

# THE ACADIANA ADVOCATE

THEACADIANAADVOCATE.COM | SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026 \$2.00

## Ruling undermines Chevron verdict

### Justices' decision affects many cases against oil companies

BY MARK BALLARD  
Staff writer

WASHINGTON — A unanimous U.S. Supreme Court on Friday undermined a huge jury verdict from Plaquemines Parish that found oil giant Chevron responsible for tearing up the state's coastal marshes in search of fossil fuels. The 8-0 decision, written by Justice Clarence Thomas in Chevron

USA Inc. v. Plaquemines Parish, is a narrow ruling on a technical legal issue. It says an appeals court erred when it denied Chevron's request to move its case into federal courts, rather than decide the case in state district courts. The ruling has implications for many other Louisiana lawsuits that seek to make oil companies pay for alleged pollution and hastened erosion along the coastline.

Justice Samuel Alito, the ninth member of the high court, didn't participate because he owned stock in one of the energy companies. Thomas and the justices found that lower courts and the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals incorrectly interpreted the federal removal law. The case was returned to the 5th Circuit. The justices didn't look directly

at a \$745 million state district court jury verdict in Plaquemines Parish against Chevron USA. But the high court's new definitions for the federal removal law likely would require the case to be retried in federal district court. More broadly, the court's interpretation affects litigation across the nation arising against private companies that contracted with the federal government. The law

says those companies should be shielded from local bias for damage caused in local communities. Chevron praised the ruling. "As the Court recognized, the plaintiffs' claims are related to activities that Chevron and other energy companies performed under federal supervision during World War II. Those claims are flawed as a matter of both state law and federal law, and Chevron looks forward to litigating these cases

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## GROWING MARKET



STAFF PHOTOS BY LESLIE WESTBROOK

**ABOVE:** Carolyn Doerle Schumacher, center, daughter of Paul A. Doerle Sr., cuts the ribbon as she and other benefactors, park staff, stakeholders and guests attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday for the Paul A. Doerle Sr. Farmers Market Pavilion and b1Bank Backyard at Moncus Park in Lafayette. The pavilion will open to vendors and guests in May for the Lafayette Farmers and Artisans Market.

**RIGHT:** Schumacher speaks about her father during the ceremony.



## Community leaders question career center move

### Greater transparency sought from School Board

BY ASHLEY WHITE  
Staff writer

A group of community leaders, including the Lafayette Parish NAACP, said they are concerned about the Lafayette Parish school system's decision to move its Career Center.

The decision raises "urgent questions about equity, access and long-term investment in underserved communities," the community leaders said in a prepared statement.

"The proposed relocation of the career center appears to move critical workforce and technical education opportunities further away from the students who rely on them most," NACCP Lafayette Branch President Ravis Martinez said in a statement. "Accessibility — both geographic and practical — must remain a central priority in educational planning."

The Lafayette Parish School Board voted in March to take Comeaux High School offline at the end of the school year and rezone its nearly 700 students. The property would be repurposed as the Ovey Comeaux Workforce Innovation Academy, housing the district's career center, E.J. Sam Accelerated Academy and the athletic facilities would be used for the district's sports needs.

When the board voted on the decision, it argued it was necessary because enrollment has been declining at Comeaux High and the Career Center has a 450-student waitlist. Both are aging facilities in need of major repairs. The decision was met with pushback and criticism from the Comeaux community.

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## Strait of Hormuz opens; U.S. blockade of Iran remains

### Trump says Tehran must reach a deal

BY KAREEM CHEHAYEB, AAMER MADHANI and ELENA BECATOROS  
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Iran said Friday it fully reopened the Strait of Hormuz to commercial vessels, but U.S. President Donald Trump said the American blockade on Iranian ships and ports "will remain in

full force" until Tehran reaches a deal with the U.S., including on its nuclear program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted on X that the crucial waterway, through which about 20% of the world's oil is shipped, was now fully open to commercial vessels, as a 10-day truce between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon ap-

peared to hold. Araghchi said ships will use routes designated by the Islamic Republic in coordination with Iranian authorities, suggesting Iran planned to retain some level of control over the channel. It was not clear if vessels would have to pay tolls.

A data firm, Kpler, said movement through the strait remained confined to corridors requiring Iran's approval.

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Residents inspect damage Friday at the site of buildings destroyed in Israeli airstrikes in Jibchit, southern Lebanon, following a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO BY HASSAN AMMAR

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