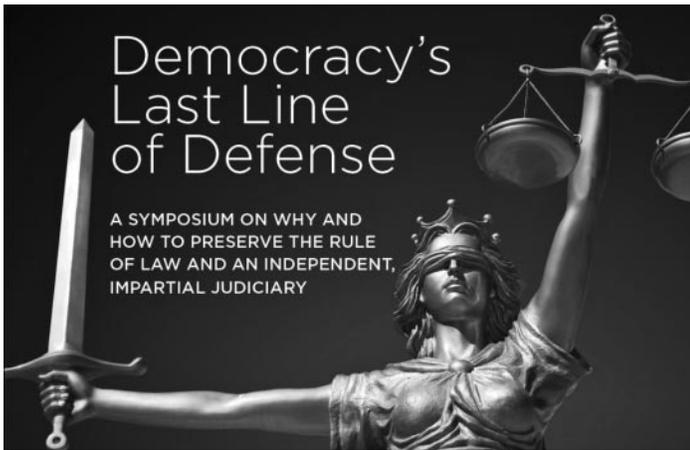




The Resource Page



WATCH DISCUSSION OF THREATS TO JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

Nearly 40 major figures from the legal, judicial, political, academic and media worlds gathered in Chicago earlier this year to discuss growing threats to the independence and impartiality of courts and how to counter the threats.

Democracy's Last Line of Defense: A Symposium on Why and How to Preserve the Rule of Law and an Independent, Impartial Judiciary, took place May 26 at The Old Post Office in Chicago.

You can watch video from each panel or presentation at <https://www.judges.org/jic/recording-photos/>.

Major speakers included:

- Doug Jones, former U.S. Senator and U.S. Attorney from Alabama and President Biden's "sherpa" for his Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson
- Chief Justices Tani Cantil-Sakauye of California and Anne M. Burke of Illinois
- Hon. Reggie Walton, Senior Judge of the U.S. District Court for District of Columbia
- Hon. Thomas Griffith (Ret.), U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia
- Former Republican National Committee Chair and Montana Governor Marc Racicot
- Ukraine Supreme Court Justice Ganna Vronska
- UC Berkeley School of Law dean, author and frequent commentator Erwin Chemerinsky

- Mother Jones Magazine Bureau Chief and MSNBC on-air analyst David Corn
- Former Newsweek legal affairs editor David A. Kaplan, author of "The Most Dangerous Branch: Inside the Supreme Court in the Age of Trump."

The symposium was organized by The National Judicial College, the Berkeley Judicial Institute and the Civil Justice Research Initiative at Berkeley Law, the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and the law firm Robins Kaplan LLP.

RESOURCE FOR FAMILY AND JUVENILE COURTS

The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts is an excellent resource for judicial officers in both the domestic relations and juvenile areas. The AFCC had its beginnings in California in 1963 and since that time it has grown to be an interdisciplinary, international association of professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

Per the AFCC website: *The AFCC promotes a collaborative approach to serving the needs of children among those who work in and with family law systems, encouraging education, research, and innovation and identifying best practices. AFCC members have led the way in developing new processes and programs to meet the needs of families in conflict. Members of the association have conducted research and written books that served as the impetus for reform in family courts and public policy arenas throughout the world. Indeed, the changes in family court systems and within AFCC over the years have been remarkable. What has not changed, however, are the ideas that inspired AFCC's founders: that an organization facilitating an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and information can serve as an agent of change and a catalyst for the needs of families, and especially children, in conflict.*

The AFCC publishes a quarterly journal, *The Family Court Review*, which provides scholarly articles on a variety of topics touching on families and children in the court system. The AFCC also conducts an annual conference that attracts respected professionals from all relevant disciplines to discuss the important topics in the field.

Information on membership, the *Family Court Review*, and the annual conference can be found at: <https://afccnet.org>

COURT WELLNESS

The pandemic engendered a whole host of initiatives to address the challenges to the health of judges and court staff, both physical and mental. Studies show that courts often shared stress similar to first responders and health professionals. Even though the pandemic seems less problematic at this point, the progress and procedures regarding wellness are still valuable as we look forward.

Early last year, the National Center of State Courts published a study entitled *Addressing the Mental Health and Well-Being of Judges and Court Employees* which helps court leaders promote and maintain a mentally healthy workplace. Included are links to valuable resources, best practices, some plans from individual states, and tips from experts. One worthy recommendation involves One Mind At Work www.onemind.org, a clearinghouse of global organizations centered on workplace wellbeing, that is the basis of several state court planning efforts. In addition, it includes an Organizational Assessment tool from the American Psychiatric Association that helps identify priorities for your own court environment. Most importantly, it lists a great list of research links for information, studies, podcasts, and webinars that will enhance any judge's ability to look out for himself or herself, as well as strengthen support for staff.