



INSTITUTE FOR
REFORMING GOVERNMENT

For Immediate Release:

July 23, 2026

Contact: press@reforminggovernment.org

IRG Court Watch Report: The Half-Crazy Wisconsin Supreme Court

Progressive majority picked its battles during consequential 2025-26 term

DELAFIELD, Wis. — The Institute for Reforming Government’s Court Watch released its review of the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s 2025-26 term on Thursday, July 23, 2026, examining how the Court’s progressive majority advanced its priorities selectively while attempting to follow the law in cases where text and precedent left little room for a different result.

The report provides an accessible analysis of 19 opinions issued during the term, with a closer look at 11 decisions affecting the rule of law, education, elections, government operations, property rights, businesses and civil liability.

[**READ THE REPORT**](#)

[**READ THE TWO PAGE SUMMARY**](#)

WHY IT MATTERS: The Court’s progressive majority did not drastically move to the left this term. Several unanimous or cross-ideological decisions closely followed statutory text and precedent, including rulings involving Wisconsin’s minority grant program, COVID-19 liability protections and the Wisconsin Consumer Act. However, in other key cases, the majority delivered progressive wins involving government power, election records and civil liability.

The report also examines the Court’s handling of Attorney General Josh Kaul’s authority over settlement funds, its unsuccessful attempt to rewrite judicial recusal rules and the legacy of Justice Rebecca Bradley as she prepares to leave the Court after more than a decade of service.

THE QUOTE:

“The Wisconsin Supreme Court’s progressive majority showed this term that it is willing to pick its battles, proceeding cautiously in some cases while using its power more aggressively in others,” said Jake Curtis, IRG General Counsel. “The biggest questions may still be ahead. With the Court’s membership changing and foundational principles of statutory interpretation

now in its sights, the next term could have lasting consequences for the balance of power in Wisconsin.”

WHAT’S NEXT: The Court is expected to confront several major issues during its 2026-27 term, including challenges to Wisconsin’s congressional district map and a potential reconsideration of *Kalal v. Dane County Circuit Court*, the landmark decision that made statutory text the starting point for interpreting Wisconsin law. The Court will also continue considering possible changes to judicial recusal rules.

The Court’s ideological balance will shift further when Justice Bradley departs on July 31 and Justice-elect Chris Taylor joins the Court, expanding its progressive majority.

The *2026 Term in Review* is available online [here](#).

###

The [Institute for Reforming Government](#) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that seeks to simplify government at every level by offering policy solutions to thought leaders in American government in the areas of tax reform, government inefficiency, and burdensome regulations.