



Press Release

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ALASKA SUPREME COURT RELEASES OPINION IN CASE ARGUED AT SUPREME COURT LIVE EVENT AT LATRHOP HIGH SCHOOL **Supreme Court LIVE Event Fosters Understanding of the Justice System**

Anchorage, Alaska, March 8, 2024 – The Alaska Supreme Court has released its opinion in *State of Alaska v. John William McKelvey III*, S-17910. The case was argued at the Supreme Court Live Program held at Lathrop High School in Fairbanks, Alaska on November 22, 2022. A copy of the opinion is available [here](#).

The case, *State of Alaska v. John William McKelvey*, centered on aerial surveillance of private property. The Alaska State Troopers received a tip that McKelvey had a grow operation on his property located in rural Fairbanks. After flying over the property and taking pictures with a telephoto lens, the Troopers obtained a search warrant. The central issue in this case concerned the validity of the search warrant and whether the Troopers' use of aerial photography violates the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Alaska Constitution's rights to privacy and freedom from unreasonable searches.

Today, the State's highest court ruled that the Alaska Constitution protects Alaskans from law enforcement aerial surveillance by requiring a warrant prior to taking pictures of private property from the sky.

Background: [Supreme Court LIVE](#) brings Supreme Court oral arguments in actual cases to student audiences at Alaskan high schools. Designed to help students better understand the justice system, this unique learning opportunity debuted in 2010, and has brought cases to Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Palmer, Sitka, and Utqiagvik.

About the Alaska Court System: The mission of the [Alaska Court System](#) is to provide an accessible and impartial forum for the just resolution of all cases that come before it, and to decide such cases in accordance with the law, expeditiously and with integrity.