Fighting for Justice, Equality, Fairness & Democracy

Alliance for Justice is a national association of over 100 organizations, representing a broad array of groups committed to progressive values and the creation of a fair, just, and free society.
With President Barack Obama’s second term underway, Alliance for Justice is working with renewed vigor for a fair, just, and free America. Without doubt, the country is engaged in a titanic battle over the future of our legal system, the legitimacy of democratic institutions, the concept of equal justice under law, and the ability of everyday Americans to actively participate in civic institutions. In this challenging high-stakes climate, Alliance for Justice is on the frontlines, drawing on over three decades of experience, expertise, relationships, and partnerships.

Bolstered by the collective power of over one hundred member organizations…

► AFJ strengthens the architecture of our democracy and fosters civic engagement by equipping an energized nonprofit community to advocate assertively for policies that foster social and economic justice, environmental action, reproductive rights, immigration reform, LGBT rights, and other vital national priorities through our Bolder Advocacy initiative.

► AFJ fights hard for the confirmation of a judge for every opening in the federal judiciary and the selection of nominees for the federal bench who reflect the full diversity of the legal profession, including those who have held positions in public service, the criminal defense bar, and public interest law.

► AFJ exposes the threat the Supreme Court’s radical conservative majority poses to the social, economic, and legal progress of the past 75 years. And, if the occasion arises, AFJ will actively advocate for the appointment of justices to the Supreme Court who have an unwavering commitment to the rights of everyday Americans and who will serve as effective counterweights to the extreme conservative forces that currently dominate the Court.

We invite you to join with us as we strive to promote our shared values of justice, equality, fairness, and democracy. Your involvement as advocate, partner, supporter, or activist is both sincerely welcomed and extraordinarily necessary.

Nan Aron
Alliance for Justice simultaneously serves as a leading progressive voice on matters related to the federal judiciary and as an unrivaled expert on the legal framework, importance, and assessment of nonprofit advocacy activities. But these two aspects of our work are really two sides of the same coin: an unwavering commitment to ensuring that everyone in our nation has an equal voice in every aspect of our democracy.

THE FIGHT TO ENSURE EQUAL JUSTICE

A cornerstone of American democracy is the notion that all members of our society should have the same expectation of justice along with equal access to the courts to secure it. Yet for over forty years, special interests have sought to control the legal system for their own ends. With an aggressive litigation strategy abetted by the current five-vote conservative majority on the Supreme Court, corporations have carved out special privileges for themselves. They have weakened the ability of everyday Americans to employ the courts either as individuals or united in class actions, and have substituted procedures, such as forced arbitration, that inherently favor corporate power.

In response, AFJ has sought to alter the national conversation about the courts and to create an environment that makes it more difficult for the federal judiciary to further tilt the balance away from long-held, hard-won notions of equal justice for all.

BUILDING A DIVERSE JUDICIARY COMMITTED TO EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Crucial to the protection of democratic principles is a judiciary that adheres to a balanced approach to the law, respects the rights of everyday Americans, and advances core constitutional values.

For that reason, AFJ devotes considerable attention to the judicial selection process, playing a central role in promoting diverse, progressive candidates for federal judgeships and opposing Republican obstruction of President Obama’s nominees to the federal bench.

The federal judiciary is in crisis, with too few judges to provide justice to the American people, a condition aggravated by relentless partisan attacks on the president’s nominees. Astonishingly, there were more vacancies on the federal bench at the end of President Obama’s first term than when he took office, leaving one branch of government understaffed and making it harder for Americans to stand up for their rights. AFJ’s advocacy efforts are buttressed by its role as the leading resource for objective information about the nominations process and a national reputation for high-quality research.

Bolder Advocacy’s expert staff trained close to 2,500 advocates from more than 1,500 nonprofits and foundations in the rules and laws governing advocacy. For example, we coached groups in Florida about their legal options for opposing a ballot measure limiting reproductive rights. This kind of technical assistance is designed to overcome misperceptions about the ability of groups to engage in advocacy and to encourage greater nonprofit participation in all aspects of our democratic system.

AFJ President Nan A. Aron appeared on MSNBC’s Up with Chris Hayes to discuss the Supreme Court, judicial nominations, and the progressive role in shaping the judiciary. AFJ is nationally known as the leading provider of information about judicial nominations. We help mobilize activists around the country to oppose the unprecedented level of obstruction in the United States Senate against President Obama’s nominees to the federal bench.

In 2012, AFJ generated over 54,000 emails to senators calling for an end to the incessant partisan obstruction that has led to a crisis in our courts.
ENCOURAGING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTHENING NONPROFIT ADVOCACY

Our democratic system depends on the active participation of the American people in policy and political debates, as individuals, or together with those who share their interests and values. Among the most important vehicles for civic engagement are nonprofit organizations, each of which is permitted by law to add its voice, in various ways, to public education about vital issues, legislative battles, or elections.

Through its Bolder Advocacy initiative, AFJ is the leading expert on ensuring an unfettered path to democratic participation for nonprofit organizations, and on ways to maximize the effectiveness of that advocacy. With misconceptions about how groups can legally engage in advocacy alarmingly common, AFJ’s goal is to help nonprofits, foundations, and other funding partners become smarter and more confident—bolder!—in their advocacy work. At the same time, AFJ encourages foundations and individual donors to be more effective in creating the lasting change they want to see in the world by supporting active advocacy programs among their grantees.

AFJ was an active participant in the production of a special issue of The Nation magazine (Oct. 8, 2012) which explored the 40-year effort by conservatives to create “The One Percent Court,” and the ways in which the current five-vote majority has assertively protected powerful interests. The magazine included an essay by AFJ President Nan Aron, “The Way Forward,” which spelled out a long-term strategy for progressive engagement in justice-related issues.

CHALLENGING THE SUPREME COURT TO PRESERVE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

A series of Supreme Court cases to be decided this year highlight threats to other core democratic values, including the right to vote and the right to marry. Shelby County v. Holder, dealing with the constitutionality of Section 5 of the landmark Voting Rights Act, and two cases related to same-sex marriage, Windsor v. United States and Hollingsworth v. Perry.

For AFJ, these cases, and others like them, are in and of themselves vitally important for the preservation of core rights under the Constitution, but they also provide an opportunity to foster a more robust understanding among the American people about the central role the courts play in shaping American life.

Also central to the functioning of our democracy are the concepts of transparency and accountability for public officials. No public servant is above the law or immune from public scrutiny, including the justices of the Supreme Court. AFJ will pursue its ongoing project to reform ethics rules governing the justices. This year we are renewing our call for Congress to require the Court to adopt the same code of conduct that governs all other federal judges.

Author, columnist Kenji Yoshino, an expert on ensuring an unfettered path to democratic participation for nonprofit organizations, and on ways to maximize the effectiveness of that advocacy. With misconceptions about how groups can legally engage in advocacy alarmingly common, AFJ’s goal is to help nonprofits, foundations, and other funding partners become smarter and more confident—bolder!—in their advocacy work. At the same time, AFJ encourages foundations and individual donors to be more effective in creating the lasting change they want to see in the world by supporting active advocacy programs among their grantees.
The Connection: Strategies for Creating and Operating 501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s, and Political Organizations and Influencing Public Policy in the Digital Age are among the definitive guides to nonprofit advocacy released by Bolder Advocacy in time for the 2012 election cycle. In addition, Bolder Advocacy's new online Advocacy Capacity Tool helps groups measure their readiness to engage in issue campaigns, influencing legislation, or other forms of advocacy.
How to Support Alliance for Justice

Alliance for Justice depends on the generous support of individuals like you, as well as foundations and organizations which value the ability of AFJ to fight successfully for the cause of justice and civic engagement. Please help us ensure that equal justice is afforded to all Americans by making a contribution to Alliance for Justice at www.afj.org. Alliance for Justice is a 501(c)(3) public charity and contributions are tax-deductible. For additional information on how you can support Alliance for Justice, please contact the Development Department at (202) 822-6070.