

# LA DEFENSA

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## **Supreme Court Overturn of Roe V. Wade Reinforces Vital Need to Build Power by Transforming LA County Judiciary and Scaling Nationally**

**Los Angeles (June 24, 2022)** – This morning the Supreme Court published a final opinion that confirmed May SCOTUS leak. The Court ruled that abortion is *not* a Constitutional right, signaling that the states will make decisions about the right to abortion for their constituents.

Within minutes, Eric Schmitt, Missouri’s Republican Attorney General, signed an opinion effectively ending abortions throughout Missouri. This swift blow to the reproductive freedoms of people who can give birth signals not only an attack on fundamental human rights, but is also grounded in the context of an austerity state. Child welfare, universal pregnancy and parental leave, food and housing security, universal public daycare, and fully funded public education have never been actualized. Instead, efforts to foster these protections are constantly under attack.

La Defensa’s work to foster judicial accountability and transform the judiciary at the local level are a direct answer to these attacks on fundamental human rights. La Defensa’s judicial accountability table, the resounding advancements of all four of [The Defenders of Justice](#) – progressive cis women judicial candidates – beyond the primary election and into the General Election, and La Defensa’s [RateMyJudge website](#) are all interventions against the judiciary’s opacity, racism, and misogyny.

**Ivette Alé-Ferlito, Co-Founder of La Defensa and Director of Policy and Advocacy at Dignity and Power Now** shares, “La Defensa’s commitment to transforming the judiciary at the local level is at its heart about defending human rights that traditionally [white male](#) and [prosecutor-dominated judiciaries](#) have tried to roll back. Progressives fight consistently to shift power in every other wing of government: the legislative and executive branches at local, state and federal levels. Yet, the judiciary has remained a branch of government with inordinate power and little scrutiny. La Defensa’s [Rate My Judge website](#), backing of the [Defenders of Justice](#), and judicial accountability power table are all interventions on this vexing problem. The right has used the judiciary to try to control communities when they can’t win electorally. In Los Angeles, progressives are building power by [dominating local elections](#) and transforming the judiciary in a way that should be a [model for national scale](#).”

**Eunisses Hernandez, Co-Founder of La Defensa and Los Angeles City Councilmember-Elect (District 1)**, shared, “We are building a pipeline of progressive judges that can advance to the highest levels of the bench, while simultaneously building a scoring system for the behaviors of previously-elected judges, and fostering public education about ways to take action to transform the judicial system – all meaningful interventions against the harms of the judiciary.”

Local judges have the power to divert people out of incarceration, including [pregnant people](#) and [people with mental health needs](#). They can also ensure access to reproductive healthcare in the jail system; and they can ensure that individuals who [simply cannot afford bail](#) are released and are able to access healthcare in their home community. Transforming the judiciary at the local level, and scaling these efforts nationally are vital to defending human rights and reproductive freedoms.

[Visit our site to hold judges accountable: RateMyJudge.LA](#)

[Learn more about the Defenders of Justice](#)

[Learn more about La Defensa](#)

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## **About La Defensa:**

La Defensa is leading a movement to decarcerate the largest jail population in the United States—the LA County jail system—by reducing the power and scope of the judiciary, law enforcement, and the legal injustice system. We do this by fighting for a fair and transparent pretrial process, state and local budgets that reflect our values, life-affirming alternatives to incarceration, narrative shift, gender justice, and judicial accountability.

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