our hard earned rights, no matter how the political winds may shift.

**The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) that we are asking the Minnesota Legislature to pass is one of the most inclusive and intersectional in the nation.** It extends robust protections to people of color, individuals with disabilities, and those whose identities intersect across multiple categories. By passing this amendment, we can cement Minnesota's commitment to justice and equality for all, creating a lasting foundation that will endure for generations.

Polling shows that Minnesotans widely support this amendment, and with the rising influence of White Christian Nationalists in Minnesota and across the country, the stakes have never been higher. It is incumbent on all of us to rise to the occasion, defend our rights, and ensure that Minnesota remains a shining example of equality and justice for all.



## The Fight Ahead

During the 2024 legislative session, Gender Justice, alongside ERA MN and other key partners and supporters like you, led the charge to pass this historic amendment. We had the votes to place it on the ballot for Minnesotans to vote on in 2026, but brazen obstruction tactics by anti-equity opponents delayed the bill until it was too late for the Senate to take it up. We watched extremist legislators substitute fear-mongering for facts and demagoguery for good-faith debate. They filibustered, chanted, screamed, and used every legislative maneuver to block the ERA. As Megan Peterson told the Star Tribune amid debate, "The fact that there is such strong opposition, year after year, tells you why we need it. ... Clearly, there's something we don't currently have, that they don't want us to have."

But last session's setback has only strengthened our resolve. **For over four decades, the fight for gender equality has been ongoing, and today, a new intergenerational, multi-racial, and intersectional movement is leading the way.** By passing the Minnesota ERA in 2025, we have an opportunity to build a state-based movement that can lead to a federal reclamation of these rights—and showcase, once again, how Minnesota is a leader on human rights.



**To succeed, we must work together to elect a pro-equality majority to our legislature this November.** With your support, Gender Justice Action is working tirelessly with partners and our community to do just that. And when we do, our legislative champions are ready to pass the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment as one of their first orders of business in 2025.

Once we secure the legislature’s support, the ERA will move to the ballot for all Minnesota voters to decide. **At that point, we will ask you to join us in launching the Minnesotans for Equal Rights ballot campaign, with experienced leadership and a broad coalition ready to fight for equal rights for all – no exceptions.**

**This campaign is not just about passing an amendment—it’s about building a movement.**

Your support will help us connect with hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans and learn what matters to them, their families and their communities. We’ll work closely with faith leaders, disability justice advocates, racial equity leaders, LGBTQ communities, and the reproductive freedom movement. **Together, we’ll cultivate the next generation of leaders and ensure our state constitution enshrines the strongest protections for bodily autonomy and self-determination.**

**If you’re inspired by this work, we invite you to join us with a gift to Gender Justice Action in support of the Minnesota ERA.**

For more information or to get involved, reach out to Alissa Light, our Senior Advisor for Minnesotans for Equal Rights, at [alissa.light@genderjustice.us](mailto:alissa.light@genderjustice.us).



## Michele Braley, Equal Rights No Exceptions Donor Story

🗨️ I have supported abortion access since attending a pro-choice rally in Washington, DC in 1986. After Roe was overturned I received an invite to an online presentation with Jess Braverman [Gender Justice Legal Director] and Erin Maye Quade [then Gender Justice Advocacy Director] about the legal landscape and what Gender Justice was doing. That is where I learned that Gender Justice had been anticipating this change for years and had legal action ready to go. The overturning of Roe made apparent the need not just to support abortion access but to be engaged in legal advocacy, too. Gender Justice’s long-term vision and strategy is impressive and needed.

It was no surprise to learn that Gender Justice had established a political advocacy sibling arm, Gender Justice Action, focused on championing gender equity and justice through meaningful political action. And when I learned about Gender Justice Action’s strategic and long-term work on one of the most inclusive, explicit and strong equal rights amendments in the country it was easy to sign on as an Equal Rights No Exceptions Donor Circle supporter.”

### Equal Rights No Exceptions Donor Circle

The Equal Rights No Exceptions Donor Circle is a commitment to Gender Justice Action’s work on the MN Equal Rights Amendment with a gift of \$5,000 or more. Contact Alissa Light at [alissa.light@genderjustice.us](mailto:alissa.light@genderjustice.us) to learn more.

# Fighting for Justice in the Courts



2024 has been a landmark year for Gender Justice in the courts, with your support making possible historic wins and significant progress in some of our biggest cases.

We've successfully blocked Minnesota abortion restrictions, won a first-of-its kind decision recognizing that refusing to fill emergency contraception prescriptions is sex discrimination, and made promising strides towards justice for transgender athletes. Here is a recap of what we have accomplished in the courts this year:

## ***Doe v. Minnesota***

### **Historic Legal Victory in Minnesota Abortion Access Case**

*Co-counsel: The Lawyering Project*

In May, the Minnesota Supreme Court delivered a victory for abortion rights by ending an anti-abortion group's attempt to intervene in the landmark *Doe v. Minnesota* case. This order from the Minnesota Supreme Court concludes the five year long legal challenge, ensuring the restrictions struck down by a district court in July 2022 will remain permanently blocked.

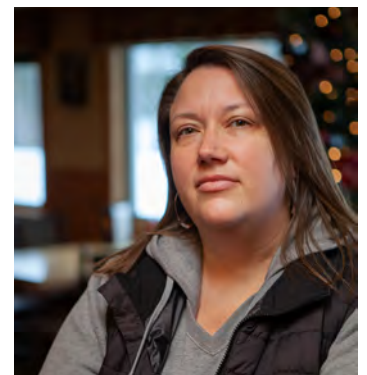


## ***Anderson v. Thrifty White***

### **Massive Win for Contraception Access**

*Co-counsel: Lockridge Grindal Nauen PLLP*

In a historic ruling, the Minnesota Court of Appeals determined that a pharmacist's refusal to fill a woman's prescription for emergency contraception based on his personal beliefs constitutes illegal sex discrimination under the Minnesota Human Rights Act. This decision is the first of its kind in the nation.



## ***Red River Women's Clinic v. North Dakota***

### **Protecting Abortion Access**

*Co-counsel: Center for Reproductive Rights and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP*

In September, we secured a major victory when a state court ruled the state's extreme abortion ban was unconstitutional, restoring abortion access across the state. This ruling is critical for ensuring lifesaving care is available to North Dakotans, but the fight is far from over. The state Attorney General announced that the state will appeal the decision, and we're ready to defend the victory in court.





## Cooper v. USA Powerlifting

### Progress Toward Justice for Transgender Athletes

Co-counsel: Nichols Kaster and Premo Frank

Following a Minnesota Court of Appeals ruling overturning our win at the District Court, the Minnesota Supreme Court announced it will hear the case of a transgender woman denied entry into USA Powerlifting competitions—a landmark case with sweeping implications for the rights of transgender athletes under Minnesota law. We are confident that the Minnesota Supreme Court will uphold the rights of transgender athletes across Minnesota.

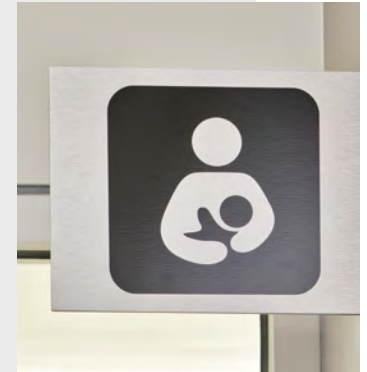


## Ali v. Sun Country Airlines

### Settlement Reached for Nursing Employee

Co-counsel: Lockridge Grindal Nauen PLLP

A settlement was reached in the lawsuit known as *Ali v. Sun Country Airlines*, in which the plaintiff Hani Ali, a nursing mother and former employee, alleged that her employer failed to provide her with appropriate space to pump and store milk, and subjected her to discriminatory treatment that forced her out of work. The Parties have resolved the case in a manner that is satisfactory to both parties. The Parties are proud to say that Sun Country has committed to implement nursing mother accommodations beyond those required under federal and state law, including a new lactation space.



## Advancing Equity for Girls' Sports in Minneapolis Public Schools

Gender Justice filed a Title IX complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in 2022 alleging sex discrimination against female student athletes in Minneapolis Public Schools on behalf of a high school sports coach client. OCR conducted a thorough investigation into the District's female athletics programs, and revealed numerous disparities. In August, Minneapolis Public Schools and OCR reached a resolution agreement that requires increased and adequate investment in athletics programs for female students District-wide and proper compliance with Title IX requirements in each high school's athletics programs.



# SUMMER OF PRIDE

From Monticello to Moorhead, from Marshall to Minot, from Mankato to Minneapolis—and many places in between—the Gender Justice team of staff, board and dedicated volunteers tabled at Pride events throughout Minnesota and North Dakota this summer, celebrating our beautiful, diverse communities and supporters while spreading the word about the resources Gender Justice offers to protect and advance LGB and trans rights.



# Justice for Reyzl

*Standing Up To LGBTQ Workplace Discrimination*



At Gender Justice, we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Minnesota is treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination. This summer, your support made it possible for us to take a significant step toward that goal by filing a landmark lawsuit alongside Wanta Thome PLC challenging discriminatory employment practices that happen under the guise of religious exemptions.

## Our case stands up for Reyzl Grace, a dedicated librarian who was effectively fired from her job simply for living as her true self.

Reyzl Grace worked as the sole librarian at the Academy of Holy Angels in Richfield, Minn. during the 2021-2022 school year. Her role required no ministerial duties, religious training, or education. Grace was widely respected by students and her colleagues for her dedication to fostering a love of reading and learning among students.

"Serving as Holy Angels' librarian was the best job I ever had," said plaintiff Reyzl Grace. "The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet founded the school on 'love of neighbor without distinction'—a principle reflected in the near unanimous support I received from colleagues and students when I came out."

In March 2022, Grace informed Holy Angels of her intention to renew her employment contract for another year – a standard practice required of all employees. The principal initially expressed a desire for her to continue in her role. However, upon learning that Grace had come out as trans and would be transitioning, the principal's demeanor changed and she told Grace she would not be able to work at the school.

A few days later, the principal presented Grace with a "Guiding Principles" document and asked if she could adhere to its contents. Grace said they would be impossible for her to follow, as they would deny her the ability to express her true self, require her to misgender students and "out" them in potentially dangerous situations. **Grace was then asked to submit a formal resignation and instructed not to disclose the reason for her departure, with the school citing a desire to control the messaging.**

"The administration's decision to remove me against the objections of the school community was heartbreaking. I bring this suit because I still love Holy Angels and want to see its promise honored toward all its staff and students," said Grace.

Refusing to resign, Grace reapplied for her position when the school re-posted the librarian position that summer. Despite using the same application and meeting all the job requirements, she was informed via email that the position had been filled.

Our lawsuit contends that Holy Angels and the Archdiocese violated the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) by unlawfully discriminating against Grace by not allowing her to renew her contract for a position she was qualified for and had successfully occupied, as well as by refusing to hire her when she reapplied. While the MHRA does grant limited exemptions on religious grounds, the legislature never intended for these exemptions to apply to secular employees.

**Our case highlights how LGBTQ Minnesotans are asked to choose between their civil rights and the want or need to work, live, study, or use the facilities at a religious association.** If they unwittingly pick a discriminatory entity, they may be denied the MHRA's protections.

Your support has been invaluable in enabling us to take on this crucial fight for justice. Together, we can work towards a Minnesota where everyone can live and work as their authentic selves. Thank you for standing with us.

**You can take a stand against discrimination by donating today. Chip in now →**



# Trans Athletes: Navigating the Conversation

Transgender athletes competing in sports has become a widely discussed topic in the media and politics in recent years—and that’s no accident. Gender Justice was among the first to identify the aggressive anti-trans propaganda campaign targeting sports for what it is: a bad faith effort funded by far-right extremists to erase transgender people from public life.

With your support, we have stood up against this hateful propaganda from the start. In 2019, donations from people like you, along with support from our generous co-counsel, made it possible for us to file a lawsuit on behalf of Jaycee Cooper, a transgender athlete discriminated against by USA Powerlifting. We’ve taken bold actions like this because we understand what’s at stake.

**We believe in the power of sports to bring people together, build community, and celebrate diversity.**

To help you navigate conversations about this topic, we’ve put together some friendly tips. These points are meant to support meaningful discussions about inclusion and fairness, and to help you connect with others on this important issue.

The ongoing debates around gender and sports are about more than just who gets to play—they touch on the fundamental rights of all people to live authentically and with dignity. As advocates for bodily autonomy and human rights, it’s up to all of us to support transgender athletes and push back against efforts to police gender. We hope these points will help you have meaningful, values-based conversations about this issue in your own life.

- **Trans athletes have been participating in sports for decades**, and research shows their sex assigned at birth does not inherently advantage or disadvantage them in competition.
- **There’s no scientific evidence** that trans athletes, on average, are any bigger, stronger, or faster than the average cisgender athlete.
- **Avoid comparing men and women when discussing trans participation in sports.** Trans women are women and trans men are men. When trans women compete in women’s sports, there are no men competing.
- **Focus on the real challenges facing women’s sports.** Racism, pay inequities, sexual abuse, and lack of athletic opportunities in schools are real issues. These challenges deserve our full attention, rather than distractions fueled by misinformation about trans athletes.
- **Sports are stronger when we prioritize equity and inclusion.** Transgender inclusion in sports has long been the standard in Minnesota. For almost a decade, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) has had a policy allowing transgender students to compete in sports—and they have, without issue. In fact, since the MSHSL adopted a formal policy permitting students to play on teams based on their gender identity, “girls’” participation rates in athletics have increased.

## Minnesota Lynx Honor Gender Justice

This summer, the Minnesota Lynx honored Gender Justice as their charity organization during the 2024 WNBA Commissioner’s Cup, an annual in-season tournament. By winning the Commissioner’s Cup Championship, the Lynx earned \$23,000 for Gender Justice!

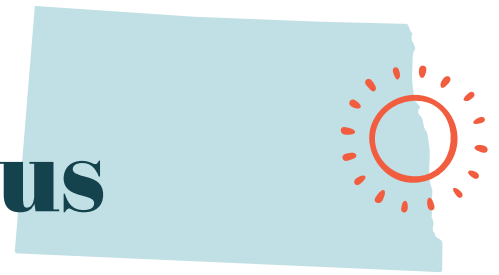
On July 14, the Lynx invited Gender Justice to an on-court recognition ceremony celebrating their victory. Gender Justice Board Chair Ann Tobin, Executive Director Megan Peterson, and Legal Director Jess Braverman took to the Target Center arena to accept a check as wide as the three of them! It was a thrill to participate and a golden opportunity to introduce so many WNBA fans to our work. Thanks again to our hometown champs for their commitment to gender equity! Thank you, Minnesota Lynx!





DEEPENING OUR IMPACT:

# North Dakota in Focus



As we expand our work in North Dakota, we're excited to spotlight Christina Sambor, our North Dakota State Director, whose leadership is crucial to our efforts in the Great Plains. In this interview, Christina updates us on the legal battles that your support is making possible against the state's restrictive abortion and trans health care bans, and how your donations to support Gender Justice's work in North Dakota can help to build progressive power in the state.



## Interview with Christina Sambor

North Dakota State Director, she/her/hers

### Can you tell us a bit about yourself and what drew you to join Gender Justice as the North Dakota state director?

Sure! I'm a mom to a spirited toddler, spouse, attorney, and creative. I'm also a late-diagnosed neurodivergent and a vocal advocate for awareness and compassion in that space. I was born and raised in Bismarck, attended University of North Dakota for college, and Pepperdine University for law school. After a brief stint in D.C., I returned to North Dakota in 2009 to practice law.

In 2014, I received a Bush Fellowship, which allowed me to focus on creative legal work, lobbying, and coalition building in the non-profit sector. During this time, I became acquainted with Gender Justice, an organization that helped a friend of mine who faced pregnancy discrimination. I was so impressed with their work that I knew I wanted to be a part of it and took every opportunity to support and collaborate with Gender Justice. It only took 10 years, but I finally joined the staff team!

### We've joined a lawsuit challenging North Dakota's extreme abortion ban. How is this case progressing?

We just won the case! The District Court issued an amazing order ruling that the ban is unconstitutional because it was so vague that it imperiled lifesaving health care, and because it infringed on North Dakotans' fundamental rights. The Court ruled that because the North Dakota Constitution protects the "pursuit of happiness" so to speak, that no restrictions should be placed on a person's right to reproductive autonomy prior to the point of viability. This decision means that abortion care is once again legal in North Dakota, bringing crucial, lifesaving care back to our communities. This win was made possible

through our joint efforts with the Center for Reproductive Rights and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.

While we're celebrating this recent win, the fight is far from over. North Dakota's Attorney General has already announced an intent to appeal the ruling. We also expect further attempts to restrict care, but we're ready to defend this victory and continue to protect the rights of pregnant North Dakotans. Additionally, the systemic damage caused by this extreme abortion ban won't disappear overnight. Rebuilding and increasing access to reproductive health will take time, resources and unwavering advocacy.

### We're fast approaching a trial in the *TD v. Wrigley* case. If we win, the state's ban on gender affirming care for trans youth will be overturned. Tell us more.

The law banning gender affirming care for minors in North Dakota interferes in private family decision-making and strips parents of their rights to get evidence-based care for their transgender children. When debated at the legislature, there was no evidence of harm presented. Rather, many families testified about the benefits of gender affirming care.

Importantly, this law was passed alongside numerous other anti-trans bills. The health care ban wasn't born out of an isolated concern for kids, but is part of a concerted effort to strip trans people in North Dakota of their rights and ability to exist.

If you care about this fight, right now is a great time to pitch in with a gift to Gender Justice as we prepare for a fast-approaching trial where we will present the facts to the Court. A recent bright spot was the judge's recent



*The law [banning gender affirming care for minors in North Dakota] has had terrible consequences for our clients. Families in our case have reported significant emotional, psychological, and financial burdens associated with getting the care they need: missed school and work due to travel for care, anxiety over losing access to essential health services, and the fear of having to leave North Dakota. These laws make transgender people and those who love them feel unwelcome in our state."*

ruling that patients who started care before the ban's enactment could resume the care in state. The downside is the Court did not suspend the law in its entirety while the case progresses, so the law's chilling effect remains as providers are not resuming care due to concerns over the serious legal threats posed by the law.

**How do you envision creating a more favorable environment for LGBTQ people in the state?**

We simply have to do better in North Dakota. We need to center and celebrate the LGBTQ and Two-Spirit communities and organize allies. Trans people are here and always have been, and they are vibrant assets to our state. We see a real opportunity to shift the narrative by bringing people together. For example, our research reveals a striking gap between people's political views on transgender issues and their personal empathy, especially towards loved ones who are trans or have a trans family member.

This fall, your donations will also help us launch a targeted communications and organizing campaign to challenge harmful narratives, equip people to engage their communities and talk about these issues, and empower them to advocate with lawmakers. Together, we can build the power needed to confront discriminatory laws and foster a safer, more inclusive environment.



*Together, we can build the power needed to confront discriminatory laws and foster a safer, more inclusive environment."*

**What are Gender Justice's goals for the upcoming North Dakota legislative session, given it only happens every two years?**

We want to use your support to up our organizing game. Narrow and prejudiced viewpoints are horribly over-represented in our legislature, and we need diverse North Dakotans to remind elected officials they work for everyone in the state. We aim to represent a hopeful and aspirational vision of North Dakota. Progressive issues have been on the defense for too long; it's time for North Dakotans to take their power back.



**How can supporters from North Dakota and beyond help protect reproductive rights and ensure transgender and nonbinary people can live authentically?**

I would really like all of our supporters to consider signing up as a monthly recurring donor. Give what's comfortable and meaningful to you, but commit to the fight for gender equity in North Dakota for the long haul. Let Gender Justice know you're glad we're tackling red state work. We're stronger by working together regionally and nationally for gender equity, especially in the current legal landscape of "returning the power to the states."



Learn more and get involved at: [genderjustice.us/northdakota](https://genderjustice.us/northdakota)

# GENDER JUSTICE BRUNCH

## Join Us

**Sunday, December 8 | The Depot Minneapolis**

Join lawyers, activists, elected officials, community leaders, influencers, students, and other champions of gender equity for the 2024 Gender Justice Brunch on Sunday, December 8 at The Depot Minneapolis.

The event will feature networking, games, performances, and a thought-provoking conversation between Joy Parker, midwife and J.D. and Dr. Gretchen Sisson, author of *Relinquished: The Politics of Adoption and the Privilege of American Motherhood*. They will explore the cultural and political considerations of adoption within the reproductive justice landscape. CLE (Continuing Legal Education) credit is available.

Tables and tickets are on sale now. Last year's event sold out in advance, so be sure to reserve your spot today!

**To purchase tickets and learn more, visit:**  
[www.genderjustice.us/brunch](http://www.genderjustice.us/brunch)



Dr. Gretchen Sisson



Joy Parker, J.D.

## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING GENDER EQUITY

Align your business, organization, or law firm with Gender Justice by becoming a sponsor for this event.

### Justice Partners



CONTRERAS EDIN LAW, PA

**Fredrikson**



**The Jacobson Law Group**  
Advocates · Advisors · Attorneys

**Taft/**

### Justice Leaders

Centro De Trabajadores Unidos  
En La Lucha  
Dorsey & Whitney LLP  
Lockridge Grindal Nauen PLLP  
Moss & Barnett  
O'Connell Consulting  
Pro Choice Minnesota  
ROYA llc

### Justice Defenders

Annex Teen Clinic  
Ciresi Conlin LLP  
Decoro Law  
Flourish Wealth Management  
Maslon LLP  
Michael Anderson Consulting  
OutFront Minnesota  
Robins Kaplan LLP  
Saul Ewing LLP  
Vote Run Lead Action  
Wanta Thome PLC

### Justice Advocates

Altmann Law  
Family Tree Clinic  
Mundahl Law, PLLC  
Our Justice  
Seven Corners Printing  
Summra Shariff

Contact [development@genderjustice.us](mailto:development@genderjustice.us) with questions regarding tickets, tables, and sponsorships.



# HOW YOU CAN MAKE THE BIGGEST POSSIBLE IMPACT

As attacks on reproductive rights and LGBTQ equality escalate nationwide, you can contribute to winning historic victories on issues like abortion access and trans rights, setting groundbreaking legal precedents, and cultivating transformative movements.

## GIVE MONTHLY

Joining Gender Justice Action's monthly giving program makes the biggest possible impact by helping to sustain the fight for gender equity. On top of being the most effective way to give, giving monthly is also the simplest. Gender Justice Action processes your gift automatically each month, so you don't have to think about it.



## LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

You can leave a legacy that advances gender equity by including Gender Justice in your will. If you already have a will, you can add a charitable gift by reaching out to your attorney or financial planner and sharing this sentence: "I bequeath \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% of my estate to Gender Justice, 663 University Avenue W, Suite 200, Saint Paul, MN 55104. The federal tax ID# for Gender Justice is 80-0603630."

## GIVE STOCK

You can make a big difference in the fight for gender equity with a gift of stock. Ask your financial planner or contact [development@genderjustice.us](mailto:development@genderjustice.us) for more information on giving stock.

## MAKE A GIFT THROUGH YOUR DONOR ADVISED FUND

Giving through your donor advised fund is easy and impactful. You can find Gender Justice through our federal tax ID# 80-0603630.

## GET TAX BENEFITS BY GIVING THROUGH YOUR IRA

If you are managing required minimum distributions from an IRA, you can often receive tax benefits by making a charitable gift (called a Qualified Charitable Distribution) directly from your IRA. Reach out to your financial planner for more information, and let them know that Gender Justice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the EIN (tax-id) number 80-0603630.

**Our staff welcomes the opportunity to speak with you and learn more about your planned or legacy giving goals. Please contact:**

Michelle Hesterberg, Development Director  
(651) 400-7563 • [michelle.hesterberg@genderjustice.us](mailto:michelle.hesterberg@genderjustice.us)

You can also reach the Development Team at [development@genderjustice.us](mailto:development@genderjustice.us)

**Your generosity allows us to hold people and institutions accountable—and ensure human, civil, and constitutional rights for us all. Thank you!**

## Fueling the Movement: Thank You to Our Generous Donors

Alliance for Justice  
American Council of Learned Societies  
Armstrong Foundation  
Bush Foundation  
CHNGE  
Chizek Family Foundation  
Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity  
Digital Defense Fund  
Equality Federation  
Equal Justice America  
ERA Minnesota  
Ford Foundation  
First Universalist Foundation  
George Family Foundation  
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation  
Irving Harris Foundation  
iSpace Environments  
Lord + Heinlein  
MEB Charitable Foundation  
Medspira  
Minneapolis Foundation  
Minnesota Lynx  
Minnesota State Bar Foundation  
Movement Voter Project  
National Women's Law Center  
North Dakota Bar Foundation  
PFund Foundation  
Proteus Fund  
Ramsey County Bar Foundation  
Reproductive Health Accountability Action Fund  
Reproductive Health Initiative for Telehealth Equity & Solutions (RHITES)  
Ray Edwards Memorial Trust  
Smith Foundation  
State of MN Women's Economic Security Act  
Still Ain't Satisfied, A Foundation With Attitude  
Studio BV  
Teal Media  
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund  
Wirtanen Family Fund of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation  
Women's Foundation of Minnesota  
Yield Giving

And 2,497 more organizations, businesses and individuals who give to Gender Justice and Gender Justice Action, like you!

# Stepping Up to the Challenge

In a year marked by relentless attacks on bodily autonomy, abortion access, and transgender rights—especially the rights of transgender children—Gender Justice is stepping up to the challenge, thanks to you.

Your support has enabled us to meet the increasing demand for our expertise on reproductive freedom, trans and LGBQ rights, and freedom from gender-based violence.

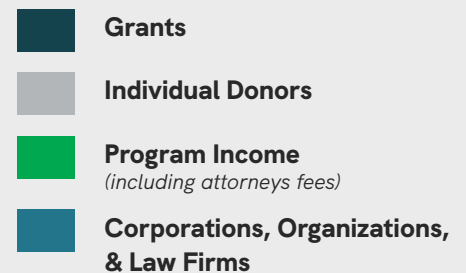
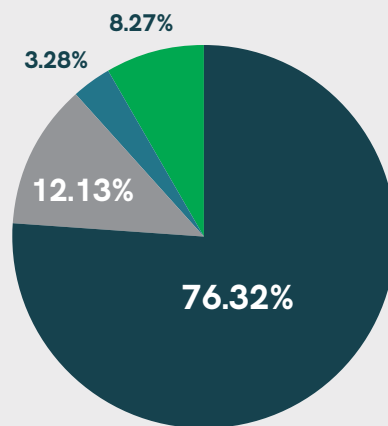
Over the past few years, with your help, our budget and staffing have tripled, allowing us to expand our team in critical ways and fortifying our ability to respond to the urgent needs of our time. Your contributions have been the cornerstone of this growth. Because of you, our legal

team has doubled in size, ensuring we have the capacity to tackle more cases and provide the expert analysis and advocacy that are desperately needed. You've empowered us to scale our operations, bringing on essential staff who keep our organization running smoothly as we take on new and more complex challenges.

But we haven't stopped there. Fueled by the passion and commitment of supporters like you, we've embraced new challenges head-on, creating Gender Justice Action—our powerful new political arm that equips us with more tools to engage in elections and fight for the future we all deserve. We've also launched a bold campaign to advance transgender rights in North Dakota, because even in the face of adversity, we are not going to leave anyone in any state behind.

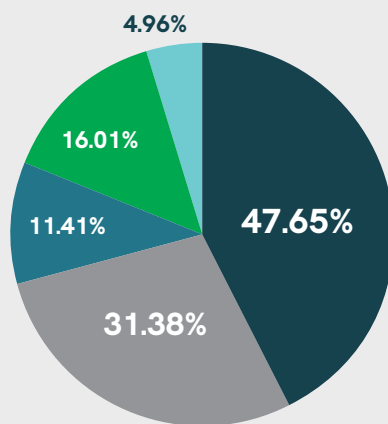
## FY23 Gender Justice Revenue - 501(c)3

Revenue includes gifts that were pledged in FY23 for work in future years.



**TOTAL: \$3,089,227.09**

## FY23 Gender Justice Expenses - 501(c)3



**TOTAL: \$3,525,714.14**

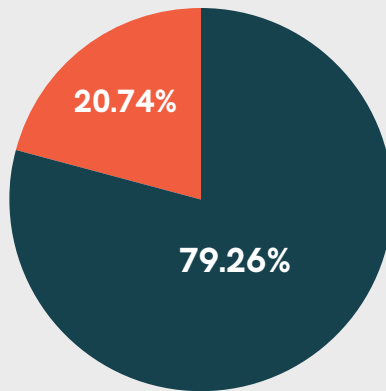


This year, as we reflect on our progress, one thing is clear: our growth is a testament to the trust and investment of our community. Thanks to you and all of the other donors, lawyers, staff, volunteers, and advocates who are part of our community, Gender Justice has established itself as a force to be reckoned with.

**From winning cases to transforming state law, you are part of a movement that is driving real change and securing lasting victories for gender justice.**

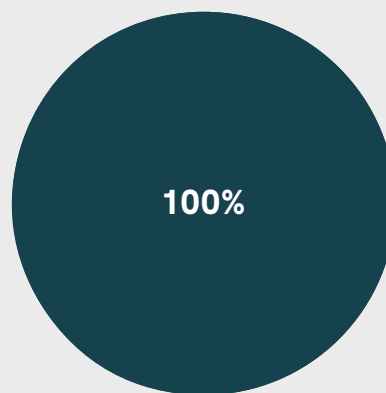
### FY24 Gender Justice Action Revenue - 501(c)4

Revenue includes gifts that were pledged in FY24 for work in future years.



■ Grants  
■ Individual Donors  
**TOTAL: \$350,503.05**

### FY24 Gender Justice Action Expenses - 501(c)4



■ Advocacy & Electoral  
**TOTAL: \$378,196.73**



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# Awards

## TEAM MEMBER ACCOLADES



### **Christina Sambor Honored as 2024 Super Lawyer**

Christina Sambor, North Dakota State Director at Gender Justice, was selected to Super Lawyers for 2024!

Being selected to Super Lawyers is limited to a small number of attorneys in each state. As one of the few attorneys to garner the distinction of Super Lawyers, Christina has earned the respect of peers as one of the top-rated attorneys in the nation. Gender Justice is incredibly fortunate to have Christina in our fight to advance gender equity in North Dakota.

Congratulations, Christina!

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# Fresh Faces

## WELCOMING NEW STAFF



### **McKinna Hodge** Legal Assistant/Paralegal | she / her / hers

McKinna Hodge joined Gender Justice after seven years at a patent law firm, where she supported over twenty attorneys and worked with over one hundred companies to help ensure their intellectual property gained a patent. While there, McKinna also gained experience in recruiting, training, and event planning. She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a double major in Psychology and Sociology of Law, Criminology, & Deviance and a minor in Sport Management. She is excited to begin her advocacy work! McKinna enjoys working at the Target Center, going to concerts, exploring the city, and hanging out with her dog.



### **Samantha Nagler** Equal Justice Works Fellow | she / her / hers

Samantha Nagler is an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Gender Justice, sponsored by Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. Her project focuses on promoting access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare by combating predatory Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Prior to joining Gender Justice, she served as a law clerk for Justice Peter J. Rubin at the Massachusetts Appeals Court.

Samantha attended Harvard Law School, where she graduated cum laude. She was an active member of the Alliance for Reproductive Justice and the Mississippi Delta Project's Reproductive Justice Initiative. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Psychology and Theatre from Northwestern University, graduating magna cum laude.



### **Alissa Light** Senior Advisor, Minnesotans for Equal Rights Campaign | she / her / hers

Alissa Light joined the Gender Justice Action team as a consultant in May 2024 and brings 20 years of experience in reproductive and LGBTQ healthcare, fundraising, organizational development, leadership and government relations. Alissa will help build out the Minnesotans for Equal Rights Campaign campaign infrastructure, recruit and develop the board and help to raise funds for a successful statewide ballot campaign.

Alissa received the Distinguished Citizen Award from Macalester College in 2023, was named one of TCB's Top 100 Minnesotans to Know in 2021, and won the Business of Pride award from Mpls/St. Paul Magazine in 2019 for her LGBTQIA+ health equity leadership. She was Executive Director of Family Tree Clinic (2010-2022) and President & CEO of The Bakken Museum (2022-2024).



## Staff

MEGAN PETERSON, Executive Director, she/hers  
 TANA HARGEST, Deputy Director, she/hers  
 ERIN MAYE QUADE, Special Projects Advisor, she/hers  
 JESS BRAVERMAN, Legal Director, all pronouns  
 CHRISTY HALL, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers  
 BRITTANY STEWART, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers  
 SARA JANE BALDWIN, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers  
 MCKINNA HODGE, Legal Assistant, she/her/hers  
 SAMANTHA NAGLER, Equal Justice Works Fellow, she/her/hers  
 CHRISTINA SAMBOR, North Dakota State Director, she/hers  
 MONICA MEYER, Political Director, she/hers and they/theirs  
 GRACE REARDON, Advocacy & Engagement Manager, she/hers  
 JAY BELSITO, Organizer, they/theirs  
 LISA GULYA, Research and Advocacy Specialist, they/theirs and she/hers  
 MICHELLE HESTERBERG, Development Director, she/hers  
 BETHANY WHITEHEAD, Senior Manager of Institutional Giving, she/hers  
 NOAH PARRISH, Communications Director, he/his  
 GABBI PIERCE, Communications Manager, she/hers  
 STACEY BURNS, Information Specialist, she/hers  
 REIKA YOKOOKA LUCENTE, Development Coordinator, she/hers  
 PAÓLA LOPEZ-CORTÉS, Executive Assistant, she/hers  
 PATRICK JONES, Director of Finance & Administration, he/his  
 HEIDI NYBROTEN, Senior Manager of Operations, they/theirs or she/hers  
 ATZÍN RAYAS FERNÁNDEZ, Operations Manager, they/theirs/elle  
 ALISSA LIGHT, Senior Advisor/Consultant, Minnesotans for Equal Rights Campaign, she/her/hers

## Board of Directors

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ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY THROUGH THE LAW



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[www.genderjustice.us](http://www.genderjustice.us)  
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## Listen and Subscribe to Our Podcast

Launched in 2023, The Gender Justice Brief delivers the latest case updates, legislative developments, expert analysis on Supreme Court cases, and conversations with leaders in the movement for gender equity.



The discussions are always informative and often entertaining — a great way to catch up on the issues that matter to you. Listen and subscribe, or download directly from [genderjustice.us/podcast](http://genderjustice.us/podcast)

Become a sponsor of The Gender Justice Brief and share your business with our engaged listeners. Reach out to [development@genderjustice.us](mailto:development@genderjustice.us) to learn more.



## You can advance gender equity. Give today.

Will you join us in the fight for gender equity? Your donation will help confront growing threats to gender equity, bodily autonomy, abortion access, contraception, trans students' rights, and gender-affirming care.



Join us today—your support makes all the difference.

