



Federal Bar Association

Office of the President

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February 14, 2007

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Re: Court Security Improvement Act of 2007, S. 378

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Specter:

I write on behalf of the Federal Bar Association to convey our strong support for the Court Security Improvement Act of 2007, S. 378. We urge its swift passage by the Senate. This measure advances the safety of judges, federal prosecutors and other attorneys, witnesses, law enforcement officers, court personnel and other citizens in our federal courthouses.

As you know, the provisions embodied in S. 378 (and its companion measure in the House of Representatives, H.R. 660) were brokered by House and Senate negotiators last fall, but the legislative package failed to move ahead to final approval.

Enactment of court security legislation is far overdue. Escalating violence against federal judges and their families represents an increasing threat to the integrity of our judicial system. The brutal slayings nearly two years ago of family members of United States District Judge Joan Lefkow, further compounded by the assaults against state and local judges in Georgia and Nevada, underscores the compelling need for Congressional revision of the penalty structure for influencing, impeding, or retaliating against judges and other officials through threats or injuries of a family member. In addition, S. 378 appropriately provides protection against the malicious recording of fictitious liens against federal judges and attorneys, and protects against the disclosure of personal information of individuals performing certain federal and federally-assisted functions.

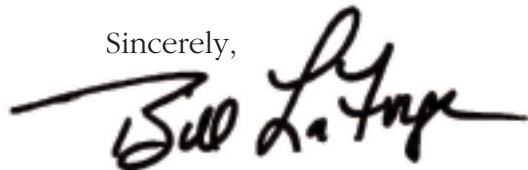
We would recommend that the redaction authority contained in section 103 of the legislation be revised to extend such authority to 2011, rather than 2009 as proposed. Section 103 renews the statutory authority that permits federal judges to temporarily redact information in their annual financial

disclosure reports if the revelation of the data would endanger the life of a judge or the judge's family. Previous authority lapsed on December 31, 2005, and should be renewed by Congress as promptly as possible to assure appropriate redaction protections remain. Extension of the redaction authority to 2011 would comport with the original intent underlying the Court Security Improvement Act of 2005 (S. 1968) to provide a four-year reauthorization period.

The Federal Bar Association has consistently supported action to provide sufficient authority and resources to the federal judiciary to guarantee access to equal justice. In that same spirit, we endorse the Court Security Improvement Act of 2007, S. 378, to improve security inside and beyond our courthouses for the protection of judicial personnel, their families, and other persons.

Thank you for your leadership and your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill LaForge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William N. LaForge
President