



STATE OF CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

Testimony of O'Donovan Murphy Director, Judicial Marshal Services Connecticut Judicial Branch Commission on Judicial Compensation Informational Forum December 2, 2024

Good afternoon, members of the committee. My name is O'Donovan Murphy, and I am the Director of Judicial Marshal Services. I am responsible for courthouse security as well as security for judges in the state of Connecticut. I am here today to address a concerning trend: the significant increase in threats directed at our judges over the past several years.

Judges are inherently vulnerable to public scrutiny and, unfortunately, retaliation. What we have observed is an alarming escalation in the number of threats against judicial officers, both on and off the bench. These threats range from verbal harassment to more direct, and sometimes violent, intentions. Some of these threats are delivered through phone calls, emails, or social media platforms, while others come in the form of letters, phone messages, or even personal confrontations.

This uptick in threats is not limited to high-profile cases but extends to all levels of the judiciary. Whether related to criminal matters, family disputes, or civil cases, judges are becoming targets for individuals who may disagree with a ruling or feel aggrieved by a decision. The emotional intensity of some litigants, paired with increasing polarization in society, has contributed to the growing danger, nationally and here in Connecticut.

The safety of our judges is paramount—not only to protect the individuals who serve in this critical role but also to ensure that our courts can continue to operate without fear or interruption. Threats against judges are an ongoing attempt to undermine the integrity of the judicial system and jeopardize public trust in the rule of law.

In response, we have implemented enhanced security measures, including the development of The Office of Protective Intelligence, improved surveillance systems, and increased coordination with local law enforcement. Judicial Marshal Services is consistently exploring ways to provide better training for our judicial marshals to recognize and respond to threats. However, judges continue to be threatened at an alarming rate, increasing by 31 percent in the last two years.

Thank you for your attention, and I welcome any questions you may have.