



612 W. Main Street, #200
Madison, WI 53703

Phone: (608) 256-0827
www.lwwwi.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2021

Contact: Morgan Grunow, communications manager
mgrunow@lwwwi.org, 608-256-0827

Court Ruling Anniversary Serves as Important Reminder for Judicial Independence and Integrity

[MADISON, Wis.] - Six years ago today, the Supreme Court of the United States issued a powerful ruling to highlight the need to achieve and maintain integrity in our courts, leaving no room for interpretation for how judicial candidates can and should campaign for judicial office.

The case, [William-Yulee v. Florida Bar \(2015\)](#), centered around petitioner Lanell William-Yulee (Yulee), who mailed and posted an online letter soliciting financial contributions to her campaign for judicial office. The Florida Bar disciplined her for violating a Florida Bar Rule, but Yulee contended that the First Amendment protects a judicial candidate's right to personally solicit campaign funds in an election. The Florida Supreme Court upheld the disciplinary sanctions, concluding that rule is narrowly tailored to serve the State's compelling interest, which The United States Supreme Court later affirmed.

Writing for the majority in the 5-4 decision, Chief Justice John Roberts opined that "Judges are not politicians, even when they come to the bench by way of the ballot. A state's decision to elect its judiciary does not compel it to treat judicial candidates like campaigners for political office. A State may assure its people that judges will apply the law without fear or favor—and without having personally asked anyone for money."

The anniversary of this decision also falls on the People Powered Day of Action - a national day of advocacy in which Leagues and advocates around the country are collectively demanding a nonpartisan, transparent map-drawing process.

Debra Cronmiller, executive director for the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, states the coinciding of the day of action and the William-Yulee case serves as an important and necessary reminder.

"Chief Justice Roberts' opinion about judicial integrity is extremely relevant today as the redistricting maps for Wisconsin are drawn. Since litigation over the multiple maps that will be submitted is nearly inevitable, we all need to know that unlike politicians, our judges will apply the law without fear or favor and not be responsive to partisan concerns," Cronmiller said. "Our

judiciary system must provide a nonpartisan, non-gerrymandered transparent mapping process which will allow every vote in Wisconsin to count to restore confidence in our elections.”

Wisconsinites can take action today at <https://p2a.co/uRzaV08>.

###

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is a nonpartisan political organization that advocates for informed and active participation in government. There are 20 local Leagues throughout Wisconsin. More information at lwvwi.org.