

No. 26-_____

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

ISAAC FOSTER,

Petitioner,

-v.-

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO
THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1) violates the Second Amendment on its face or as applied to Petitioner because the federal government may not permanently disarm citizens whose prior felony convictions were for nonviolent offenses only.

PARTIES TO THE PROCEEDING

The parties and their stock tickers are:

Petitioner: Isaac Foster

Stock Ticker: N/A

Respondent: United States of America

Stock Ticker: N/A

RELATED PROCEEDINGS

There are no related proceedings.

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OPINIONS AND ORDERS BELOW

The Second Circuit's decision (Pet. App. 1a–3a) is unpublished but is available at 2026 WL 1815637. The district court's judgment (Pet. App. 6a–19a) is unpublished, as is the district court's order denying Petitioner's motion to dismiss the indictment (Pet. App. 4a–5a).

JURISDICTION

The Second Circuit issued its decision and entered judgment on June 24, 2026. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1254(1). The Second Circuit had jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1291. The district court had jurisdiction under 18 U.S.C. § 3231.

RELEVANT CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

U.S. Const. amend. II.

It shall be unlawful for any person—(1) who has been convicted in any court of, a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year ... to ship or transport in interstate or foreign commerce, or possess in or affecting commerce, any firearm or ammunition; or to receive any firearm or ammunition which has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1).

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

A. Introduction

This case presents an important constitutional question subject to an entrenched circuit split: whether, consistent with the Second Amendment, the federal government may permanently disarm a United States citizen based exclusively on prior felony convictions.

This split developed in the wake of the Court’s decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*, 597 U.S. 1 (2022). Following *Bruen*, and this Court’s subsequent decision in *United States v. Rahimi*, 602 U.S. 680 (2024), the Third Circuit holds that 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1)—which criminalizes firearm possession by anyone with any sort of prior felony conviction—cannot be constitutionally applied to an individual with only an old, nonviolent prior conviction. *See Range v. Att’y Gen. United States*, 124 F.4th 218, 222 (3d Cir. 2024) (en banc). The Fifth Circuit, for its part, holds that § 922(g)(1) is unconstitutional where a defendant’s predicate felony was not punished via permanent disarmament at the Founding. *United States v. Mitchell*, 160 F.4th 169, 193 (5th Cir. 2025), *cert. denied*, — S. Ct. —, 2026 WL 1855110 (U.S. June 29, 2026); *United States v. Cockerham*, 162 F.4th 500, 506 (5th Cir. 2025), *cert. denied*, — S.Ct. —, 2026 WL 1640866 (U.S. June 8, 2026).

The Sixth and Seventh Circuits also suggest that § 922(g)(1) is amenable to as-applied challenges. In the Sixth Circuit, “most applications of § 922(g)(1) are constitutional,” but the statute is susceptible to as-applied challenges by people whose “entire criminal record” shows that they are not “dangerous.” *United States v. Williams*, 113 F.4th 637, 657–58 (6th Cir. 2024). The Seventh Circuit similarly holds open the possibility of as-applied constitutional challenges. *See United States v. Seiwert*, 152 F.4th 854, 860–73 (7th Cir. 2025).

But other circuits hold the opposite. Last year, the Second Circuit ruled that § 922(g)(1) is constitutional as applied to all individuals with any sort of prior felony conviction. *See Zherka v. Bondi*, 140 F.4th 68, 95 (2d Cir. 2025), *cert. denied*, — S.Ct. —, 2026 WL 135708 (Jan. 20, 2026). The circuit refused to permit any “case-by-case, ‘as applied’ exceptions” to § 922(g)(1)’s prohibitions. *Id.* at 95–96.

The Second Circuit’s position aligns with that of the Fourth, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Circuits. *See United States v. Hunt*, 123 F.4th 697, 703-04 (4th Cir. 2024); *United States v. Jackson*, 110 F.4th 1120, 1125 (8th Cir. 2024); *United States v. Duarte*, 137 F.4th 743, 748 (9th Cir. 2025); *Vincent v. Bondi*, 127 F.4th 1263, 1266 (10th Cir. 2025); *United States v. Dubois*, 139 F.4th 887, 893 (11th Cir. 2025).

Thus, the circuits are hopelessly divided on § 922(g)(1)'s constitutionality following *Bruen*—and cannot agree on whether the statute is even amenable to as-applied challenges. The Court should resolve this split, and it should do so promptly: § 922(g)(1) is a commonly charged federal offense and the continued uncertainty as to that law's constitutionality is untenable.

Petitioner's case presents a good vehicle to decide this question. Petitioner's prior felony convictions were for offenses that do not justify permanent disarmament under the other circuits' tests—possessing drugs, committing grand larceny, and committing an assault when he was a juvenile—and he has fully preserved his challenge to § 922(g)(1)'s constitutionality.

B. Petitioner's Conviction and Appeal

Petitioner was charged with being a felon in possession of ammunition in violation of § 922(g)(1). Petitioner moved to dismiss the charge in the district court, arguing that § 922(g)(1) is unconstitutional under the Second Amendment both on its face and as applied to him. The district court rejected this argument. Pet. App. 4a–5a. Petitioner then pleaded guilty, pursuant to a plea agreement, to violating § 922(g)(1). He was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment, plus two years' supervised release. Pet. App. 6a–8a. Petitioner is currently incarcerated pursuant to the judgment.

Petitioner appealed his conviction to the Second Circuit, again arguing that § 922(g)(1) is unconstitutional on its face and as applied to him. After Petitioner filed his notice of appeal, the Second Circuit issued a precedential opinion in *Zherka*, 140 F.4th 68, holding that § 922(g)(1) is constitutional even as applied to people with prior convictions for nonviolent felonies. *Id.* at 93. Based on *Zherka*, the Second Circuit rejected Petitioner's claims and affirmed his § 922(g)(1) conviction. Pet. App. 1a–3a.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION

The Court should grant this petition for three reasons. First, the petition presents an important and recurring question concerning the constitutionality of a federal criminal statute, over which the circuits are hopelessly divided.

Second, this case is a good vehicle to address the question because the issue is cleanly presented and fully preserved.

Third, the Second Circuit's holding is wrong: § 922(g)(1) is unconstitutional under the Second Amendment. At the least, individual defendants with only stale, nonviolent prior convictions should be permitted to challenge the constitutionality of § 922(g)(1) as applied to them.

I. The circuits are hopelessly divided over the important and recurring question of § 922(g)(1)’s constitutionality.

The circuits are intractably divided over the constitutionality of § 922(g)(1), particularly as applied to people with nonviolent prior felony convictions. The circuits are also divided as to whether individuals may bring as-applied constitutional challenges to § 922(g)(1).

Sitting en banc, the Third Circuit applied this Court’s decisions in *Bruen* and *Rahimi* to hold that § 922(g)(1) cannot constitutionally bar gun possession by certain individuals with nonviolent criminal records. *See Range*, 124 F.4th 218. According to the Third Circuit, “*Bruen* abrogated our Second Amendment jurisprudence,” such that courts “no longer conduct means-end scrutiny”; individuals convicted of felonies “remain[] among ‘the people’” protected by the Second Amendment; and “the Government has not shown that the principles underlying the Nation’s historical tradition of firearms regulation support depriving” certain nonviolent felons of the “Second Amendment right to possess a firearm.” *Id.* at 222, 232. In *Range*, the Third Circuit specifically held that an individual with a prior conviction for felony food stamp fraud could not be constitutionally prevented from obtaining a firearm. *See id.* at 223.

The Fifth Circuit has also held, at least twice, that § 922(g)(1) is unconstitutional as applied to individual defendants. *Mitchell*, 160 F.4th at

193; *Cockerham*, 162 F.4th at 506. As the Fifth Circuit recognizes, the government must point to Founding-era laws that “share the same ‘how’” and “why” as § 922(g)(1): a historical analogue that imposes permanent, lifelong arms forfeiture as a penalty for a similar predicate offense. *Mitchell*, 160 F.4th at 190. It has thus found § 922(g)(1) unconstitutional as applied to an individual with a predicate conviction for possessing firearms as an unlawful controlled-substance user, *Mitchell*, 160 F.4th at 194. It has also found § 922(g)(1) unconstitutional as applied to a defendant with a predicate conviction for failing to pay child support. *Cockerham*, 162 F.4th at 505–07.

Likewise, the Sixth and Seventh Circuits have recognized the possibility of as-applied challenges to § 922(g)(1) for individuals with nonviolent prior felony convictions. The Sixth Circuit holds that “*Bruen* requires a history-and-tradition analysis” different from that previously employed by courts and that, under this analysis, there may be as-applied Second Amendment challenges to § 922(g)(1). *Williams*, 113 F.4th at 657–58. The circuit opined that “most applications of § 922(g)(1)” will be constitutional, but that “individuals could demonstrate that their particular possession of a weapon posed no danger to peace.” *Id.* at 657. Indeed, without the opportunity for such as-applied challenges, the Sixth Circuit ruled that § 922(g)(1) “would abridge non-dangerous felons’ Second Amendment rights.” *Id.* at 661.

The Seventh Circuit has also likewise recognized (or at least assumed) that defendants may mount as-applied constitutional challenges to § 922(g). *See Seiwert*, 152 F.4th at 860-73.

The Second, Fourth, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Circuits have all reached the opposite conclusion. According to these circuits, § 922(g)(1) is constitutional in all its applications—even as applied to an individual who has only nonviolent prior felony convictions and can establish that he is not dangerous. *See Zherka*, 140 F.4th at 95; *Hunt*, 123 F.4th at 703-04; *Jackson*, 110 F.4th at 1125; *Duarte*, 137 F.4th at 748; *Vincent*, 127 F.4th at 1266; *Dubois*, 139 F.4th at 893. These circuits do not allow any as-applied challenges based on the nature of an individual’s prior felony—or under any other circumstances.

* * *

In sum, following *Bruen* and *Rahimi*, at least ten circuits have addressed § 922(g)(1)’s constitutionality in precedential or en banc decisions, and the circuits remain divided. Four circuits allow as-applied challenges based on the defendant’s specific record and characteristics, while six circuits categorically reject such challenges. This split has proven intractable and should be resolved by this Court.

II. This case presents a good vehicle to address the issue.

This case provides a clean opportunity to resolve this circuit conflict. Petitioner preserved his constitutional challenge to § 922(g)(1) before the district court and the Second Circuit. With the exception of one stale assault conviction from when he was a juvenile, his prior convictions are all nonviolent, meaning that his case would have been resolved differently in the Third, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Circuits. And in rejecting his challenge, the Second Circuit explicitly relied on its recent (post-*Rahimi* and *Bruen*) precedential decision in *Zherka*. Pet. App. 1a–3a.

III. The Second Circuit’s decision is wrong.

Finally, the Court should grant this petition because the Second Circuit is wrong. For the reasons persuasively explained by the en banc Third Circuit in *Range* and the Fifth Circuit in *Mitchell*, § 922(g)(1) violates Petitioner’s Second Amendment rights: Petitioner is among “the people” protected by the Second Amendment, and the government cannot establish the necessary historical tradition of permanently disarming citizens like him, based solely on nonviolent prior convictions.

To start, American citizens with prior felony convictions, like Petitioner, are among “the people” protected by the Constitution—including the Second Amendment. The phrase “the people” appears several times in the Constitution, including in the First, Fourth, Ninth, and Tenth Amendments.

It “unambiguously refers to all members of the political community, not an unspecified subset.” *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 579 (2008). The phrase thus includes those previously convicted of a crime. *See, e.g., Range*, 124 F.4th at 226.

Therefore, for § 922(g)(1)’s restrictions on these citizens’ Second Amendment rights to be lawful, the government must provide evidence of analogous regulations from the Founding to show that § 922(g)(1) comports with our nation’s history and tradition of firearms regulation. *See Bruen*, 597 U.S. at 29. Here, however, the government cannot show a relevant Founding-era analogue as to either the “why” or the “how” of § 922(g)(1).

As to the “why,” there is no evidence of any significant Founding-era firearms restrictions on citizens who committed only nonviolent offenses, completed their sentences, and posed no ongoing danger to others. *See* Joseph G.S. Greenlee, *The Historical Justification for Prohibiting Dangerous Persons from Possessing Arms*, 20 WYO. L. REV. 249, 283 (2020). While the historical record suggests that dangerousness sometimes supported disarmament, conviction status alone did not connote dangerousness to the Founding generation. *See id.* At the Founding, “[p]eople considered dangerous lost their arms. But being a criminal had little to do with it.” *United States v. Jackson*, 85 F.4th 468, 472 (8th Cir. 2023) (Stras, J., dissenting from the denial of rehearing en banc) (surveying historical disarmament laws).

As to the “how,” the government cannot marshal Founding-era evidence of class-wide, lifetime bans on firearms possession merely because of conviction status. Bans based on felony convictions were an invention of the twentieth century. See C. Kevin Marshall, *Why Can’t Martha Stewart Have a Gun?*, 32 HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL’Y 695, 708 (2009). As then-Judge Barrett explained: “The best historical support for a legislative power to permanently dispossess all felons would be founding-era laws explicitly imposing—or explicitly authorizing the legislature to impose—such a ban. But at least thus far, scholars have not been able to identify any such laws.” *Kanter v. Barr*, 919 F.3d 437, 454 (7th Cir. 2019) (Barrett, J., dissenting).

Founding-era surety and forfeiture laws are not sufficiently analogous to § 922(g)(1) to survive Second Amendment scrutiny. Unlike § 922(g)(1), Founding-era surety laws at most temporarily deprived an owner of his arms if he was found to pose a unique danger to others. See *Bruen*, 597 U.S. at 55-59. By contrast, § 922(g)(1) imposes a permanent ban on a class-wide basis, without any specific finding of dangerousness.

“Founding-era laws that forfeited felons’ weapons or estates are not sufficient analogues either. Such laws often prescribed the forfeiture of the specific weapon used to commit a firearms-related offense without affecting the perpetrator’s right to keep and bear arms generally.” *Range*, 124 F.4th at

231. Thus, the government cannot identify a sufficient historical analogue to render § 922(g)(1) constitutional as applied to individuals like Petitioner.

CONCLUSION

The Court should grant this petition.

Respectfully submitted,

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