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Supreme Court backs Trump efforts to limit lower courts that block his agenda

The high court did not rule on birthright citizenship.



President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte at the NATO summit in The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, June 25, 2025.
(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)



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The U.S. Supreme Court ruled, 6-3, Friday to limit federal judges' ability to issue [nationwide injunctions](#) and left open President Donald Trump's ability to end birthright citizenship.

The justices did not rule on the constitutionality of Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship, which is the executive order that the three national injunctions at the center of this case were attempting to block. The order cannot take effect until 30 days after the Friday opinion, the opinion states.

The decision was a major win for Trump, who has dealt with a series of nationwide injunctions that have blocked the effectiveness of his policies within his second term. In a Truth Social post Friday, Trump wrote, "the Birthright Citizenship Hoax has been, indirectly, hit hard."

Under this decision, the conservative justices ruled that the injunctions can only cover the parties with standing to sue, which could include states, advocacy groups and individuals.

"Traditionally, courts issued injunctions prohibiting executive officials from enforcing a challenged law or policy only against the plaintiffs in the lawsuit," Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who authored the majority opinion, wrote. "The injunctions before us today reflect a more recent development: district courts asserting the power to prohibit enforcement of a law or policy against anyone."

The justices argued that "These injunctions — known as "universal injunctions"— likely exceed the equitable authority that Congress has granted to federal courts."

The court granted the Trump administration's request for partial stays of the three universal preliminary injunctions attempting to block Trump's executive order ending birthright citizenship. The executive order attempts to not grant birthright citizenship when a person's mother was in the country without authority or on a temporary status and their father was not a citizen or a lawful permanent resident at the time of their birth.

The 14th amendment to the Constitution states: "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States." The amendment has been used to grant citizenship to essentially everyone born inside the United States, regardless of their parent's immigration status.

Trump, and other proponents of ending birthright citizenship, argue that this should not include parents who are not legal permanent residents. The executive order, which was issued on the first day of Trump's second term, would only apply to people born after Feb. 19.

Barrett wrote that the federal courts have the power to resolve cases and controversies, but do not exercise general oversight of the Executive Branch.

CASA and the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project, two immigrant advocacy groups, filed Friday for class action protection for all parents and children who could be impacted by Trump's executive order. Representatives of the organizations said in a press conference that they are awaiting a decision by a district judge in Maryland.

"We don't think this order should go into effect or will go into effect as to anyone, anywhere, ever, and it is our intention to continue to fight to make sure that doesn't happen," said William Powell, Senior Counsel at the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection at Georgetown University Law, at the press conference.

Members of CASA, members of the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project, and individual plaintiffs in the original case are still protected by the injunctions, Powell said.

The Supreme Court ruling comes after the Trump administration filed suit against all [federal judges in Maryland this week](#) over an order they issued to prevent deportations of people legally challenging their removals.

In a dissenting opinion Justice Sonia Sotomayor emphasized the historical legality of birthright citizenship.

"Every court to evaluate the Order has deemed it patently unconstitutional and, for that reason, has enjoined the Federal Government from enforcing it," Sotomayor wrote in a dissenting opinion, joined by fellow liberal justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson. "Undeterred, the Government now asks this Court to grant emergency relief, insisting it will suffer irreparable harm unless it can deprive at least some children born in the United States of citizenship."

The liberal justices further argue that the majority “disregards basic principles of equity as well as the long history of injunctive relief granted to non-parties.”

Trump is not the only president who’s policies have been blocked by nationwide injunctions, Democratic Presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama both dealt with these legal battles.

“If the Republican is in the White House, the Democratic Attorney Generals are going to be suing, and the other way around,” Carl Tobias, a law professor at The University of Richmond, told The Baltimore Sun. “Both political parties have used it depending on who’s in the White House.”

Tobias said this dynamic is unlikely to end do to this ruling, but that this will instead limit the number of people who can be covered by the injunctions. This could mean that people involved in the litigation could be covered, including possibly entire states, Tobias said, but attorney generals couldn’t say that they are “suing for the entire country anymore.”

Politicians have already begun to weigh in, including Baltimore County Democrat Rep. Johnny Olszewski.

“I sure hope that they’re prepared to move quickly then to take reviews with things that have national scale if that’s the case,” Olszewski told The Sun. “The challenge is, you’ve got so many things that fall in the same category of concern. So are you gonna have some courts that say, ‘This type of activity is okay here but not — it’s okay in Louisiana but not in Maryland?’”

Eastern Shore Rep. Andy Harris, the only Republican in the Maryland congressional delegation, on X (formerly Twitter) called the ruling a “huge win for the Constitution and for common sense,” and called the federal judges who issued the injunctions “activist judges”.