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# First Openly Transgender Lawyer to Argue at Supreme Court (1)

By Kimberly Strawbridge Robinson

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- ACLU's Chase Strangio will argue on behalf of minors and their families
- Tennessee one of 22 states that ban gender affirming care for minors

The ACLU's Chase Strangio will become the first openly transgender lawyer to argue at the US Supreme Court, making his high court debut on Dec. 4.

Strangio will argue on behalf of three Tennessee minors, their parents, and a doctor who challenge the state's ban on gender affirming care for minors. He'll share time with the Biden administration, which says the law violates equal protection.

Tennessee is one of 22 states that have passed similar bans in recent years, the Biden administration told the justices in its brief.

Strangio is the co-director of the American Civil Liberties Union's LGBTQ & HIV Project and "has been a leader in developing the legal strategy of the ACLU against waves of anti-transgender laws passed in state legislatures since 2016," the ACLU said in a statement Monday.

According to the ACLU, Strangio was part of the team that won the first trial against a ban in 2023.

In April of that year, the ACLU sued Tennessee on behalf of private plaintiffs, seeking to block the ban. The Biden administration intervened alongside.

The Supreme Court only agreed to hear the Biden administration's appeal of the case, but the government asked to share its time with the private plaintiffs.

"This Court's resolution of the question presented will determine whether the plaintiff adolescents have access to essential medical care in Tennessee and whether the plaintiff parents face the choice of relocating to a different State or forgoing essential medical care for their children," the Biden administration said in its request.

### LGBTQ Rights

Strangio graduated Grinnell College and earned a law degree from Northeastern University in 2010. He's been with the ACLU since 2013, where he's worked on some of the most important cases for LGBTQ rights. That includes the 2015 ruling recognizing the right to same-sex marriage, the challenge to President Trump's transgender military ban, and the 2020 ruling protecting transgender workers.

He also represented Chelsea Manning, the whistleblower who came out as transgender while in military custody, and Gavin Grimm, the transgender Virginia teen who sued to use the men's bathroom at school.

"Anyone who has worked with Chase knows the intelligence, compassion, and courage he brings to every fight for the rights and well-being of his plaintiffs," James Esseks, the co-director of the ACLU's LGBTQ & HIV Project, said in a statement.

In 2018, Strangio wrote on Medium about the trauma experienced by transgender individuals.

"It feels like worrying that someone will take your kid away from you because you are living your truth," he wrote. "It feels like anxiety that you will be fired, that you will be kicked out of school, that you will be abandoned, or hurt, or killed because of who you are."

The case is *United States v. Skrmetti*, U.S., No. 23-477.

**(Updates with details about Strangio.)**

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