

MARCH 4, 2022

**STATEMENT CONCERNING DA'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT IS  
INVESTIGATING JUDGE PAPPAS**

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We've read the media reports that the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office (DA) is investigating Magisterial District Judge Mik Pappas relating to his failure to promptly sign a warrant request. While all the details have not been made public, based on those released so far, we've seen no evidence of misconduct. Regardless of the investigation's outcome, we feel duty-bound to respond to the reports.

When there is an allegation that a judge engaged in professional misconduct, the allegations are typically investigated by an independent agency such as Pennsylvania's Judicial Conduct Board. It is not the role of the attorneys who regularly appear before a judge to conduct the investigation.

A judge's role requires independence from the other branches of government – including the executive branch and law enforcement. An independent judiciary is necessary to secure the public's trust that when a judge makes a decision that could dramatically impact the lives of the involved parties, the judge does so in a fair and impartial way. Whether intentional or not, the DA's public disclosure that it is investigating a judge before whom its attorneys appear undermines judicial independence.

A judge should only be concerned about the law, the facts as they apply to the law, and the solemn execution of their duty and responsibilities to the community. A judge should never be forced to consider, consciously or subconsciously, fear of investigation and/or prosecution when making any decision that the job requires.

