

Seattle judge is second to indefinitely block Trump's birthright citizenship order

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A federal judge in Seattle on Thursday indefinitely blocked President Donald Trump's push to end birthright citizenship for children born to parents without legal immigration status, the second such ruling in as many days.

U.S. District Court Judge John Coughenour's nationwide preliminary injunction comes two weeks after he issued a temporary restraining order putting a 14-day stop to the Trump administration acting on its plans to revoke birthright citizenship.

"It has become ever more apparent that to our president the rule of law is but an impediment to his policy goals," Coughenour said Thursday. "In this courtroom, and under my watch, the rule of law is a bright beacon which I intend to follow."

The earlier order was the first in the nation blocking the executive order signed on Trump's first day in office. Thursday marked 14 days since Coughenour's initial ruling.

Coughenour's rulings stem from a lawsuit filed by Washington Attorney General Nick Brown and his counterparts in Oregon, Arizona and Illinois.

On Wednesday, in a case brought by two nonprofits that work with immigrants and five pregnant women, a federal judge in Maryland also blocked Trump's attempt to eliminate birthright citizenship.

A hearing on a preliminary injunction is set for Friday in another case filed by 18 states.

The injunctions will likely remain in effect until the case is resolved, unless a higher court overturns them. Attorneys assume the issue will eventually end up before the U.S. Supreme Court, where three Trump appointees sit.

At a court hearing last month, Coughenour chastised the Trump administration's attorney from the Department of Justice, calling the president's order "blatantly unconstitutional."

Since then, Coughenour has merged the states' case with one that three pregnant women in Washington without legal immigration status filed. Meanwhile, 18 Republican-led states, with the help of Pete Serrano, who ran unsuccessfully for Washington state attorney general last year, pushed the judge to let the president's order stand.

On Thursday, Coughenour, who Republican President Ronald Reagan nominated to the federal bench in 1981, noted "how impressive" the states' court filings have been, and commended Brown for his work.

Trump's executive action aims to end birthright citizenship for babies born to a mother and father who are not U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. The order was set to take effect Feb. 19.

In 2022, about 153,000 babies were born to two parents without legal immigration status across the country, including 4,000 in Washington, according to the state's lawsuit.

Meanwhile, these children are still subject to U.S. law and states need to provide them services, attorneys for Washington have argued. If they are no longer U.S. citizens, states will lose federal dollars for those services.

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution codified birthright citizenship in 1868, and legal precedent has upheld it since.

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