



American College of Trial Lawyers

PENNSYLVANIA STATE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS EXPRESSES OPPOSITION TO IMPEACHMENT EFFORT

A central pillar of our democracy is an independent judiciary. Judges must decide cases with faithfulness to the law, without “fear or favor” and free from the influence of political storms or other external pressures. Judicial independence requires not only respect for judges in their personal sphere, but also demands respect for their decisions. Courts are empowered by the Constitution to provide the final say on matters involving the interpretation of statutes and governmental action, and we must carefully guard against any intrusion on that power.

Resolution 1044 was recently introduced in the State Legislature to impeach Supreme Court Justice David Wecht based on decisions that he authored or joined on politically charged issues. While citizens are free to express disagreement with the decisions of a court, calls to impeach a judge based on his or her rulings strike at the foundation of judicial independence. The Pennsylvania State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers expresses its strong opposition to a recent attack on Justice David N. Wecht of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. When a jurist becomes the target of impeachment as the result of exercising his duty as a judge to decide cases, it erodes essential trust and respect for our system of justice. Judges discharge their sworn duty when they decide cases based on the facts and the law. It is an affront to all judges to predicate impeachment merely on a disagreement with their rulings.

The American College of Trial Lawyers is an international organization of trial lawyers whose mission includes strongly supporting judicial independence and defending the judiciary from attacks against their rulings. Since its founding in 1950, the College has recognized that the independence of the courts is essential to our system of government.

While in times of political upheaval, judgments by the courts may incite a strong reaction, the line of respectful dissent must never be crossed. The Pennsylvania Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers finds such core precepts of our democracy are under attack by the resolution to impeach Justice Wecht and feels compelled to speak here.

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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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