

The Forward Eagle

Compiled Weekly

“Let us endeavor mutually to enlighten one another.”

May 4, 2026

Vol IV Number 17

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Current Events

1.

On April 29, 2026, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Mullin v. Doe* (and the related case *Trump v. Miot*). These cases concern the Trump administration's attempt to revoke Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for thousands of immigrants from Haiti and Syria, focusing on whether or not federal courts can review decisions to end these humanitarian protections. The court is considering President Donald Trump's effort to end temporary protected status for Haitians. Justice Amy Coney Barrett has two adopted children from Haiti.

Looming over Supreme Court arguments Wednesday on President Donald Trump's efforts to end temporary immigration protections for Haitians is the question of how unsafe conditions are in Haiti, which has long suffered from violence and natural disasters.

One of the justices may have personal insight into that question.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett and her husband, Jesse, decided to adopt a child internationally in part because, as Barrett later recounted, “There were so many children in need.”

They settled on Haiti.

Vivian, then 14 months old, became Barrett's second child in 2005. John Peter, flown out of Haiti after the devastating 2010 earthquake, became her fourth oldest. Barrett's other kids, she has seven in all, are her biological children.

Now Barrett will join her fellow justices in deciding whether the Trump administration can remove temporary immigration protections for 353,000 Haitian migrants, all given temporary status because of the earthquake and its aftermath. The court will head oral arguments on Wednesday.

“Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere,” Barret said in a February 2019 talk at Notre Dame Law School. “And it's close enough to the United States that we could go as a family and be involved in Haiti as the children got older. So we chose Haiti.”

It can be risky to predict a justice's views of a case based on their life experiences. But some legal scholars argue that the role of justices' lived experience is often given too little weight by court watchers.

“She's a human being, and it's hard to imagine it not spilling over in some fashion,” said Neal Devins, a professor at William & Mary Law School. At the same time, he said, Barrett's connection to Haiti is likely to be just one of an array of factors playing into her thinking, including her allegiance to originalist legal interpretation and the conservative legal tradition from which she comes.

There are major differences in how Barrett's children and the Haitian migrants covered by TPS entered the United States and the laws governing international adoptions. Barrett's children, unlike the Haitian temporary protected status holders, are U.S. citizens.

The adoption process is long and painstaking, requiring bonding visits with children in their home countries, according to experts on international adoptions. They say

adoptive parents typically build a strong connection with their child's native country.

“I think she wants her legacy to be one of being a law-oriented justice,” said Devins, who knew Barrett when she was a professor at Notre Dame Law School. That said, he added, “she may appreciate this case differently.”

Justice Barrett in the past has spoken of the severe conditions her children endured in Haiti and the difficulties they faced.

Haitian migrants received temporary legal status to live and work in the U.S. after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake in 2010 left the country in ruins and made large parts of it unsafe. For many years, the U.S. government extended those protections as Haiti experienced rising levels of gang violence, disease and poverty. In June 2025, Kristi L. Noem, then the secretary of homeland security, moved to end those protections, saying the country was now safe for their return. Haitian migrants sued.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday weighed whether or not the Trump administration properly terminated temporary protections for Haitian (and Syrian) migrants. Its decision could ultimately determine the protected status of tens of thousands of migrants from a host of countries, including Venezuela and South Sudan. If the justices side with the Trump administration, those migrants could be deported to their home countries.

Trump's State Department has issued an advisory for Americans not to travel to Haiti, citing “widespread” kidnapping, “exchanges of gunfire with criminal gangs,” civil unrest and limited health care. The advice appears to conflict with Noem's claim that the country is now safe.

Barrett has insisted that she can separate her personal experiences, particularly her Catholic religious beliefs, from her legal reasoning.

Empathy and personal relationships still play a role. One 2015 study found that judges with at least one daughter were more likely to vote in a “feminist fashion” in women's rights cases than judges with only sons, evidence that personal relationships can affect how judges decide cases. The study found that the “daughters effect” was driven largely by Republican-appointed judges.

When she adopted Vivian at 14 months old, Barrett said, the baby girl was malnourished, and Barrett did not know whether she would ever be able to talk.

The adoption of her son, John Peter, almost did not happen. Barrett explained in the 2019 talk that the paperwork for him had “gone south” and that “mentally and emotionally, we had closed that door.” Then, in 2010, the earthquake struck Haiti, and Barrett received a call from her adoption agency. The State



Haiti and Dominican Republic

Department had lifted some paperwork requirements. Barrett and her husband then adopted John Peter.

Marlene Gail Noble, one of the Haiti-born plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case, also was adopted by an American couple.

Noble was born in Haiti and abandoned as an infant, according to court filings. In 1993, when she was 2, a faith-based organization brought her to the U.S. to give her medical treatment for spinal tuberculosis. After several foster care placements, when Noble was seven years old, she was adopted by a couple in Pennsylvania.

Although Noble was eligible to become a U.S. citizen upon her adoption, her parents did not submit the right paperwork, according to a brief her attorneys wrote to the Supreme Court. Now an adult, Noble works as a lab assistant and has received TPS to allow her to continue to live in the U.S.

To her, Haiti is a foreign place.

“Forcing me to return to Haiti would not only be devastating but it would also be dangerous and possibly deadly, particularly with my ongoing health issues,” Noble wrote in a sworn declaration. “I have no connections in Haiti, nor resources or direction as to where I would live or how I would survive.”

Word of the Week

refugee

[ref-yoo-jee, ref-yoo-jee] / ˌrɛf yuˈdʒi/

noun

1. a person who flees for refuge or safety, especially to a foreign country, as in time of political upheaval, war, etc.
2. (as a modifier) *a refugee camp, a refugee problem*

Origin: derived from the Latin *refugium*, re- (“back”) and *fugere* (“to flee,”) as in “*Tempus Fugit*.”

The Forward Eagle

is published weekly by the Column Press Co.,
NYC.

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