The Colorado Health Foundation™

What the Supreme Court's Recent Decisions Could Mean for Colorado

Each year, the U.S. Supreme Court issues decisions that shape the legal landscape. While many cases receive attention across the country, their impacts on people's lives are often felt close to home—in our schools, workplaces, health systems, and communities.

At The Colorado Health Foundation, we recognize that health and well-being are shaped by more than the delivery of health care. Laws, policies, and legal precedents influence whether people experience a sense of belonging in their community and can participate fully in civic life. That is why we monitor certain Supreme Court decisions.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued many significant decisions in 2026. This summary highlights cases that may produce changes to the conditions shaping health and well-being in Colorado. Rather than examining each of the court's decisions in isolation, we analyze these cases through a lens of what it takes to build a healthier Colorado—one where everyone belongs and has a say.

A Colorado Where Everyone Belongs

Belonging is more than a feeling; it is foundational to health and well-being. When people have stability and are welcomed and supported by those around them, our communities become places where we can form strong relationships and contribute to civic life.

Several cases this term touched on issues that impact belonging, including those related to immigration and LGBTQ+ rights

Immigration

One of the year's most significant immigration decisions came in ***Trump v. Barbara***, where the Court reaffirmed the longstanding constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship. For Colorado, the immediate legal framework remains unchanged. Children born in the United States continue to be recognized as citizens, providing certainty for thousands of immigrant and mixed-status families. That stability reaches far beyond legal status. Citizenship influences access to education, public programs, civic participation, employment opportunities, and the confidence that families can continue building their lives and contributing fully to their communities.

In ***Mullin v. Al Otro Lado***, the Court held that individuals waiting outside the United States' borders have not yet "arrived" under federal immigration law and therefore are not entitled to asylum processing until they physically enter the country. The ruling gives the federal government greater authority over when asylum seekers may be processed at ports of entry.

Although the case centers on border operations, its effects may be felt in Colorado. If asylum processing becomes slower or more limited, people who later resettle here or are seeking to reunite with family in Colorado may spend longer periods in uncertain or temporary conditions. Prolonged displacement can affect physical and mental health, interrupt education and employment, and make it difficult for families to establish stable housing and build local connections. Colorado communities may also experience greater demand for legal services, health care, housing assistance, language access, and other supports that help people successfully rebuild their lives.

In a third immigration-related case, ***Mullin v. Doe*****,** the Court upheld the federal government's decision to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian and Syrian nationals while confirming broad executive authority over future TPS determinations. Thousands of TPS holders currently live and work in Colorado, contributing to local businesses, schools, neighborhoods, and the state's economy. Although the ruling directly affects only two nationalities, it reinforces the federal government's discretion over humanitarian protections, creating greater uncertainty for TPS holders from other countries.

In Colorado, that uncertainty can affect workforce stability, family security, and the organizations that support immigrant families. When families are unsure about their ability to remain in the communities they call home, it becomes harder to put down roots and build lasting relationships. In that way, this decision has implications not only for immigration policy, but also for the sense of belonging that helps individuals, families, and communities thrive.

LGBTQ+ Rights

In ***Chiles v. Salazar***, the Court sent Colorado's law prohibiting licensed mental health professionals from providing conversion therapy to minors back to the lower courts for further review. The law remains in effect, but the ruling subjects Colorado's protections—and similar laws nationwide—to heightened constitutional scrutiny. If those protections are ultimately struck down, the state could face renewed questions about regulating licensed mental health professionals and protecting access to evidence-based, affirming care for LGBTQ+ youth. More broadly, the case reflects an ongoing conversation about whether LGBTQ+ young people can expect learning and health care environments that affirm who they are. When young people experience affirmation, dignity, and support, they are more likely to develop the sense of belonging that contributes to their overall health and well-being.

The Court also decided ***West Virginia v. B.P.J.***, allowing existing state bans on transgender student athletes to remain in place without establishing a nationwide rule. The decision does not require Colorado to change its laws or policies, and the state retains the authority to continue following its own legal framework. Colorado currently has no such ban in place today, but ballot Initiative 109 will ask voters to decide whether to adopt this kind of policy in the November general election.

The case shapes a broader national conversation about inclusion and belonging in schools. Participation in school activities is about far more than athletic competition. It helps young people build friendships, develop confidence, strengthen their physical and mental well-being, and feel connected to peers. As states continue to take different approaches, the experiences of transgender students may vary significantly depending on where they live. In Colorado, the decision leaves room for policymakers, educators, and communities to continue shaping learning environments where every student has the opportunity to participate, contribute, and belong.

A Colorado Where Everyone Has a Say

Communities are stronger when people have meaningful opportunities to shape the decisions that affect their lives. Voting, fair representation in government institutions, and civic participation help determine whose voices are heard in the policymaking process and how public resources are invested in communities. When people can participate fully, they are better positioned to influence the policies that affect their health, opportunity, and well-being.

This term, the Court considered two cases with implications for civic participation.

In ***Louisiana v. Callais***, the Court addressed the role of race in congressional redistricting under the Voting Rights Act. Although the case originated in Louisiana, this ruling may influence how all states approach federal voting rights protections in future redistricting cycles.

The decision makes it more difficult to challenge congressional district maps under the Voting Rights Act when those maps reduce the voting strength of communities of color. As a result, states may have greater flexibility in drawing districts that affect which communities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives who reflect their experiences.

Redistricting determines how neighborhoods are grouped into legislative districts at the federal, state, and local level. This shapes political representation and, ultimately, public policy. As courts continue to define the boundaries of federal voting rights protections, the legal framework governing political representation will continue to evolve.

Because elected officials make decisions affecting housing, education, transportation, environmental quality, economic opportunity, and health care, changes to redistricting law may affect how effectively historically underrepresented communities can help shape the future of their communities.

The Court also upheld Mississippi's mail ballot receipt law in ***Watson v. Republican National Committee***. Colorado's election system operates differently, so the ruling does not directly change how ballots are counted in our state. However, it preserves states' flexibility to adopt policies that expand access to voting by mail if future circumstances require it. That flexibility can be particularly important during emergencies, natural disasters, or disruptions to mail service, helping ensure that older adults, rural residents, people with disabilities, and others who may face barriers to in-person voting can continue participating in elections.

These cases underscore a broader principle: healthy communities depend on people having meaningful opportunities to participate in the democratic process and help shape the public decisions that affect their lives.

Looking Ahead

Supreme Court decisions rarely transform communities overnight. Their effects often emerge gradually through future litigation, policymaking, administrative action, and the everyday decisions of state and local governments, schools, health systems, employers, and community organizations.

The Colorado Health Foundation will continue sharing information about legal and policy developments that have the potential to influence the conditions for health across our state. Understanding these decisions helps us better understand how the systems around us evolve and how we can continue working toward a Colorado where everyone belongs, everyone has a say, and everyone can thrive.

TYPE

Blog

POST DATE

Jul 2, 2026

BY

The Colorado Health Foundation