



American College of Trial Lawyers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS ISSUES STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF
RESPONSE BY CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN ROBERTS TO REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
CONCERNING FEDERAL JUDICIARY**

Political Attack on Judges Poses a Direct Threat to Judicial Independence

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 21, 2018 – The American College of Trial Lawyers, a non-political organization composed of the leading trial lawyers in the United States and Canada—civil and criminal lawyers representing civil plaintiffs and defendants and criminal prosecutors and defense lawyers, of all political affiliations—today issues a statement in support of the response by Chief Justice John Roberts to remarks by President Trump criticizing “an Obama judge” referencing a federal district trial judge serving within the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals for the United States, for a decision that issued a temporary restraining order blocking the barring of migrants who illegally cross into the United States from seeking asylum. The College considers such an attack as a direct assault on judicial independence, the backbone of our constitutional democracy.

The statement was made by **Jeffrey S. Leon**, President of The American College of Trial Lawyers, on behalf of the College and its 5,900 Fellows. Leon said, “We applaud Chief Justice Roberts for stating that:

We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges, Bush judges or Clinton judges. What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their level best to do equal right to those appearing before them. That independent judiciary is something we should all be thankful for.

Leon further said, “The President used inappropriate language because he did not agree with this particular ruling. It is wrong for the Chief Executive of the Executive Branch to politicize a decision by the judiciary in this way. This undermines judicial independence which is the backbone of constitutional democracies everywhere. The President has the right to disagree with a judicial opinion and to seek legal means to overturn it on appeal; but such political characterization of judges is an affront to the fundamental principle of judicial independence that cannot be ignored.”

The position of the American College of Trial Lawyers is documented in a white paper on [*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 preeminent members of the Trial Bar from the United States and Canada and is recognized as the leading trial lawyers 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 profession. The College has long supported the independence of the Judiciary and respect for the courts in the United States and Canada; that independence is fundamental to democratic societies.

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