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Dean Melanie Leslie Joins 157 Law School Deans in a Joint Statement Condemning the Attack on the Capitol

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

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Dean Melanie Leslie Joins 157 Law School Deans in a Joint Statement Condemning the Attack on the Capitol



We are deans of a diverse range of law schools across the country. We do not use our positions to advance our individual views. But we do have an obligation to support the rule of law and preserve the integrity of the legal profession. On rare occasions, despite our differing situations and views, that obligation requires us to speak as one to defend the fundamental commitments of our profession. This is such a moment.

The violent attack on the Capitol was an assault on our democracy and the rule of law. The effort to disrupt the certification of a free and fair election was a betrayal of the core values that undergird our Constitution. Lives were lost, the seat of our democracy was desecrated, and our country was shamed.

Many lawyers and judges worked honestly and in good faith, often in the face of considerable political pressure, to ensure the 2020 election was free and fair. However, we recognize with dismay and sorrow that some lawyers challenged the outcome of the election with claims that they did not support with facts or evidence. This betrayed the values of our profession. Our profession demands that when lawyers pursue legal action, they must bring claims in good faith, grounded in facts and evidence, and demonstrate respect for the legal system. Only then can lawyers fulfill their responsibilities as lawyers and public citizens to promote public confidence in the rule of law and the justice system — duties

that extend to all professional activities, whether lawyers are representing a client or not. The rule of law is as much a touchstone of our profession as it is of our Constitution.

As law deans, our mission is to train the next generation of leaders to uphold the core values of our profession and sustain the rule of law. This should be a moment of reflection for legal educators and members of the legal profession. A sustained effort will be necessary to repair and preserve our precious democratic institutions. As legal educators and lawyers ourselves, we must redouble our efforts to restore faith in the rule of law and the ideals of the legal profession. We have enormous faith in the law's enduring values and in our students, who will soon lead this profession. We call upon all members of the legal profession to join us in the vital work ahead.

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