



# KEEP OUR REPUBLIC

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## Former Federal Judges Unite To Defend the Constitution on Constitution Day

***Keep Our Republic's Article III Coalition Mobilizes Retired Judges to Counter Threats to the Judiciary and Advance Public Education on our Constitution***

**September 17, 2025** — In an extraordinary first-of-its-kind bipartisan statement, more than 40 retired federal judges — appointed by six different presidents across both parties — are speaking out with one voice: America's constitutional judiciary is under threat, and the time to act is now.

Released today on **Constitution Day**, their open letter marks an unprecedented public statement from [Keep Our Republic's Article III Coalition](#), a growing coalition of retired federal judges committed to protecting the rule of law and educating Americans about the critical role of an independent judiciary. The judges' core message is clear: *"Since 1787 our Constitution has stood firm. Now so must we all."*

Constitution Day is a time when Americans pause to celebrate the founding ideals that gave rise to our Republic. It is also a day to recognize the guardians of those ideals: the judiciary. For nearly 250 years, judges have embodied the Constitution, applying its principles to ensure liberty, equality, and justice. This year, the celebration comes at a time when those very ideals are under historic strain.

With this public letter, **Keep Our Republic's Article III Coalition** also launches a civic education effort aimed at demystifying how the courts work, what judicial independence really means, and why it matters to every American. The Coalition will meet Americans where they are, beginning with in-person events in **Savannah, Georgia on September 17, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on October 6, and Denver, Colorado on October 14**. At these events, judges from the Coalition will speak directly with everyday Americans about the importance of judicial independence, the Constitution, and the rule of law. These efforts will help the public understand not only how the judiciary has safeguarded liberty across history, but how it must continue to do so now and into the future.

"Judges are used to having their decisions criticized, which is perfectly proper. But when those criticisms devolve into vituperative, baseless, and personal attacks, they endanger judges and their families," said **Judge John E. Jones III, Formerly of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania**. "It is imperative that we speak out and add our voices to those who have called for this abhorrent behavior to stop."

“Although appointed under different administrations and political parties, the Coalition’s nearly 50 retired federal judges of diverse personal backgrounds are united on the national need for judges to be free to rule based only on the law applied to proven facts and not political pressures or any administration’s ‘agenda,” said **Judge Paul R. Michel, Formerly of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.**

The signers span the nation and include appointees of Presidents Carter, Reagan, H.W. Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama. Their letter highlights that defending judicial independence is not a partisan issue—it is a constitutional imperative.

“During my time on the bench, I saw how essential public trust is to the judiciary’s ability to function. Judges have no armies or budgets, they rely entirely on public confidence in their impartiality and independence. When that confidence is undermined, our entire system of justice is at risk,” said **Judge David S. Tatel, Formerly of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit** “That is why I have joined my colleagues in speaking out: to defend the rule of law and to remind Americans that the courts belong to protect the people and the Constitution."

The judges emphasize that Constitution Day is not just about history, but about living up to the Constitution’s vision in our own time. The framers understood that moments of crisis would come — times of stress, division, and doubt — and they designed a judiciary strong enough, and independent enough, to guide the nation through them. Today is one of those times.

“Throughout my career, I believed deeply in the promise of equal justice under law. That promise depends on an independent judiciary—free from fear, political pressure, or intimidation,” said **Judge Thelton Henderson, Formerly of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.** “I’m speaking out because that independence is under attack, and the silence only invites further erosion.”

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### **About Keep Our Republic**

Founded in 2020, Keep Our Republic (KOR) is a non-partisan civic education organization committed to strengthening the vitality of America’s democracy by promoting trust in elections, the rule of law, and the constitutional system of checks and balances. Committed to upholding the integrity of three branches and educating citizens on threats to our democratic values, KOR serves as a beacon of truth and transparency in an era of misinformation. Join us in our mission to protect and preserve the republic for future generations. Keep Our Republic was recognized by the American Bar Association with its prestigious [Unsung Heroes of Democracy Award](#).