



Supreme Court of Illinois

February 20, 2025

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT TO HEAR ORAL ARGUMENTS AT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ON MARCH 18

The Illinois Supreme Court will leave the Illinois Supreme Court Building in Springfield behind for a day and “ride the circuit” to hear oral arguments at Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale on March 18, 2025.

The Supreme Court will hear arguments in two cases starting at 10 a.m. (all guests are asked to be seated by 9:30 a.m.), on Tuesday, March 18, at the SIU Student Center, located at 1255 Lincoln Dr. in Carbondale. The cases before the court will be *People v. Hoffman* and *Hulsh v. Hulsh*.

“The Court is so excited to continue its tradition of Riding the Circuit at Southern Illinois University,” Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis said. “We thoroughly enjoy visiting different parts of the state and holding court in front of hundreds of students who are likely observing the work we do for the first time. It is important for these students to understand the court system and the role it plays in their lives.”

A limited number of seats are available for the public. Those wishing to attend are asked to RSVP at this [link](#) for a reserved seat by **March 12**. Those with a reserved seat are asked to arrive early as all guests should be seated by 9:30 a.m. for opening remarks. Backpacks and other large items or bags will not be allowed. A question-and-answer session will follow the oral arguments. A livestream of the event will be available [here](#).

“This is an extraordinary opportunity for our students and the broader Southern Illinois community to witness the Illinois Supreme Court in action,” said Angela Upchurch, Dean of the SIU Simmons Law School. “This experience provides students in our community with direct exposure to the judicial process, enhancing their education and inspiring future careers in law. We are honored to partner with the Illinois Supreme Court to bring this historic event to our campus.”

In *People v. Hoffman*, the defendant pleaded guilty to drug-induced homicide. The factual basis for the plea showed that the defendant sold heroin to the victim and that the victim’s death resulted from the ingestion of the heroin which was laced with other drugs. The trial court imposed the mandatory minimum sentence of six years’ imprisonment. Defendant had asked to be sentenced under a statute which permits a trial court to impose a sentence below the

mandatory minimum if certain conditions are met, including that “the offense involves the use or possession of drugs[.]” The trial court found this statute inapplicable to drug-induced homicide.

The appellate court vacated defendant’s sentence, finding that drug-induced homicide is an offense that “*involves* the use or possession of drugs.” Thus, the appellate court ordered the trial court to consider whether to impose a sentence below the mandatory minimum.

The State is appealing to the Illinois Supreme Court.

In *Hulsh v. Hulsh*, a father abducted his two children who were living with their mother in Slovakia and brought them to the Chicago area. A federal court ordered the father to return the children to the mother, and the mother was awarded attorney fees and costs she incurred to get the children back. The mother then sued the father’s mother and brother in Illinois for tortious interference with custodial rights. Specifically, the mother alleged that the father’s mother and brother directly participated in the abduction. The trial court dismissed the lawsuit, and the appellate court affirmed. The appellate court explained that Illinois does not recognize a cause of action for tortious interference with custodial rights and that it is the prerogative of the Illinois Supreme Court or the legislature to create such a cause of action.

The mother is appealing to the Illinois Supreme Court.

This program is sponsored by the Illinois Supreme Court, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, Southern Illinois University Carbondale and SIU Simmons Law School.

More information is available [here](#).

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: James Brunner, Public Information Officer of the Illinois Supreme Court at 217.208.3354 or jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov.)