



NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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Judicial Conference Asks Help to Protect Federal Judges

Federal judges and their families need greater protection away from the courthouse, and the U.S. Marshals Service needs help from Congress to provide it, federal judicial leaders said Tuesday.

In a [letter](#) to the President and Congressional leaders, the Judicial Conference of the United States said the recent murders of a federal judge's family members in Chicago and killings at a county courthouse in Atlanta, Ga., have left judges "feeling particularly vulnerable, not only for themselves, but also for their families."

"The Judicial Conference believes that attacks such as these strike at the core of our system of government, and steps should be taken as soon as possible to preclude them from happening again," said Administrative Office Director Leonidas Ralph Mecham, who wrote the letter on behalf of the Judicial Conference.

In the letter, several initiatives were identified to be undertaken by the Attorney General, through the U.S. Marshals Service, which has the statutory responsibility to protect the federal Judiciary:

- The U.S. Marshals Service should join the Judiciary to seek immediate funding to provide a comprehensive package of off-site security enhancements, including \$12 million to install a home intrusion detection system for each judge.
- The Department of Justice should seek additional resources for the U. S. Marshal Service as follows:
 - increase the "woefully inadequate" staffing of the U.S. Marshals Service's Office of Protective Intelligence;
 - develop a rigorous program of threat investigation by U.S. Marshals;
 - increase U.S. Marshals Service staffing to allow deputy U.S. Marshals to be present in the courtroom when needed during criminal proceedings; and
 - increase salaries of deputy U.S. Marshals to be commensurate with those of other federal law enforcement agencies to ensure recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals.

The letter asked for support in achieving a common goal, "namely the protection of the federal Judiciary and its essential role in society."

"Often, when a judge makes a decision in a case, even though it faithfully follows federal law," the letter said, "that judge is subject to harsh, sometimes vicious, criticism. The Judicial Conference wants to ensure that this criticism does not result in physical harm to judges and their families."

At its semi-annual meeting in March, the Conference passed a [resolution](#) calling for the Department of Justice and the U.S. Marshals Service "to review fully and expeditiously all aspects of judicial security and, in particular, security at judges' homes and other locations away from the courthouse."

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