



# COURTHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

## Closing Arguments

*The week in Courthouse News.*

Friday, October 27, 2023

Welcome to the first edition of Closing Arguments, a weekly roundup of stories from courthouses across the country.

The week was more dramatic than usual at Donald Trump's NYC fraud trial. After Trump violated his gag order for a second time, Judge Arthur Engoron forced him to take the stand, found him not credible as a witness and [tacked on a \\$10,000 fine](#) to the \$5,000 the former president already owed for his first violation. [[Erik Uebelacker](#)]

Now in its the third week, the trial will determine the damages Trump and his businesses owe, since the judge [found him liable for inflating his financials](#) before proceedings even began. Trump's sons, Eric and Don Jr., also face charges. The Trumps are [expected to testify starting next week](#).

The gag order chaos in New York rippled into Washington, where prosecutors in the election interference trial [saw an opportunity to reinstate another order](#), which is currently on pause while Trump appeals it as vague and overly broad. Backing Trump in that fight is the ACLU, which filed an amicus brief this week. [[Ryan Knappenberger](#)]

And speaking of election interference, [trial in Washington got underway](#) for the five Capitol rioters accused of first breaching the police line on Jan. 6, 2021.

Keep reading for a whole lot more from Courthouse News.

— *Nina Pullano*

## Here's what else happened in court this week:



Dozens of states are suing Meta in federal and state court, saying the social media giant [designed Facebook and Instagram to get kids and teens addicted](#) to the platforms and contributed to soaring rates of teen depression. [[Natalie Hanson](#)]

» Disgraced cryptocurrency mogul Sam Bankman-Fried, who founded the collapsed crypto trading platform FTX, [took the stand Friday at his criminal fraud trial](#) in Manhattan. “I made a number of small mistakes and a number of large mistakes,” he told jurors. [[Josh Russell](#)]

» Georgia must [redraw its voting districts in time for the 2024 election](#) after a federal judge ruled the state's maps diluted the power of Black voters. We also saw the start of an Atlanta bench trial to decide whether a Texas-based "vote-monitoring" group [should be able to challenge voter eligibility](#) in the Peach State, as it did in the contentious 2021 U.S. Senate runoff. [[Kayla Goggin](#), [Megan Butler](#)]

» Google began its defense [nearly seven weeks into its landmark antitrust trial](#) in Washington, where it's accused of holding a monopoly over internet searches. Looking to dispel that notion Prabhakar Raghavan, a senior VP at Google, told the judge that kids on the internet are way more into TikTok and have dubbed the tech giant on trial "Grandpa Google," as in, "Grandpa Google knows the answers and will help you with homework. But when it comes to doing interesting things, they like to start elsewhere." [[Ryan Knappenberger](#)]

» At the Fifth Circuit, [Texas journalists lost their First Amendment challenge](#) to the state restrictions on flying drones to capture footage over private property, prisons, oil and gas drill sites and large sports venues. [[Cameron Langford](#)]



At the Fourth Circuit, New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson [faced off against a sports marketing firm](#) over whether the court can determine who's eligible to be a student-athlete — or if that's a decision for the NCAA alone. [[James Farrell](#)]

## **Top 8: This week's most-read stories**

*From across the Courthouse News website — including news from Capitol Hill, state legislative decisions and major research developments.*

- 1) Buried ancient city slowly emerges from Sicilian dirt**
- 2) Speaker Johnson ends GOP's leadership nightmare, but could signal bad dreams for House Dems**
- 3) Suspicious of Weisselberg's testimony, AG pushes for 'forensic examination' of Trump Org emails**
- 4) Attention shifts to Trump's kids as third week of fraud trial wraps up**
- 5) Pro-Trump troll sentenced to seven months over Election Day shenanigans**
- 6) The mess gumming up the Supreme Court's review of a Trump-era tax law**
- 7) Feds: Lawyer for Trump aide yields in Mar-a-Lago case ethics fight**
- 8) Trump told Michael Cohen to 'reverse-engineer' net worth statements: Testimony**



Played at the federal trial against a California dive boat captain accused of abandoning ship during a deadly fire, a [24-second iPhone video taken by one of 33 passengers who died](#) in the blaze showed the victims trapped in the smoke-filled, below-deck bunk room after Jerry Boylan, the captain, had already jumped overboard. [[Edvard Pettersson](#)]

## ICYMI: New cases and rulings on our radar

» **Coyote Valley Dam:** SAN FRANCISCO — A federal court in California [declined to order the Coyote Valley Dam to adjust its operations](#) in response to a lawsuit claiming the dam endangers salmonids in the area.

» **Not kosher:** BOSTON — The Rabbinical Council of Massachusetts [won its federal suit against a food supplier](#) that put the organization's kosher trademark on products that don't adhere to its certification, despite a cease-and-desist letter. The supplier owes the council \$593,000.

» **Sex doll defamation:** OMAHA, Neb. — The owner of a business that transports bodies to the morgue says a competitor defamed him by exaggerating details of a former employee's arrest to funeral directors and news outlets — including that the worker was [caught copulating with a sex doll](#) in a dead person's apartment.

## Sidebar — a podcast from Courthouse News



The fall 2023 Supreme Court term is here, and the justices are set up for another monumental round of ruling — including weighing in on whether more people should be allowed to own a firearm, the limits of trash-talking your mayor and (rather significantly) whether the government can function as it always has.

Sidebar's newest addition, Courthouse News' Supreme Court reporter Kelsey Reichmann, joined the team just in time to serve up a rundown of the cases you'll want to keep an eye on. It's SCOTUS v. America. [[Kelsey Reichmann](#) reports, [Kirk McDaniel](#) hosts]

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