



American College of Trial Lawyers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Iowa State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers Opposes Attacks on Iowa State Judges and Justices

DES MOINES, IOWA (August 16, 2024) – The Iowa State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL) opposes attacks on individual judges and justices based upon recent opinions released.

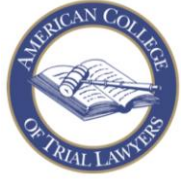
Just over a year ago, Bob Vander Plaats of the Family Leader made and encouraged impeachment threats against Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Christensen and Justices Waterman and Mansfield arising from their decision in *Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, et al, v. Reynolds*, No. 22-2036 (Iowa S.Ct. June 16, 2023). Fortunately for the people of Iowa, the effort did not succeed. The justices had released an opinion declining to remove an injunction preventing the enforcement of the fetal heartbeat bill.

More recently, Lea DeLong who is associated with the Iowans for Reproductive Freedom (which is not officially involved in the effort) penned a letter that was discussed within a Des Moines Register opinion piece headlined as **IOWANS ARE TALKING ABOUT FIRING JUDGES AGAIN. THEY MAKE A GOOD CASE**, August 9, 2024. DeLong makes the case for the removal of Iowa Supreme Court Justice David May because of his vote in a recent opinion – suggesting Justice May is ideologically out of touch with people in the state. The opinion upheld a 6-week abortion ban as constitutional.

Evidently, attacks on individual Iowa Supreme Court Justices are becoming more frequent. The attacks pay no attention to the arguments and legal analysis used in forming a decision, but rather are lodged due to disagreement with the result. Make no mistake, every Iowan has a right to disagree with a particular decision by the Court. When disagreement turns to threats, however, the judicial system and our democracy is at risk. To attempt to intimidate judges and justices to rule a certain way or face removal from their positions contradicts a vital element of our judicial system in Iowa – independent reasoning free from political pressures.

The Iowa State Committee of the American College of Trial of Lawyers, just as it did a year ago, opposes attacks on the state’s well-qualified, vetted, and dedicated judges and justices purely based upon the opinions released after hearing arguments, interpreting the legislature’s language, and assessing the constitutional protections afforded by the State. These last two circumstances, where pundits from both sides of the political aisle have individually targeted the justices, lend credence to the objective and non-political nature of Iowa Supreme Court. It is true that there are differences of opinion, both in the public and on the Iowa Supreme Court. Those differences, however, do not mandate removal from office. Judges must decide cases with faithfulness to the law, without fear or favor, and free from the influence of political storms or other external pressure.

The College has no ties to any political party or any partisan endeavors. Moreover, the views set forth in this letter are approved by the members of the Iowa State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers. The State Committee is comprised of Iowa lawyers who practice all over the State and who have different political, civil, and religious affiliations.



American College of Trial Lawyers

About the American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of preeminent members of the trial bar from the United States and Canada and is recognized as the leading trial lawyer's organization in both countries. 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 is dedicated to maintaining and seeking 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. For more information about the College, visit its website at www.actl.com.

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