

The U.S. Supreme Court: Not Pro-Trump, Not Anti-Trump

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In recent months, the U.S. Supreme Court has issued a series of landmark decisions involving policies advanced by President Donald Trump. Predictably, these rulings have generated intense political debate. Supporters of the president have celebrated decisions that advance his policy objectives and criticized those that do not, while his opponents have done precisely the opposite. As a result, many commentators have been quick to label individual rulings—or even the Court itself—as either “pro-Trump” or “anti-Trump.”

Such characterizations, however, risk misunderstanding the constitutional role of the Supreme Court. Unlike the political branches of government, the Court’s responsibility is not to promote or obstruct the agenda of any president, political party, or ideological movement. Its constitutional duty is to interpret the Constitution, federal statutes, and established legal precedent, resolving disputes according to legal principles rather than political preferences. While individual justices inevitably bring different judicial philosophies to the bench—whether originalism, textualism, or a more evolutionary approach to constitutional interpretation—the legitimacy of the Court depends on its commitment to legal reasoning rather than partisan loyalty.

For that reason, the outcome of any particular case should not be viewed in isolation as evidence of political favoritism. A decision may coincide with the objectives of a Republican or Democratic administration simply because the law, as interpreted by the Court, supports that position.

In another case involving the same administration, the Court may reach the opposite conclusion because different constitutional provisions, statutes, or precedents govern the issue. Judicial consistency lies not in producing politically consistent outcomes, but in applying legal principles consistently across different cases.

The Court’s recent decisions illustrate this reality. It rejected President Trump’s attempt to end

birthright citizenship, reaffirming that the Fourteenth Amendment protects citizenship for nearly everyone born on American soil. At the same time, it expanded presidential authority to remove leaders of most independent federal agencies, while preserving the Federal Reserve’s distinctive institutional independence.

It declined to hear Trump’s appeal in the E. Jean Carroll case, leaving a substantial civil judgment against him in place, and upheld state authority to count timely mailed ballots received after Election Day. Conversely, it also upheld state laws restricting transgender women from participating in women’s sports, concluding that such measures do not violate either the Constitution or Title IX.

Viewed individually, each of these rulings has significant legal and political consequences. Viewed collectively, however, they reveal a more nuanced picture than the one often presented in public discourse.

The same Court has ruled in favor of President Trump on some of the most consequential questions before it while rejecting his position on others. This pattern suggests that the justices are not simply deciding cases according to partisan allegiance, but according to their interpretation of the law as applied to the facts and constitutional questions before them.

Reasonable people will continue to disagree with many of these decisions, and vigorous debate over constitutional interpretation is both inevitable and healthy in a democratic society. Yet disagreement with a ruling should not automatically lead to the conclusion that it is politically motivated.

The Supreme Court was designed to function as a judicial institution rather than a political one. Its decisions should therefore be evaluated first and foremost on the strength of their constitutional reasoning, legal analysis, and fidelity to precedent—not merely on whether they produce outcomes that favor or disadvantage a particular president or political movement.

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