

Pennsylvania Bar Association President Speaks Out Against Attacks on Rule of Law in Pakistan

HARRISBURG (Nov. 9, 2007) — Pennsylvania Bar Association President Andrew F. Susko today issued the following statement regarding recent events in Pakistan:

“The Pennsylvania Bar Association is deeply troubled and disturbed by the events occurring in Pakistan. The suspension of the national constitution by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, the ouster of the Chief Justice of the Pakistani Supreme Court and the arrest and detention of scores of Pakistani lawyers does violence to the ideal of a free and orderly society governed by the rule of law.

A government functions legitimately by the will of its people, with respect for and adherence to the principle of the supremacy of the rule of law. The legal profession well understands that judges and lawyers are guardians and protectors of this essential principle. The present course of the Pakistani government undermines its legitimacy and provides others who would ignore the rule of law fertile opportunity to gain support in Pakistan. The attack against judges and lawyers severely undermines – and threatens to destroy – the fundamental underpinning of a truly free society, a government that is not above the law.

Unlike many countries, Pakistan is fortunate to have an established and courageous legal community and justice system, both of which are crucial to the legitimate governance of its people. Because the very heart of that justice system is at stake, the 29,000 members of the Pennsylvania Bar Association join with the American Bar Association and other bar associations across the country in urging Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to rescind his actions immediately.”

Founded in 1895, the Pennsylvania Bar Association strives to promote justice, professional excellence and respect for the law; improve public understanding of the legal system; facilitate access to legal services; and serve the 29,000 lawyers who are members of the association.