



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS RESPONDS TO  
CRITICISMS CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF JOHN  
NORRIS TO THE FEDERAL COURT OF CANADA**

*Criticisms Seen as Unjustified, Unfair of His Role as a Defense Lawyer*

**NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA – MARCH 6, 2018** – The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of preeminent members of the Trial Bar from the United States and Canada and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in both countries. The College is dedicated to maintaining and improving the standards of trial practice, the administration of justice and the ethics of the legal profession. The College has long supported the independence of the Judiciary and respect for the courts in Canada and the United States; that independence is fundamental to our democratic societies.

The American College of Trial Lawyers considers the criticism that has been published over the past several days concerning the appointment of John Norris to the Federal Court of Canada unjustified and entirely misplaced. Those criticisms have been made on the basis that during the course of his long and distinguished career as a lawyer, Justice Norris represented people who were accused of serious crimes.

Criminal defense lawyers serve a critically important role in a free and democratic society. They are responsible to represent their clients resolutely and honorably within the limits of the law. This includes the duty to raise fearlessly every issue and argument available to defend their clients against allegations that must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt by the prosecution. Indeed, the vigorous representation by defense lawyers of people accused of crimes is one of the cornerstones of a fair and effective criminal justice system.

Justice Norris does not deserve to be criticized in any way for having discharged those important responsibilities. Nor does the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada deserve criticism for the appointment of Justice Norris to the bench, to the extent the criticism is directed to the advocacy Justice Norris has provided on behalf of his clients.

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