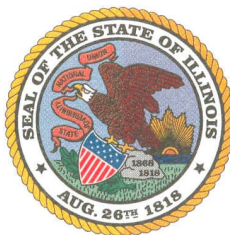


**STATE OF ILLINOIS
CIRCUIT COURT
SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

JOHN S. LOWRY
Chief Judge



**WINNEBAGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
400 WEST STATE STREET, SUITE 215
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61101
PHONE (815) 319-4800**

October 15, 2025

For Immediate Release

**Contact: Thomas R. Jakeway
Trial Court Administrator
Phone: 815-319-4806
Email: tjakeway@17thcircuit.illinoiscourts.gov**

Official Statement

ROCKFORD, IL – Over the last several days a judge in the 17th Judicial Circuit has received significant threats and harassment which are being addressed in coordination with local law enforcement. These threats escalated when a public official (who was not present in court) made statements to the media that a judge’s ruling releasing a defendant from custody at initial appearance court was “unacceptable” and “negligent.” The unintended consequence of the tone and content of these statements has had a real consequence of endangering the safety of the judge and her family.

The public official’s comment implied that the judge did not follow her oath of judicial office. Such statements crossed the line from expressing disagreement with a ruling to an attack on her judicial competence and integrity.

The current political climate includes all-time high threats, harassment and violence against judges. Inflammatory rhetoric toward judges is a contributing factor. Fair criticism of a judge’s ruling should focus on the evidence presented in court and the applicable law. Motions to reconsider and the appellate process are the appropriate avenues to address disagreement. Judges should be allowed to make impartial decisions free from outside influence in order to preserve judicial independence- a cornerstone of our democracy.

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