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Reckless Statements and Their Impact in the Charged Environment Surrounding the Mar-A-Lago Search

New York, August 24, 2022 – The New York City Bar Association (City Bar) is [calling](#) on all members of the bar and political leaders to refrain from making knowingly false or misleading statements about the legal process or government institutions or officers executing the Mar-a-Lago search warrant, to recognize the gravity and significance of the issues raised by this case, to allow any legitimate legal issues to be heard and resolved in court, and to recognize how words recklessly spoken in a highly charged environment can lead to violence.

In a 16-page statement discussing events related to the Mar-a-Lago search, the court filings to date, and applicable legal principles, the City Bar writes that “lawyers and high public office holders have provided misleading and confusing statements and have expressed contempt for – and leveled thinly-veiled threats against – law enforcement officers, a judge, and the entirety of the criminal justice system and those who administer it. Remarks have demonstrated an alarming acceptance of violence as a means of redress of perceived wrongs committed by law enforcement officers against the former President, and were quickly echoed and amplified, in both words and deeds, by those who would advocate violence as an acceptable response.”

The City Bar states that words matter and have consequences “particularly when spoken by lawyers and public leaders about contentious legal processes,” and this is borne out by events following the search and “the media storm whipped up with claims of false conduct and improper behavior by FBI agents.” These included the attack on the FBI offices in Cincinnati by an assailant who had advocated violence against the FBI on social media; threats of violence and antisemitic attacks against the judge who found probable cause to sign the search warrant; the surrounding of the FBI offices in Phoenix; the posting on social media, by a former assistant to the former President, of FBI agents’ personal information to ensure that they don’t “get a good night's sleep for the rest of 2022”; the identification of family members of potential targets of violence; and assorted calls for “civil war.”

In these circumstances, the City Bar writes, “lawyers, in particular, have an important role to play in upholding, not undermining, the rule of law and the independence of the judicial system.”

The City Bar also urges Congress to take up and debate in earnest The Daniel Aderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act so that additional measures can be taken to protect the safety of our judges.

Read the full statement here: <https://bit.ly/3cj7cqd>

About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has over 23,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world. www.nycbar.org