



National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys

Safeguarding Justice for All Americans

Board of Directors

September 12, 2022

Steven B. Wasserman
President (DC)

Dear Representative:

Adam E. Hanna
Vice President
(S.D. IL)

On behalf of the National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys (NAAUSA), representing the interests of over 6,400 Assistant U.S. Attorneys (AUSAs) working in the 94 U.S. Attorney Offices, I express our strong support for the bipartisan Preventing a Patronage System Act (H.R. 302).

Mark Vincent
Treasurer
(UT)

The fair, equal, and apolitical administration of justice relies on a strong career cadre of federal prosecutors with deep knowledge of the law and insulation from political retaliation. The merit hiring system ensures only qualified AUSAs are handling federal criminal and civil cases. The civil service protections in place ensure AUSAs are only fired for their incompetence, not their refusal to execute a political demand.

Karen Escobar
Secretary
(E.D. CA)

Kevan Cleary
(E.D. NY)

Joseph Koehler
(AZ)

Each U.S. Attorney's Office already has a Presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed U.S. Attorney leading the policy of the office. U.S. Attorneys, in consort with political leaders at the Department of Justice, provide a necessary political voice in our system. Different administrations regularly prioritize and deprioritize the enforcement of different laws. Political appointees provide a space for these policy views to be heard and these leaders are subject to a political check – a presidential election every four years. But politics should never play a role on the front line. Politics should never decide an investigation. And politics should never decide a prosecution. The merit protections offered AUSAs and the strict enforcement of prohibited personnel practices in the framework established in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 ensure this is a reality.

Clay West
(W.D. MI)

Our nation was recently racked by accusations of political interference in the investigative process. Luckily, the American people can rest assured knowing that if there is a legitimate claim of political interference, there is a strict and well-enforced process within our federal government for handling these claims and protecting whistleblowers who raise them. However, if a president can unilaterally reclassify employees and strip them of their protections, there is no longer a safeguard against political interference. A president could simply fire a prosecutor who refused to take a case and hire one that will act based on the president's demands. This is not the system of justice our nation should support. Most importantly, it does not align with the rule of law or the founding concept that we are a nation of laws, not of men.

Executive Director
Chad Hooper

The Preventing a Patronage System Act protects the apolitical and expertise driven administration of justice. It is necessary to insulate the federal workforce from political interference that would undermine American trust in our justice system. We urge Representatives to support the passage of this critical bill. Thank you for considering the perspective of NAAUSA. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our Washington representative Natalia Castro (ncastro@shawbransford.com) regarding this matter.

Washington Reps.
Jason Briefel
Natalia Castro

Counsel
Debra Roth

Respectfully,

Steven Wasserman
President