

October 21, 2020



## INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF TRIAL LAWYERS

### STATEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF TRIAL LAWYERS

#### On Pennsylvania House of Representatives Resolution 1044

Pennsylvania General Assembly Resolution 1044, introduced by State Rep. Frank Ryan (R-Lebanon), on October 6, 2020, calls for the impeachment of Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice David N. Wecht. Justice Wecht has participated in cases concerning Congressional redistricting in the Commonwealth and the authority of the Governor to issue emergency proclamations.

Regrettably, Resolution 1044 is a partisan political attack on this independence, of a sort not new to the General Assembly. In 2018, State Rep. Cris Dush (R. Jefferson) introduced resolutions calling for the impeachment of Justice Wecht, along with Justices Christine Donohue, Kevin Dougherty, and Debra Todd, who had joined him in a decision overturning a congressional map rejected as unlawful gerrymandering.

Politically motivated actions such as Resolution 1044 have the effect of undermining the Rule of Law and the delicate balance of power between our coordinate branches of government. A healthy democracy must allow judicial decision making to take place free of threats of retaliation, intimidation or removal. Importantly, judicial independence protects the citizens of our Commonwealth from the vagaries of the politics of the moment and assures consistency and fairness, while maintaining the credibility of the court.

Lawyers have a special responsibility in defending the Rule of Law and the independence of our judiciary. The protection and defense of these principles are integral to the mission of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers.

Therefore, the Academy vehemently objects to Resolution 1044 and requests its immediate withdrawal. History has demonstrated that strict adherence to and respect for the Rule of Law assures a more fair and just society for all citizens.

The International Academy of Trial Lawyers is an elite group of trial lawyers representing both sides of the bar: plaintiffs' and defendants' counsel in civil litigation and prosecutors and defense lawyers in criminal cases. The Academy's general purposes are to cultivate the science of jurisprudence, promote reforms in the law, facilitate the Administration of Justice, and elevate the standards of integrity, honor, and courtesy in the legal profession.

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