
LAWYERS DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

The Democracy Commitment

A Project by Lawyers Defending American Democracy, in partnership with the legal profession, to protect our Constitution, the rule of law, and the norms and principles of democracy, to ensure our public officials act with integrity, and to promote civil discourse in our communities.

1. **Why is a Democracy Commitment needed?** At this moment in our history, the Constitution and the rule of law in the United States are in peril, and it is critical that every member of the legal profession engage in preserving the norms and principles of our democracy for future generations.
2. **What is the goal of the Democracy Commitment?** The goal of this effort is to recruit lawyers throughout the country to use their voice and influence to protect our democratic institutions and, in doing so, uphold the oath they took upon being admitted to the profession. Maintaining our democracy in the face of, among other challenges, attacks on the justice system, including judges and law firms, violations of due process rights, dismantling of government institutions, false statements, dishonesty, and the spread of disinformation in our public discourse and threats has become the greatest challenge of our lifetime.
3. **Why lawyers?** Since the formation of our country, lawyers have had the responsibility to defend the underlying constitutional values and norms of political behavior on which our democracy depends. Lawyers hold a special role in society to protect the rule of law, the values of our democratic institutions, and our justice system. Lawyers of all political views are especially suited to play a key role in reversing the increased virulence seen in the tenor of public discourse by using their status, skills, legal expertise, and convening authority to engage the profession and collaborate with members of their communities.
4. **What specifically would lawyers do?** Lawyers can be leaders in undertaking a variety of educational programs and projects in their geographical and social areas of influence. Each such effort would be focused on ways to protect democracy and the rule of law, and to mobilize the public in responding to and rejecting dishonesty, threats, intimidation, and violence, regardless of their source.

Here are examples of how lawyers can galvanize the legal community and others in a collaborative effort to address the goals of this Democracy Commitment:

- a. Develop a series of community conversations through bar association programs, town hall meetings, civic organizations, and other vehicles to implement specific action plans to encourage stakeholder dialog and reject intimidation or threats to democracy. This includes such ideas as:
 - i. Engaging business, community, and faith-based leaders in understanding the threats to our freedoms and the norms and principles of democracy that now exist, and why it matters to everyone in this country.
 - ii. Creating opportunities for facilitated conversations about ways to eliminate dishonesty, threats, verbal or physical intimidation, and violence against those lawfully conducting the functions of government at all levels and against the media.
 - iii. Partnering with local law schools to engage students in understanding their own role in protecting democracy.
 - iv. Using our unique skills and training to seek elected office or appointed roles in government. Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD) has created a detailed toolkit for this work: **Guardians of Justice – A Call for Lawyers to Lead**. This effort is nonpartisan and offers ten fundamental principles to which all lawyers seeking government roles should adhere.
 - v. Becoming a voice for retaining our constitutional freedoms by writing opinion articles and letters to the editor, appearing on media outlets, podcasts, and other forms of social media – seeking opportunities to reach the public and speak consistent with these efforts to reclaim our democratic institutions.
- 5. **The role of Lawyers Defending American Democracy:** LDAD is a non-profit, non-partisan organization focusing on threats to our democratic institutions and the rule of law, with a particular emphasis on ways to galvanize the legal profession to become engaged in ameliorating these threats. The organization was founded on the belief that the legal profession has a special obligation to protect the rule of law, to speak up when democracy is threatened, and to lead by inspiration and example.

LDAD commits to serving as a major resource to the profession in the implementation of this commitment, assisting with the development of program ideas, toolkits, curricula, and other ways to ensure that the profession speaks with unity and clarity to become a more powerful voice on behalf of our democratic institutions.