



Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association est.2001

Newsletter for Winter 2024/2025



Website



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PO. Box 30072

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773-282-3879

MAIL: jpna@jpna.net

Meetings

You are all invited to JPNA meetings at 7pm Congregational Church of Jefferson Park, 5320 W. Giddings.

January 29, February 26, March 26.

Free parking is available at the Hoyne drive-up Bank, Milwaukee & Giddings. Refreshments will be served.

Judiciary Independence Cornerstone of Democracy

Submitted by Sol

The independence of the judiciary is a cornerstone of democracy and the rule of law. Yet, this foundational principle is jeopardized when judges align themselves with political parties. Judges should not be part of a political party, as it undermines their impartiality, erodes public confidence, and weakens the separation of powers that is essential for a balanced and fair government.

First and foremost, judicial impartiality is paramount. Judges are tasked with interpreting and applying the law without bias or favoritism. Their decisions must be guided solely by the principles of justice and legal precedent, not by the ideologies or agendas of a political organization. Membership in a political party creates a conflict of interest, whether real or perceived. Even if a judge acts with the utmost integrity, their affiliation with a political party can cast doubt on their objectivity. Litigants and the broader public may question whether the judge's rulings are influenced by partisan loyalties rather than the merits of the case.

Public confidence in the judiciary is another critical reason judges should remain politically neutral. The judicial system derives much of its authority from the trust and respect of the people it serves. When judges are seen as political actors, that trust is eroded. Citizens may view court decisions not as fair and reasoned outcomes but as extensions of political maneuvering. This perception can lead to cynicism and disillusionment with the justice system, undermining its legitimacy. A judiciary perceived as partisan fails to serve its fundamental purpose: to act as an impartial arbiter of disputes and a guardian of constitutional rights.

Furthermore, political affiliations among judges threaten the separation of powers. In a healthy democracy, the judiciary operates independently from the legislative and executive branches of government. This independence ensures that judges can check the powers of other branches without fear of retribution or bias. When judges are members of political parties, their ability to function as impartial checks on government power is compromised. They may feel pressure to align their decisions with the policies or preferences of their party, diluting the judiciary's role as a neutral counterbalance.

Critics may argue that judges, like all citizens, have the right to freedom of association and political participation. While this is true, judges voluntarily accept restrictions on certain liberties when they take on their roles. This sacrifice is necessary to preserve the integrity and independence of the judiciary. Just as judges must avoid conflicts of interest in their personal and financial dealings, they must also refrain from political affiliations that could compromise their impartiality.

In practice, many jurisdictions recognize the importance of judicial neutrality and have implemented rules prohibiting judges from engaging in overt political activity. These rules are not an infringement on judges' rights but rather a safeguard for the justice system as a whole. By remaining apolitical, judges uphold the principles of fairness, equality, and justice essential to democracy.

Judges role as impartial arbiters of the law demands independence from partisan influences. Maintaining this independence ensures public confidence, protects the separation of powers, and upholds the rule of law. How can we achieve this?

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Tips for Callers to Chicago's Emergency Communications Center

Here are some tips that callers to 9-1-1 should keep in mind when requesting emergency police, fire or medical services:

- When placing a call to 9-1-1, if you encounter an extended ring cycle, do not hang up and redial unless the ring lasts more than a few minutes. You will only delay your access to the Emergency Communications Center.
- In most instances, calls will be answered before the caller even hears a ring. However, under some circumstances, heavy call volumes will occur and extensive rings can happen. If all call takers are busy, calls are held in the order in which they are received and are distributed to call takers in that order as soon as they become available.
- When providing information about an incident, be as descriptive as possible. You will be asked to give identifying information about any persons or automobiles involved in the situation. The more information you can provide, the more information dispatchers will be able to relay to responding police units.
- If you do not want your name given to responding police units, be sure to inform the call taker. There is a box that the call taker will activate so that you will remain anonymous. The only way for this to be deactivated is with your approval upon contact by a supervisor.
- Calls for police service are dispatched on a priority basis. Any situation that represents an immediate threat to life, bodily injury or major property damage or loss is a high-priority dispatch. These calls are to be dispatched within 10 minutes.
- Incidents where there is no immediate threat to life; no one was injured in the incident; the incident is not in progress; the offender is not in the immediate area, and the incident does not involve a major loss or damage of property are of

(Tips Continued)

- a lower priority. These calls are to be dispatched within one hour. If your call is not a high priority, as defined above, you will be informed that a unit will be sent when available.
- Use the police non-emergency number 3-1-1, when a personal police response will not affect the outcome of an incident. By using the non-emergency number, you will help ensure the availability of adequate resources for emergency situations.
- When calling for emergency medical services and the nearest ambulance is more than 18 blocks away, a fire engine or truck will be sent prior to the arrival of the ambulance. Members of the fire suppression company are all trained in basic life support techniques and can administer emergency care until the arrival of paramedics.
- Ambulance service is provided only in real emergencies — situations that cannot wait. Minor illnesses and routine transfers to medical facilities are referred to private ambulance services. The City does charge a fee for ambulance service; however, no one will be denied service because of inability to pay.

Continued from Page 1

To ensure elected judges remain independent of political parties, implement nonpartisan judicial elections, where candidates are listed without party affiliations. Reform campaign finance to limit reliance on political contributions, and prohibit judges from seeking or accepting party endorsements. Adopt merit-based selection systems, such as appointing judges through nonpartisan commissions, followed by retention elections. Educate voters on the judiciary's impartial role, encouraging evaluation based on qualifications rather than political alignment. Establish independent oversight bodies to enforce nonpartisan rules, and foster cultural recognition of the judiciary as a neutral arbiter of justice. These steps protect judicial integrity and public trust. In a democratic society, the judiciary must remain above politics, serving as a beacon of fairness and justice for all.

(Information within this article was sourced from multiple sites)

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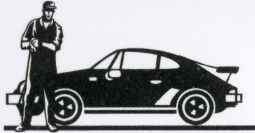


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