



American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers Issues Statement Opposing Attacks on Judges
Says Attacks Present a Threat to the Principle of Judicial Independence Enshrined in Our
Constitution and A Bedrock of our Democracy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2020

Newport Beach, CA – The American College of Trial Lawyers (The College) today issued a statement opposing attacks on judges, stating that such attacks are a direct threat to judicial independence.

Recently President Trump has issued public statements on Twitter regarding Federal Judge Amy Berman Jackson who on February 20, 2020 will sentence Roger Stone, following his conviction on seven counts of lying to investigators and witness tampering. In his statements, the President, referenced Judge Jackson's handling of cases against a former campaign manager and a former presidential candidate and, in addition, accused a juror in the Stone case of harboring "significant bias".

The statement was made by Douglas R Young, President of the American College of Trial Lawyers:

"The President's remarks have stirred many individuals to attack Judge Jackson. That is the predictable and dangerous consequence of statements from the Executive Branch that disparage a judge in personal terms. Such attacks present a threat to the principle of judicial independence enshrined in our Constitution and a bedrock of our democracy. Likewise, the President's assertion of bias by the jury member in the Stone trial exposes that individual to personal risks that have no place in our nation's reliance on citizen-jury service."

The American College of Trial Lawyers believes that the President has the right to disagree with a judicial opinion and to seek legal means to overturn it on appeal; but *ad hominem* and disparaging personal attacks on an individual judge are an affront to the fundamental principle of judicial independence that cannot be ignored. The College also believes that no President should interfere in a pending judicial proceeding, take actions or make statements that could reasonably be viewed as intimidating to a judge, or belittle any judge for his/her decision on sentencing. It is vital that all branches of our government respect the integrity of the judicial process.

The position of the American College of Trial Lawyers is documented in a white paper on [*The Need to Promote and Defend Fair and Impartial Courts, A Sequel to Judicial Independence: A Cornerstone of Democracy Which Must Be Defended*](#), which is available on the College website.

About The American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of the best of the trial bar from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in North America. Founded in 1950, the College is an invitation only fellowship. The College thoroughly investigates each nominee for admission and selects only those who have demonstrated the very highest standards of trial advocacy, ethical conduct, integrity, professionalism and collegiality. The College

maintains and seeks to improve the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics, and the administration of justice through education and public statements on important legal issues relating to its mission. The College strongly supports the independence of the judiciary, trial by jury, respect for the rule of law, access to justice, and fair and just representation of all parties to legal proceedings. Learn more at www.actl.com.

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