



## AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **ACTL Urges Respect for Rule of Law, Judicial Independence on Constitution Day**

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA (September 17, 2025) – As we celebrate Constitution Day — commemorating the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787 — the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL) underscores that, above all, the Constitution is grounded in the importance of the rule of law.

The rule of law requires adhering to the principle that democracy respects the balance of power among the three coequal branches of government and is reliant on an independent judiciary to function properly. Any threat to judicial independence endangers the rule of law, undermining public confidence in our democracy and our overall system of justice.

A strong, impartial judiciary — premised on the immutable principle that we are a nation of laws and not just the whims of individuals — is vital not only for the protection of individual liberties but also for the maintenance of economic confidence and the peaceful resolution of disputes. ACTL views the rule of law, of which judicial independence is a critical component, as the cornerstone of a functioning democracy.

In recent years, judges have faced escalating personal and political attacks — including threats to their safety — aimed at intimidating the judiciary and influencing court decisions. These attacks jeopardize not only individual judges but also the integrity of the American legal system.

Attacking judges through unfair rhetoric, legislation, or harassment creates a chilling effect that deters independent decision-making and weakens public trust in the courts' ability to act without fear or favor. Judicial rulings are based on judges' application of the law and the Constitution.

Disagreements may arise, but our legal system has the capacity to resolve them. The proper way to challenge a ruling is to appeal it. Defiance of a court order — whether by individuals, institutions, or elected officials — erodes the rule of law and signals that compliance with judicial decisions is optional, not obligatory. This undermines the courts' authority and the principle of equal justice under law.



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On this Constitution Day, the ACTL urges all citizens — regardless of their political differences — to reflect on the principles adopted by the Founders that have served our country and democracy for 238 years. Those principles are more essential than ever to ensure the continued health of our democracy.

### **About The American College of Trial Lawyers**

The American College of Trial Lawyers comprises 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.

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