

ARIZONA REPUBLIC

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

azcentral.com

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

High court to hear birthright case

Ruling could have major effect on kids' citizenship

Daniel Gonzalez and Stephanie Murray
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

On April 30, 2025, Erika Mateo gave birth at a Tucson hospital days after the Border Patrol found the 24-year-old undocumented immigrant from Guatemala wandering, lost and eight months pregnant, in the southern Arizona desert after illegally crossing the border into the U.S. from Mexico.

Even though Mateo was in the U.S. il-

legally, her baby, whom she named Emily, was automatically granted U.S. citizenship under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

But Emily's citizenship could be stripped away under an executive order signed by President Donald Trump on Jan. 20, 2025, ending birthright citizenship.

Trump's executive order was paused after legal challenges. But on April 1, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the legality of that executive order.

Should the Supreme Court rule in Trump's favor, which legal experts say is unlikely, hundreds of thousands of children born in the United States to undoc-

umented parents, or parents who were in the United States temporarily, could have their citizenship revoked.

That's because Trump's executive order was slated to take effect 30 days after he signed it. The Supreme Court's ruling, expected sometime in June, would likely be retroactive to that date, Feb. 19, 2025.

"There are many" children like Emily, said Luis Campos, a Tucson lawyer who represented Mateo, whose story was documented by The Arizona Republic as well as other news outlets.

Emily was granted an Arizona birth certificate, and remains in the U.S. while her mother pursues an asylum claim in

immigration court in Tennessee, said Campos, who no longer represents her.

Regardless, the executive order says that even if states grant birth certificates purporting to grant citizenship, the federal government doesn't have to recognize those documents, Campos said.

Going forward, the Supreme Court's decision in the case could have major implications for children born to parents in Arizona and across the nation who are undocumented or living in the U.S. temporarily on student, work or tourist visas. The decision also could

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Gas prices above \$5 a gallon are displayed at an Exxon station near the U.S. Capitol on in Washington, DC, on March 31.

ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

Hegseth: Expect 'decisive' turn in war

Gas tops \$4 a gallon for 1st time in over 3 years

Michael Loria, Bart Jansen, Cybele Mayes-Osterman, Melissa Montoya and Rachel Barber
USA TODAY

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth on March 31 said the upcoming days in the war with Iran will be "decisive," as President Donald Trump demanded allies reopen the Strait of Hormuz themselves and average gas prices rose above \$4 a gallon.

Hegseth, speaking to reporters at the Pentagon, said the "primary effort" is diplomacy, but added the U.S. military will "negotiate with bombs" if necessary. He refused to rule out a potential ground operation.

"Our adversary right now thinks there are 15 different ways we can come at them with boots on the ground. And

guess what – there are," he said.

"If we needed to, we could execute those options," he said. "Or maybe we don't have to use them at all."

"The point is to be unpredictable," he added.

A day earlier, Trump threatened to walk away from the fight he started by targeting the country's electricity plants, oil infrastructure and "possibly all desalination plants" if peace talks fail and the Iranians do not agree to open the Strait of Hormuz.

About 20% of the global oil supply must pass through the vital waterway off the coast of Iran.

Iranian officials maintain that they are not involved in direct negotiations with Washington and vowed to "severely punish aggressors."

Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, tchair of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he couldn't discuss any specific targets but that the military carefully reviews the risk to civilians and legal considerations in selecting targets.

"As targets come before us, we run them through the same process that we always do and always strike lawful targets in accordance with the normal procedures that we use," Caine said.

Other countries should 'step up'

Trump also signaled that the United States might abandon its efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, telling allied countries to "start learning how to fight for yourself, the U.S.A. won't be there to help you anymore."

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ASU scientists deploy lasers

Mapping to help study shrinking snowpack

Shi En Kim
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

On the heels of a winter heat wave that left people wondering where spring went, a new study reveals that most of the winter snowpack in the White Mountains in eastern Arizona had melted by mid-March.

The results hold implications for water management of the Salt River system that supplies the 2.5 million people living in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

The fleeting and shrinking snowpacks across the West are the result of a warming climate, said Enrique Vivoni, director of the Center for Hydrologic Innovations at Arizona State University.

"There might be winters where there might be more precipitation, it's just not going to persist as a snowpack for as long as it has in the past," Vivoni said. This, in turn, will whittle stream flows.

The findings come out of the first aerial snowpack survey in Arizona. Researchers led by ASU used LiDAR technology – a technique involving the rapid-fire of laser pulses from the air – to measure the topography of the snow-covered terrain in the Upper Black River watershed in Arizona's White Mountains.

By mapping the overall snow depth in the entire basin, researchers can better estimate the annual quantity and timing of meltwater release that enters the Salt River system. Vivoni and other scientists hope to develop hydrological models for predicting snowmelt-driven stream flows, guiding downstream decisions on whether to store or release water from the Salt River's four reservoirs – Canyon, Saguaro, Apache and Roosevelt lakes – come spring.

What it means for the Salt River

Scientists monitor snowpacks using on-the-ground techniques, essentially by sticking a ruler in the snow and measuring the thickness. By contrast, aerial mapping tells a bigger story, providing the literal 30,000-foot view of the hydrological health of an entire watershed.

The LiDAR technique has already been deployed to measure snow conditions in alpine California and Colorado. Compared with other Western

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SKY HARBOR PROTEST 1B



Protesters march through the airport to rally against the presence of ICE on March 30. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

Conversion therapy ban ruling

The U.S. Supreme Court on March 31 said Colorado's ban on LGBTQ+ conversion therapy for young people infringes on the free speech rights of a Christian counselor. 3A

Fall-off-the-bone chicken

Dante Balarezo went from one to two and then three grills and was working from 2 a.m. to 7 p.m. Now, his small eatery in Chandler is thriving. 1D

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Volume 136 | No. 318
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