



Dear Republican Leaders,

Justice Jennifer Brunner arrogantly demands she is above criticism from the public. I encourage you to take a few moments to read Chairman Paduchik's response to these absurd and dangerous claims.

Justin Bis
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**Chairman Bob Paduchik, Ohio Republican Party
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Occasionally, I will read something so banal it requires a thoughtful response. Supreme Court Justice Jennifer Brunner's opinion piece in the Columbus Dispatch on March 25 is a fine example.

She writes, "Increased partisan attacks that recklessly and persistently suggest that courts are mere political arms of government affect public confidence in the independence of the judiciary."

Brunner is using hyperbole when she equates criticism of the judiciary as an "attack." Tellingly, she uses the word seven times in her 609-word screed. She does this because the thesis of her article is weak.

She cites a National Center for State Courts poll that measures of trust and confidence in the courts are the lowest they've been since tracking began in 2014. Brunner argues, without evidence, that waning confidence and trust in the courts is due to reckless and persistent criticism of the court.

The behavior and actions of jurists make a much more compelling explanation for sinking trust in the judiciary.

Brunner's financial and political relationships with Ohio Redistricting litigants is a perfect example of behavior that erodes confidence in the judicial branch of government. She has damaged her impartiality by failing to recuse herself or explain reasons for not recusing from the redistricting lawsuits.

For months, we've asked Brunner to explain her relationships with four plaintiffs in the Ohio Redistricting litigation. These litigants are the same political supporters that either raised tens of thousands or worked for her Supreme Court campaign. Brunner finds time to write self-serving op-eds but cannot find time to explain her clear conflicts of interest.

It is obvious Democrat Brunner's op-ed is thinly veiled intimidation to discourage court criticism. Gratuitous rebukes from the bench have also come from a Republican member of the Ohio Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor previously wrote a scathing statement regarding a tweet by an Ohio Republican Party staffer during the 2020 Election.

This idea, from two members of the Ohio Supreme Court, that judges are somehow above public discourse and criticism is patently absurd.

As elected officials, they participate in political campaigns and curry favor with political parties and special interest groups. The rulings and actions of elected jurists can and should be questioned the same as any other elected official. After all, criticism of politicians is the best guard against authoritarianism.

Brunner graduated from law school, passed the bar exam, and swore an oath to the Constitution of the United States; it's safe to assume she has read and understands the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment explicitly protects our right to petition and voice criticism of our government and its officers.

Maybe Brunner spent so much time in former Communist nations that she has forgotten that in America, political speech is free.

If Brunner cannot stomach political critics, she should consider another profession.

Until she explains her relationship with Eric Holder and other redistricting litigants, the Ohio Republican Party will be persistent in our criticism of her conflicts of interest.

Her failure to address those conflicts has gifted Republicans with a major campaign issue that we will continue to shed light on.

Bob Paduchik is chairman of the Ohio Republican Party.