



Maria Lanahan

President Trump nominated Maria Lanahan to serve as a Federal District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri on May 6, 2025.

Career¹

- Bachelor of Arts, Gonzaga University, 2009
- Juris Doctorate, University of Chicago, 2013
- Law Clerk, Hon. Brian K. Zahra, Michigan Supreme Court, 2013-2014
- Associate, Thompson Coburn LLP, 2014-2018
- Sr. Manager Litigation Counsel, Charter Communications, 2018-2020
- Law Clerk, Hon. Raymond Gruender, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, 2020-2021
- Principal Deputy Solicitor General, Missouri Attorney General's Office, 2021-present

Record on Reproductive Freedom

Access to Mifepristone

As Missouri's Principal Deputy Solicitor General, Lanahan has been instrumental in litigation aiming to roll back access to mifepristone, one of two pills typically used in medication abortion.

In 2022, an anti-abortion extremist group sued the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and demanded they either rescind the FDA's 2000 approval of mifepristone or, alternatively, reimpose medically unnecessary restrictions. The case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court after the district court judge – a known anti-abortion extremist, Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk – and a panel of Fifth Circuit judges ruled to roll back access to mifepristone. Anti-abortion attorneys general from Missouri, Idaho, and Kansas filed to intervene in the case, but were not parties to the issues before the Court. In June 2024, the Supreme Court ruled that the anti-abortion group did not have standing and sent the case back to the lower courts.

- Lanahan represented Missouri alongside the state's attorney general, solicitor general, and representatives from Idaho and Kansas in a request to intervene in the case, boldly alleging that the states had standing despite having no connection to the district where the case was filed.²
- Instead of identifying a valid connection to the Northern District of Texas, Missouri argued the state had standing because access to medication abortion resulted in fewer teen pregnancies in the state and thus the FDA's approval and protocols related to mifepristone access harmed Missouri financially.³

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- Lanahan also represented Missouri, Idaho, and Kansas in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in support of the anti-abortion group's baseless claims, throughout which she propagated medically and factually inaccurate anti-abortion disinformation.⁴

The anti-abortion group dropped its case in November 2024 after the Supreme Court ruled the group did not have standing.⁵ Then, in January 2025, Judge Kacsmayk took the extraordinary step of allowing the anti-abortion attorneys general from Missouri, Idaho, and Kansas to continue this baseless case despite the states' lack of connection to the Texas district where the case is being litigated and without the involvement of the group that initially brought the claim.⁶ The attorneys general are pushing the claims that the FDA must rescind approval of mifepristone, or in the alternative, severely restrict access to mifepristone by instating medically unnecessary restrictions.

- Since that time, Lanahan has continued to help lead Missouri's efforts to undermine access to mifepristone. She has not recused herself from this case since her nomination.⁷

Challenging Missouri's Reproductive Freedom Ballot Initiative

As Deputy Solicitor General, Lanahan challenged⁸ Missouri's "The Right to Reproductive Freedom Initiative" ballot, even after a majority of Missourians voted to enshrine reproductive freedom in the state's constitution in 2024.⁹

Opposition to Planned Parenthood

- In May 2020, the Missouri Department of Health unlawfully denied a license to Reproductive Health Services of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region, the last abortion clinic in Missouri. An administrative commission later determined that Missouri wrongly denied the license and ordered them to pay \$170,000 in fees.¹⁰ Lanahan led litigation to appeal that decision and prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving the compensation to which they were entitled.¹¹
- Lanahan defended Missouri's proposed legislation to prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving any state Medicaid funding.¹²

Record on Intersectional Commitments

LGBTQ+ Equality

- As Principal Deputy Solicitor General, Lanahan led litigation challenging Kansas City and Jackson County's decision to pass ordinances to ban harmful conversion therapy.¹³
- She also appealed a lower court decision in order to force two institutions that provide gender-affirming care for youth to produce private, HIPAA protected health records regarding the gender-affirming care it provided young patients.¹⁴

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- She challenged the right of LGBTQ+ plaintiffs in civil court to strike a juror that believed “homosexuality is a sin” for cause.¹⁵

Democracy and Voting Rights

- As Principal Deputy Solicitor General of Missouri, Lanahan defended the state in actions that disenfranchised the vote of minorities when she defended a Missouri redistricting map that effectively splits the vote of minority communities in the state.¹⁶

Immigration

- As Principal Deputy Solicitor General of Missouri, Lanahan has joined other states in challenging the Biden Administration’s program that allows nationals of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to safely and legally come to the United States.¹⁷

¹ Maria Lanahan, Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees, United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary (May 8, 2025).

² Motion of Mo., Idaho, and Kan. to Intervene, *U.S. Food and Drug Admin, et al., Petitioners, v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine, et al., Respondents*; No. 23-235, 23-236 (2024), https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/23/23-235/298312/20240122150358882_A.%202024-01-22%20-%20Alliance%20v.%20FDA%20-%20Motion%20to%20Intervene.pdf; Reply in Support of Motion to Intervene, No. 23-235, 23-236 (2024), https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/23/23-235/299912/20240206153029384_2024-02-6%20-%20Alliance%20v.%20FDA%20-%20Reply%20in%20Support%20of%20Motion%20to%20Intervene.pdf.

³ See Anna Spoerre, *Missouri AG in Abortion Pill Lawsuit Argues Fewer Teen Pregnancies Hurt State Financially*, Mo. Indep. (Oct. 22, 2024), <https://missouriindependent.com/2024/10/22/missouri-mifepristone-lawsuit-andrew-bailey-teen-pregnancy/#:~:text=Bailey%20made%20a%20similar%20argument,find%20online%20abortion%20medication%20providers>.

⁴ Brief of Mo., Idaho, and Kan. in Support of Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine, *U.S. Food and Drug Admin. v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine*, Nos. 23-235, 23-236 (2024), https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/23/23-235/301864/20240229125923158_1.%202024-02-29%20-%20FDA%20v.%20Alliance%20for%20Hippocratic%20Medicine%20-%20States%20amicus%20brief.pdf.

⁵ Brendan Pierson, *Anti-Abortion Groups Drop Challenge to Abortion Pill as GOP States Seek to Continue Case*, Reuters (Nov. 19, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/anti-abortion-groups-drop-challenge-abortion-pill-gop-states-continue-case-2024-11-19/>.

⁶ Motion for Leave to File Amended Complaint, *Mo. v. U.S. Food and Drug Admin.*, 2:22-CV-233-Z (N.D. Tex. 2025), <https://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/legaldocs/gkvlbeywevb/01162025abortion.pdf>.

⁷ Alanna Vagianos, *2 of Trump’s Court Picks Argued Abortion Pill ‘Starves The Baby To Death’ In Womb*, Huffpost (May 28, 2025), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/trump-court-picks-abortion-pill-starves-baby_n_68373610e4b04fb106c44a3a.

⁸ *Blackmon v. Missouri*, No. SC100786 (Mo. 2024).

⁹ See Anna Spoerre, *Missouri Voters Approve Amendment 3, Overturn State’s Abortion Ban*, Mo. Indep. (Nov. 5, 2024), <https://missouriindependent.com/2024/11/05/missouri-voters-overturn-states-near-total-abortion-ban/>.

¹⁰ See Crystal Thomas, *State Zeroes in on Care of 4 Patients in Planned Parenthood Abortion Licensing Dispute*, Kan. City Star (Oct. 20, 2019), <https://www.kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article236740208.html#storylink=cpy>.

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¹¹ See Tessa Weinberg, Missouri Health Agency Appeals Ruling Requiring it to Pay Planned Parenthood Legal Fees, Mo. Indep. (May 27, 2022), <https://missouriindependent.com/briefs/missouri-health-agency-appeals-ruling-requiring-it-to-pay-planned-parenthood-legal-fees/>.

¹² *Planned Parenthood of St. Louis Region v. Knodell*, 685 S.W.3d 377 (Mo. 2024).

¹³ *Bury v. City of Kansas City*, 4:25-cv-00084 (W.D. Mo. 2025), <https://ago.mo.gov/wp-content/uploads/KC-Counselors-Suit.pdf>.

¹⁴ Appellant's Brief, *The Washington University v. Bailey*, Case No. 222 - CC09640, Brief No. ED113034, 2025 WL 1181301 (Mo. App. E.D.) and Attorney General's Opening Cross-Appellant Brief, *Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri v. Bailey*, No. ED112842, 2024 WL 4766784 (Mo. App. E.D.). See Annalise Hanshaw, *Planned Parenthood Must Comply with Missouri AG Request for Patient Records, Court Rules*, Mo. Indep. (May 6, 2025), <https://missouriindependent.com/2025/05/06/planned-parenthood-must-comply-with-missouri-ag-request-for-patient-records-court-rules/>.

¹⁵ Appellant's Brief, *Finley v. Missouri Dep't Correction*, 662 S.W.3d 89 (Mo. App. W.D. 2022), No. WD84902, 2022 WL 3156497.

¹⁶ *Faatz v. Ashcroft*, 685 S.W.3d 388 (Mo. 2024).

¹⁷ *State of Texas et al. v. United States Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, No. 24- 40160 (5th Cir. 2024).