

City and County of
San Francisco



President, Board of
Supervisors

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Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin Joins Former & Current Presiding Judges and Respected Civil Law Leaders In Denouncing Attacks on the Independence of the Local Judicial Branch of SF Government

San Francisco – Today Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin joined former and current presiding judges and representatives from both the San Francisco and Asian American Bar Associations to denounce recent attacks on the local judiciary. Irresponsible and highly politicized rhetoric has culminated in the recruitment of challengers to two well-respected and qualified incumbent judges up for reelection to their appointed seats.

“It is incumbent on civic and elected leaders to stand up for the independence of the court,” said **Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin**. “We have an obligation to stand up to the right-wing nationwide trend of politicizing our courts.”

“Judicial elections are different than all others, because judges are subject to a code of judicial ethics that preclude them from making political and personal statements that will undermine their ethical responsibility to uphold the law, which is at odds with the pressures of a political campaign,” said **former Presiding Justice of the California First District Court of Appeal, the Honorable Anthony Kline**. “I believe that the SF Superior Court is well-known as an extraordinarily competent, impartial, and qualified court. You can buy a judge in Texas, but you can’t buy a judge in San Francisco.”

“California’s judicial system is one of the best judicial systems in the world – not the state, not the nation, but the world,” said **Presiding Justice of the First Appellate District Court, the Honorable Teri L. Jackson**, who was the first female African American Presiding Judge in San Francisco. “Representatives from courts everywhere come here and model our system because we have fair and impartial judges who are making rulings without succumbing to the political pressures of special interests. We are not in the business of making our decisions based on the political tides. We are not here to be liberal or conservative or majoritarian, we are here to apply the law fairly and ensure fair access to our courtrooms. I would like to see someone tell me that the sitting judges that are being challenged are unqualified or biased – they are just doing their jobs.”

“The essence of a fair judiciary is a judge who will impartially decide cases based on the law,” said **former San Francisco Superior Court Judge, the Honorable Harold E. Kahn**. “The purpose of judicial elections is to vote out people who are incompetent, who are corrupt – but the judges who are being challenged are none of these things. They are highly qualified, they are thoughtful, and they are unbiased.”

Local political action committee StopCrimeSF has launched an aggressive campaign to paint the courts as “pro-crime”, which has concerned well-respected and bipartisan civil leaders and legal experts.

“Of course judges want San Franciscans to be safe. The judges who hear criminal cases are not ‘pro-crime’ – they are upholding the law, and are operating from years of scholarly experience,” said **former San Francisco Superior Court Justice Lillian K. Sing**. “Judges serve the public by the law, regardless of who is trying to influence them – none of us want to be in front of a judge that has predetermined they are for or against any broad set of issues.”

The Board of Supervisors will consider a resolution authored by President Peskin to affirm the City’s support of an independent, impartial and qualified judiciary next Tuesday, November 14 at the regular Board of Supervisors meeting. The full text of the Resolution can be found here: <https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12446599&GUID=F0F5B773-5FAC-4B88-ADE3-97E8D1793490>

“The attempt to intimidate and unseat judges five years ago came from the left, and the attacks this time are coming from the right,” said **Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin**. “We will not allow our courts to be Trumped.”

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