

PRESS RELEASE



The International Academy of Trial Lawyers Issues Statement Condemning Attacks on the Independence of the Judiciary

President Criticizes Recent Assaults as Political Expedience, Base Racism

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—June 9, 2016—The International Academy of Trial Lawyers (the “Academy”) today issued a statement condemning attacks directed to the independence of the judiciary.

The statement was issued by Academy President Richard D. Burbidge on behalf of the Academy and its Fellows. An invitation-only body of 500 elite trial lawyers from the United States and 30 different countries, the Academy seeks to promote the administration of justice and defend the rule of law within the U.S. and internationally.

President Burbidge’s letter appears in full immediately below.

“The International Academy of Trial Lawyers unequivocally condemns attacks on the independence of the Judiciary on any basis or for any purpose. It is particularly offensive and intolerable when it takes the form of political expedience or base racism as has been the case in recent political expressions.

In America, the Rule of Law, for which so many have sacrificed, has as its foundation the independence and integrity of the Judicial Branch which protects fundamental rights and provides checks and balances against the constant force of political excesses and abuses. Thanks to our founders, America cherishes and must protect the independence of the Judicial branch. Judges, must be impartial and independent, and therefore cannot and should not address their decisions in a forum other than a court of law.

We recognize that honest political debate in the Executive and Legislative branches of government is a healthy exercise under our Constitution. However, when such debate becomes an attack designed to undermine the integrity of the Judicial branch, where independence is critical to protect the rights and privileges of every citizen, no one should be silent. If a party disagrees with a judge’s decision, the system which has existed for almost 250 years, provides an opportunity for review. No case that is filed in the Judicial branch of government should be decided anywhere else.

The International Academy of Trial Lawyers, is committed to Judicial Independence and the Rule of Law. On these principles, we have not and will not waiver.”

About the International Academy of Trial Lawyers

The Academy is an elite group of trial lawyers representing both sides of the Bar: plaintiffs' and defendants' counsel in civil litigation and prosecutors and defense lawyers in criminal cases. Fellowship in the Academy is by invitation only, and trial lawyers are invited to become Fellows only after an extremely careful vetting process that includes discreet inquiries of both judges and other trial lawyers of high standing. Fellows come from firms of all sizes, from international firms with thousands of lawyers to very small firms. While the majority of the Fellows come from the United States, the Academy also includes lawyers from more than 30 other countries.

The Academy's general purposes are to cultivate the science of jurisprudence, promote reforms in the law, facilitate the Administration of Justice, and elevate the standards of integrity, honor and courtesy in the legal profession.