



August 8, 2024

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Chair  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Nadler  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Jordan and Ranking Member Nadler:

On behalf of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), I write to share our support for the *Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act* (H.R.8093/S.3984) and request for the bill to be put on the Suspension Calendar. This bill is led by Representatives Michael McCaul (R-TX) and the late Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Chris Coons (D-DE). This bill combats the recent rise in attacks and threats of violence towards state and local judges, prosecutors, and other court personnel by providing critical resources around judicial security, including technical assistance, trainings, physical security assessments of courthouses, and a national database tracking threats and attacks.

The NDAA is a national, non-partisan non-profit membership association that provides training, technical assistance, and services to prosecutors around the country in support of the prosecution profession. Founded in 1950, we are the oldest and largest association of prosecutors in the country with over 6,000 members. The NDAA represents state and local prosecutors' offices from both urban and rural districts, as well as large and small jurisdictions.

From 2015 to 2021, the U.S. Marshals Service reported that threats to individuals under their protection—including federal judges, prosecutors, and court officials—increased by 400%. In the last several years, state court judges in Texas and Ohio have faced near-fatal attacks, and state and local court judges in Nevada, Colorado, Mississippi, Rhode Island, New York, California, Kentucky, Michigan, Wyoming, Idaho, and Indiana have also been the targets of threats or attacks. In October 2023, Washington County Circuit Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson was murdered just outside of his Maryland home by a litigant.

Next to judges, prosecutors face the second highest number of threats and attacks in the judicial system. In 2013, Kaufman County Assistant District Attorney Mark Hasse was shot and murdered as he was walking down the street in Kaufman, Texas. Several months later, the same individual that killed Assistant DA Hasse invaded the home of Kaufman County District Attorney Mike McLelland and his wife, Cynthia McLelland, and murdered them. These attacks and increased targeted aggression against our judicial personnel is gravely concerning to our membership.

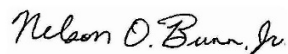
Violence towards judges, prosecutors, court staff, their families, and the public undermines the rule of law and disrupts the ability for the judicial system to function properly and effectively. While federal judges, prosecutors, and other court officials are protected by the U.S. Marshals Service, state and local judges and prosecutors do not have similar resources available to them around judicial security. As a result, they are currently limited in their ability to identify threats, relay important threat information, and incorporate evidence-based safety measures for them and their families.

The *Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act* would address these shortcomings that state and local court personnel face by:

- Establishing standardized incident reporting and threat evaluation practices;
- Providing technical assistance and training around judicial security to state and local judges, prosecutors, court staff, and local law enforcement;
- Conducting physical security assessments of court facilities;
- Coordinating research around best practices in judicial security; and
- Creating a national database to report, track, and share information on threats to state and local judges and court personnel.

The NDAA respectfully urges you to place the *Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act* on the suspension calendar. This important piece of legislation will provide state and local judges, prosecutors, and court staff across the country with the critical resources and support needed to keep them and their families safe—ultimately helping to preserve the rule of law and safeguard our judicial systems. Thank you for your commitment to advancing justice and public safety in our communities. We are happy to provide further insights from a prosecutor's perspective or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nelson O. Bunn, Jr.".

Nelson Bunn  
Executive Director  
National District Attorneys Association