

The Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey condemns any attacks on the character or integrity of our judiciary.

Caldwell, NJ – January 13, 2023 – The Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey (AFBNJ) believes that an independent judiciary is the bedrock of our democracy and an absolute necessity to ensuring the public’s continued trust in the rule of law. Those principles are threatened whenever a member of our judiciary is personally attacked, harassed, or intimidated because of a decision that they have rendered.

That threat to our democracy and the rule of law is even greater when the attack comes from those in senior government positions. For that reason, every citizen, but particularly those of us that are members of the bar, have an obligation to condemn such attacks regardless of which government official or political party is behind them, and irrespective of which legal issue is in play.

To be sure, disagreement and criticism of a judge’s decision is to be expected, particularly on “hot button” issues. Criticism and zealous advocacy are often essential components to advocating for what the rule of law should be and what rights we should enjoy as citizens. Indeed, aside from advocacy, every citizen’s right of free speech allows them to criticize our rule of law and the decisions that judges are called upon to render.

But there is no circumstance or issue, no matter how important we believe it to be, that justifies personal attacks on the public servant jurist who has made the decision assigned to them. Unsubstantiated suggestions that the decision is predicated upon a judge’s political affiliation, or baseless attempts to undermine the judge’s integrity, are improper. In the end, whatever points are attempted to be gained by launching such attacks are far outweighed by the danger and threat they present to our judges, their families, and our American society as a whole. These actions have a domino effect and embolden others to lose respect for our judges, disregard the independence of our judiciary, and cast aside our rule of law.

In sum, political leaders, like any litigant, are allowed to criticize a decision and to call for changes in the law. They have every right to appeal and seek reversal. It is dangerous and unjustified, however, when they personally attack the character or integrity of our judges. Each of us has an obligation to ensure that our judges receive the respect and dignity necessary for them to carry out their constitutional obligations free from any threats or attacks.

About the Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey

Founded in 1971, the AFBNJ is the preeminent bar association for the federal court of New Jersey, launched by distinguished attorneys and leaders of the bar in recognition of the need for judges, attorneys in the private bar, and federal law enforcement attorneys to be able to work together. Now celebrating its 51st year, the AFBNJ is proud to be the voice of the federal bar in New Jersey, a district with distinguished judges and lawyers who freely and courteously share their views on matters of federal practice. For more information about the AFBNJ, visit <https://afbnj.org>.