



1/14/2026

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chair
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington D.C. 20510

RE: Lambda Legal Opposes the Confirmation of Justin Olson for the District Court for the Southern District of Indiana

Dear Senator:

Lambda Legal urges you to oppose the nomination of Justin Olson for the District Court for the Southern District of Indiana. Founded in 1973, Lambda Legal is the oldest and largest national legal organization dedicated to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (“LGBTQ+”) people and everyone living with HIV, through impact litigation, policy advocacy, and public education.

Approximately 5.4% of Indiana’s population identifies as LGBTQ+. ¹ Consequently, the views of this nominee on the equal dignity of LGBTQ+ people and their families are highly relevant to whether LGBTQ+ people living in the state will receive fair and impartial justice if Mr. Olson is confirmed to the Southern District of Indiana.

After a comprehensive review of Mr. Olson’s record, we believe his views, particularly with respect to civil rights issues, reflect a deep hostility to the principles of equality, liberty, justice and dignity under the law for LGBTQ+ people. While the work of an advocate differs from that of a federal judge, Mr. Olson’s work makes clear that his animosity towards LGBTQ+ rights would impact how he judges cases. He is not qualified for a lifetime position on the federal courts.

In 2025, Mr. Olson became a member of the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), an organization that the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has identified as an anti-LGBTQ+

¹ Andrew R. Flores & Keith J. Conron, *Adult LGBT Population in the United States*, The Williams Institute (December 2023), available at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/adult-lgbt-pop-us/>.





hate group since 2016.² ADF believes that “government policy should reflect the truth about God’s created order: that biological differences between men and women matter, that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, and that children are best cared for by their moms and dads.”³ ADF promotes public policy and litigation that is consistent with their anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs.

In his current role as Counsel with Kroger Gardis & Regas LLP, Mr. Olson has established a practice which attacks the rights of transgender students across the country. In legal filings, Mr. Olson misgenders transgender people, calling transgender women “trans-identifying men” and “men.” At times, he also uses transgender students’ former names. This language and intentionally misnaming transgender people is offensive and dehumanizing to litigants, witnesses, and observers alike. Mr. Olson also seeks to ban transgender women and girls from access not only to athletics, but also from spaces like restrooms and locker rooms, where access consistent with their identity is essential to their health and safety. When asked, in writing, by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee whether he would condemn the extreme anti-transgender statements of one of his clients, he declined to comment. Mr. Olson’s message is clear- transgender people aren’t deserving of respect or a place in society. There is no reason to believe that Mr. Olson wouldn’t continue this pattern of disrespect and erasure if he were to serve as a judge for the Southern District of Indiana.

Additionally, Mr. Olson promotes anti-abortion laws that seek to establish fetal personhood. In law school, he wrote a journal article explaining why statutes that define a fetus as a person do not violate the Establishment Clause. The laws he championed impact the availability of and access to abortion care. His arguments completely disregard pregnant people who may need access to this health care.

Mr. Olson’s anti-LGBTQ+ and broader anti-civil rights agenda has no place on the federal courts. His work makes clear that he has a disregard for the lives of transgender people and pregnant people. He should not be given a lifetime position at the federal level to allow him to do even more damage to our civil rights. We urge you to vote against his confirmation.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional information throughout the confirmation process. You can reach us through Ethan Rice, Senior Attorney, erice@lambdalegal.org

Sincerely,

Lambda Legal

² Southern Poverty Law Center, *Alliance Defending Freedom*, <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/extremist-files/alliance-defending-freedom/>.

³ Alliance Defending Freedom, *Issues: Marriage & Family*, <https://adflegal.org/issues/marriage/>.

