

S. 3984
H.R. 8093

Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act

The Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act (S. 3984 / H.R. 8093) — led by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX), Chris Coons (D-DE), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Representatives Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and Michael McCaul (R-TX) — is a vital step in increasing the protection of our judges and the integrity of our judicial system. The bill will establish a State Judicial Threat Intelligence and Resource Center to provide technical assistance, training, and monitoring of threats for state and local judges and court personnel.

The Issue

Judicial officers throughout the nation are subjected to threats of violence daily. In 2021, individuals protected by the U.S. Marshals Service — including federal judges, prosecutors, and court officials — faced over 4,500 threats, a 400% increase since 2015. Numerous threats have also been made toward state and local judiciary members, including the October 2023 murder of Washington County Circuit Court Judge Andrew F. Wilkinson outside his Maryland home and the 2022 murder of Former Juneau County Circuit Court Judge John Roemer in his Wisconsin home. Criminals have attacked or threatened state judges and court personnel in Nevada, Colorado, Texas, Ohio, Mississippi, Rhode Island, New York, California, Kentucky, Michigan, Wyoming, Idaho, and Indiana. Recently, nationwide bomb threats were issued about state court facilities. Court clerks are threatened and harassed daily, and state supreme court justices handling controversial cases are seeing increased incidents of threats and intimidation. While the U.S. Marshals Service monitors, addresses, and develops best practices around threats to the federal judiciary, no such resource center exists for the estimated 30,000 judicial officers who serve in state and local courts. Due to the interstate nature of these threats, it is important to pool together state resources to ensure the safety of our state and local judges.

Bill Summary

The bill creates a State Judicial Threat Intelligence and Resource Center that will:

- (1) provide technical assistance to state and local judges and court personnel around judicial security;
- (2) provide physical security assessments for courts, homes, and other facilities where judicial officers and staff conduct court-related business;
- (3) coordinate research to identify, examine, and advance best practices around judicial security; and
- (4) be housed within the existing State Justice Institute, a private non-profit and non-partisan corporation established by Congress in 1984.

Supporting Organizations

- Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ)
- Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA)
- Council of Chief Judges of the State Courts of Appeal (CCJSCA)
- All Rise
- National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO)
- National Association for Court Management (NACM)
- American Judges Association (AJA)
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
- National Center for State Courts (NCSC)
- National District Attorneys Association (NDAA)