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SSN Members Engage the Judiciary

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Beyond connecting directly with legislators, one crucial way to inform policy is via the judiciary. Over the last few months, two SSN members have taken the stand as expert witnesses in important cases. Their research proved critical to the final decisions issued by the courts.

Immigration law

BENJAMIN GONZALEZ O'BRIEN

San Diego State University



In Nevada, U.S. District Judge Miranda Du ruled that a nearly 70-year old section of law that makes it a felony to reenter the U.S. after being deported was enacted with discriminatory intent towards Latinos and is therefore unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause. Judge Du [drew heavily](#) on the research of Professor Benjamin Gonzalez O'Brien in her decision, noting that his testimony as an expert witness in the case showed that the 1952 Congress acknowledge the problematic racial aspects of the law, but chose to pass it without any further examination.

Abortion restrictions

DIANA ROMERO

CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy



In Indiana, a federal district court [permanently blocked](#) several long-standing abortion restrictions in the state. These include a ban on telemedicine consultations for women seeking abortion and a ban on second-trimester abortions outside hospitals or surgery centers. Serving as an expert for the plaintiffs in the case, Professor Diana Romero relayed her research on why low-income women face greater barriers accessing health care than others, findings which were consistent with the firsthand experiences reported by women seeking abortion services in Indiana.