

2026 NAACA Conference

National Association of Appellate Court Attorneys



Providence, RI, July 28-31, 2026

UC Berkeley School of Law and the Berkeley
Judicial Institute co-sponsor NAACA

Berkeley Law

Berkeley
Judicial Institute

REGISTRATION, TUITION AND FEES

Conference tuition is \$450 for NAACA members and \$675 for non-members. There is a separate fee of \$75 for guests attending the social events (\$100 for families). The registration deadline is July 6, 2026. The registration form can be found on the NAACA website, www.naacasonline.org where payment can be made via PayPal, or you may send a check payable to NAACA (Fed. Tax ID No. 42-1676557) to NAACA, P.O. Box 2154, Mechanicsville, VA, 23116. Courts wishing to pay by EFT should email NAACA's Executive Directors at naacaexecutivedirectors@gmail.com to make arrangements.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Included in your conference tuition are three social events for members and two for non-members: (1) the opening reception on Tuesday, July 28 in the South County Room at the Omni Providence Hotel following registration; (2) the T-shirt exchange/reception on Wednesday, July 29, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at a location TBD; and, (3) for NAACA members, the business lunch on Friday, July 31, at 12:45 p.m. at the hotel. For those unfamiliar with the T-shirt exchange, a NAACA tradition, attendees bring a T-shirt from their home state/city/town (or the host city) depicting an event (festival, special occasion, etc.). At the reception, you will pick a number (blindly, from a hat) and "swap" T-shirts with other participants for a set period of time (usually about 30 minutes). Your T-shirt will be displayed on your back for other participants to view. The lower the number, the better. For example, if you have #5, you can force a "swap" of your T-shirt with anyone who has #6 or higher. It's great fun and an excellent way to meet other conference attendees!

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

Attendees from any appellate court within the USCA 1st and 2nd Circuits (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Vermont) receive a 10% discount on tuition. Courts sending five or more attorneys also receive a 10% discount on tuition. The discounts cannot be combined.

SCHOLARSHIPS

For 2026, NAACA is offering four Branham Scholarships. Each scholarship covers the cost of conference tuition and the two evening social events. The scholarships are funded by the James L. Branham Scholarship Fund, which was established with a generous bequest from Jim Branham, a long time NAACA member who died in 2022.

Branham Scholarships are available to NAACA members and non-members, attendees at prior NAACA conferences and those who haven't attended a conference, so everyone is welcome to apply. The deadline for applications is June 1, 2026.

To apply, please email naacaexecutivedirectors@gmail.com with the subject line: 2026 NAACA Scholarship Application. Your email should include your name, court, email address, and phone number, and answer the following questions:

- (1) Have you attended a prior NAACA Conference? If so, in what year(s)?
- (2) What additional information, if any, would you like us to consider? (e.g., information about your court or personal finances, including whether your court is willing/able to cover any of your expenses; whether other members of your court will be attending this conference or have attended a prior conference; and how attendance might benefit you or your court.)

Applications will be kept confidential, and recipients will be notified by June 15, 2026.

MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in becoming a member of NAACA to take advantage of the lower tuition rate for NAACA members, please visit www.naacaonline.org or email NAACA's Executive Directors at naacaexecutivedirectors@gmail.com.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The conference is being held at the Omni Providence Hotel, 1 W. Exchange Street, Providence, RI, 02903. A block of rooms has been reserved until July 6, 2026. The room rate is \$154/night, plus taxes and fees. All reservations can be made online at: [Hotel Reservations for 2026 NAACA Conference](#) or by calling Omni's Central Reservation Line at 402.952.6646 and identifying yourself as being with NAACA to get the group rate. Conference rates extend three days before and after the end of the conference, based on availability. Reservations made after July 6, 2026, will depend on room availability.

AIRLINE AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Providence is serviced by the Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport (PVD) located 10 miles south of the hotel. The best option to travel between the airport and the hotel is using ride shares (Uber and Lyft) or taxis, about a 15-minute trip costing \$25-\$30. Another option is to fly into Logan International Airport (BOS) in Boston (more and less expensive flights) and drive to Providence, about a 1-2 hour trip (depending on traffic).

REFUND POLICY

All registration fees, less a \$50 fee to defray fixed conference expenses and processing costs, will be refunded for cancellations received on or before July 20, 2026. Refunds for cancellations received after that date will be at the discretion of NAACA. Refund requests must be made by emailing naacaexecutivedirectors@gmail.com no later than July 31, 2026.

WHAT TO PACK

Dress is casual. Weather in Providence in July tends to be pleasant with average high temperatures in the low 80's and average low temperatures in the mid-60's.

Some comments from attendees at recent NAACA Conferences:

"This was my first NAACA Conference and it was a career defining experience."

"I truly enjoyed the educational content and meeting fellow staff attorneys from around the country."

"Just overall amazing--the caliber of the speakers is overall great, and that is the biggest draw."

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Tuesday, July 28

- 4:00-5:00 **Conference Registration** – The Omni Providence Hotel
- 5:00-7:00 **Opening Reception** – South County Room, The Omni Providence Hotel

Wednesday, July 29

- 8:45-9:00 Welcome Remarks
- 9:00-10:15 **Power, Process, and the Polls - An Update on Election Law Issues**
Professor Justin Levitt, LMU Loyola Law School, Los Angeles
Prof. Justin Levitt discusses mid-district redistricting, political gerrymandering, the federal role in elections, and other timely issues involving election law.
- 10:15-10:30 **BREAK**
- 10:30-11:30 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**
- 1- Wow! Pow! What'd You Say? How to Make Your Oral Communication More Effective**
Professor Barbara Tannenbaum, Brown University
Staff attorneys tend to be excellent writers--it's what we do! But oral communication is often equally important in our professional work lives, as well as in our personal lives. From one of the leading voices in the field, learn how to develop your skills in public speaking and persuasive communications.
- 2- Why the Innocent Can't Get Out of Prison**
Professor Daniel Medwed, Harvard Law School & Northeastern University School of Law
An exploration of the procedural barriers preventing innocent prisoners from obtaining their exoneration.
- 11:30-11:45 **BREAK**
- 11:45-12:45 **After Their Separation, Are Church and State Getting Back Together Again?**
Professor Caroline Mala Corbin, University of Miami School of Law
Roger Williams founded Providence when he fled persecution from the religious authorities in Massachusetts. He came up with the radical idea that the Church and State should be separate. From his teachings to today, the notion of this separation has been elastic. It has stretched and twisted, but it has held. But what are the current trends and where does this concept stand today? Professor Corbin, an expert on the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment, will explore the answers to these questions.
- 12:45-2:15 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 2:15-3:45 **SCOTUS Criminal Law Review**
Professor Alexandra Natapoff, Harvard Law School
Professor Natapoff will review the criminal law cases decided by the Supreme Court in its 2025-26 Term.

3:45-4:00 **BREAK**

4:00-5:00 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

1- Rethinking Deference: Habeas Corpus, A Federal Perspective

Professor Daniel Harawa, NYU Law School

This session will examine whether federal habeas courts have drifted toward forms of deference to state courts that exceed what AEDPA's text and history require. It explores how doctrines of restraint may have evolved beyond AEDPA's drafters' intent, raising structural concerns about the federal judiciary's role in safeguarding constitutional rights. Drawing in part on the Supreme Court's recent recalibration of deference in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, the session invites attendees to reconsider whether current habeas practice reflects faithful statutory interpretation or an unwarranted expansion of judicial deference.

2- Habeas Corpus, A State Perspective

Jimmy A. Frazier, Chief Deputy Staff Attorney, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

The program will discuss what a state-court appellate attorney might want to know about federal habeas review.

Thursday, July 30

8:45-10:15 **Interplay of Federalism and State Constitutions**

Professor Marcus Gadson, University of North Carolina School of Law

The tension between the federal government and the states has been evident since the nation's founding. Some might say the relationship today is strained. Here to help us understand the current state of affairs and what's at stake in the interplay of federalism and states' autonomy is one of the nation's leading authorities on state constitutional law.

10:15-10:30 **BREAK**

10:30-11:30 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

1- Crossing Borders

Professor Kristina Campbell, Gonzaga University School of Law

Professor Campbell will discuss the pressing issues affecting immigration enforcement, including recent appellate decisions illuminating the federal government's shifting priorities.

2- High Standards, Healthy Striving: Addressing Perfectionism in the Appellate Courts

Dr. Tracey Meyers, Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

This session explores how perfectionism differs from healthy striving and why it thrives in high-performing legal environments. Participants will examine how perfectionistic thinking affects decision-making, leadership, and mental health, and will learn practical strategies drawn from self-compassion and cognitive-behavioral approaches. Attendees will leave with concrete tools to maintain rigorous professional standards while reducing unnecessary self-criticism and sustaining long-term effectiveness.

11:30-11:45 **BREAK**

11:45-12:45 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

1- Evolving Criminal Constitutional Procedure

Professor Kami Chavis, William & Mary Law School

From stop and frisk to jury selection strategy: analysis of constitutional issues affecting law enforcement and the promise of fair prosecutions.

2- Sustaining Justice: Empathy, Vicarious Trauma, and Resilience in the Appellate Courts

Dr. Tracey Meyers, Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

This session explores how empathy—essential to careful and principled legal work—can both enrich and tax those who serve the courts. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how stress affects the mind and body and will learn practical, evidence-based tools to support resilience. Through accessible strategies including mindfulness, somatic grounding, and breathing practices, attendees will leave with concrete approaches to sustain well-being while continuing to uphold the important work of justice.

12:45-2:15 **LUNCH BREAK – ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

1- Roundtable discussions for Supervisors

Participants will have an opportunity to discuss mutual trials and tribulations, and hopefully some solutions, with other supervisors

2- Roundtable discussions for Line Staff Attorneys

Participants will have an opportunity to discuss issues of common concern and share ideas on potential solutions.

2:15-3:45 **The History and Scope of Executive Power**

Professor Jed Shugerman, Boston University School of Law

The Roberts Court has been expanding presidential authority to its historic maximum. This presentation will examine the history and scope of executive power derived from English common law and Article II of the U.S. Constitution. The “unitary executive theory,” which argues that Article II gives the president broad implied powers, is approaching its political and doctrinal zenith. These developments have major implications for the president’s authority to remove agency officials, use of emergency powers, and the extent of the president’s control over the executive branch.

Friday, July 31

8:45-10:15 **SCOTUS Civil Law Review**

Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, UC Berkeley School of Law

Dean Chemerinsky presents his much-anticipated review of the important civil cases from the Supreme Court’s 2025-2026 Term. (This session will be presented virtually.)

10:15-10:30 **BREAK**

10:30-11:30 **The State of Free Speech in the United States**

Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, UC Berkeley School of Law

Free speech in the U.S. is being contested on multiple fronts — from government responses to dissent, campus speech battles, digital platform regulation, to how courts interpret First Amendment protections in the modern

era. Dean Chemerinsky will guide us through the maze. (This session will be presented virtually.)

11:30-11:45 **BREAK**

11:45-12:45 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

1- Wicked Smart Writing: Strategies to Improve Legal Writing Productivity that Defy Gravity

Professor Kathleen Elliott Vinson, Suffolk University Law School

In this session, you will explore how you approach the writing process. You will learn how to overcome common barriers to legal writing productivity. You will review practical techniques to use to increase your writing efficiency. Finally, you will learn how to harness your writing strengths.

2- Put Your Writing on the Stand: A Self-Editing Workshop to Help Make Your Writing Stronger Beyond Track Changes: Strategies for Effective Legal Writing Revision

Prof. Margaret Hahn-DuPont, Northeastern University School of Law

Good legal writing doesn't end with a complete draft — it begins there. The best legal writers put their own work on the stand: probing for gaps and weaknesses in analysis, demanding clarity and concision in expression. Through hands-on exercises, participants will develop practical self-editing skills that transform a solid first draft into a clear, compelling, and effective opinion — tools you can put to work immediately, whether you are new to chambers or a seasoned drafter.

12:45-1:00 **Preview of the 2027 NAACA Conference**

1:00-2:15 **LUNCH BREAK (NAACA BUSINESS LUNCH)**

2:15-3:15 **Reproductive Rights in the States: The Post-Dobbs Landscape**

Professor Reva Siegel, Yale Law School

Professor Siegel will consider the response to Dobbs in state legislatures and state courts in states that permit access to reproductive health services and those states that restrict or ban such access.

3:15-3:30 **BREAK**

3:30-5:00 **The Wired Lawyer: Hot Topics in Technology Competence and Professional Ethics?**

Professor Ashley London, Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University

Prof. Ashley London will focus on the hottest topics in legal tech today and break down the ethical rules and guidelines that underpin legal practice in the digital age. This presentation will cover the latest cases involving lawyers behaving badly when using generative AI tools, including *Cassata v Michael Macrina Architect, P.C.* (2026 NY Slip OP 26014), which lays out the most comprehensive analysis of the dangers of lawyers ignoring their ethical duties when using AI. It will also cover AI's impact on access to justice, and how AI-generated documents created for litigation in *U.S. v. Heppner*, case number 1:25-cr-00503, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, ended up not being covered by attorney-client privilege. The presentation will also outline and explain the ethics rules governing "lawfluencers" and the growing impact of deepfake technology in the law.