

# THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



*Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law*

February 6, 2017

As members of the Board of The Constitution Project, a nonpartisan organization devoted to protecting our nation's founding document, we are astonished and distressed by recent statements from the President that do not show proper respect for our constitutional scheme of checks and balances. The President's attacks on the integrity and independence of the federal courts are anathema to our democracy. The judiciary is filled with admirable men and women, appointed by Democrats and Republicans alike, who are dedicated to protecting the Constitution.

The three co-equal branches of our government—legislative, executive and judiciary—are designed to operate independently within their own spheres, but are given important responsibilities to ensure that no single branch becomes too powerful. The Constitution vests the execution of our laws in the President and the executive branch, but vests the authority to determine the validity of the actions of the executive in the courts. The President has every right to defend the actions of his Administration in the courts, but he also has every obligation to obey and respect the decisions that the courts may render. Even as the judicial branch must continue to honor our constitutional separation of powers through its independent opinions and decisions, we urge all citizens—from whom the powers in the Constitution derive—to speak out about the fundamental importance of the separation of powers to our Constitution and condemn these affronts to our democratic system.

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