

Justice at Stake



"Today, the opportunity to access justice in our courts is becoming as much a luxury as a Louis Vuitton bag."
 ABA President Stephen Zack

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Speak to American Values

Americans of all backgrounds are ready to reject these slogans and stand up for strong courts – if we talk about the values they care about most. - "Speak to American Values," Justice at Stake messaging guide

Here are four key findings from "Speak to American Values," a Justice at Stake messaging guide that outlines a simple and powerful communications framework for defending fair and impartial courts from political interference.

1) Values Matter.

The debate over the courts is a debate over values. Court critics seek to put defenders of checks and balances on the defensive. Most Americans want courts to be fair and impartial and accountable to the law and the Constitution—not political pressure and special interests. When we focus on these widely shared values, we're on our way to winning the debate.

2) Americans Need to Be Reminded of Political Threats to Fair Courts.

A purely positive message alone can't carry the debate. Americans won't stand up for the independence of our courts unless they understand it is threatened. Americans are offended when they hear that legislators want to weaken the power of our courts to protect individual rights, or deny someone their day in court.

3) Talk of courts being accountable to the Constitution and law, not to politicians and special interests.

Defenders of strong courts should embrace accountability—to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, not to politicians and special interests. Remind Americans that court decisions must be published, and that they can be appealed. By providing the right definition of accountability, we can disarm the other side and demonstrate how radical its goals really are.

4) Don't debate controversial decisions or slogans like "judicial activism."

When opponents of strong courts attack "judicial activism" and controversial rulings, their goal is to distract us from our strongest messages. If we don't get distracted, we can move to a discussion of broader values that Americans care about most. Terms like "judicial activism" do energize those who already dislike the courts. But opinion research finds little evidence that slogans like these resonate with most Americans.

Justice at Stake

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Help Justice at Stake protect fair and impartial courts.



