

Akron Bar Association
Media Response and Endorsement/Advocacy Policy
Approved January 27, 2016

I. Media Response

A. It is the policy of the Akron Bar Association (“Akron Bar”) to:

1. respond to unjust attacks on the judicial system;
2. respond to unjust criticisms of the legal profession; and
3. assist the public in understanding the operation of courts, judicial procedures, and the administration of justice.

The following guidelines and procedures relate to such media response:

B. A Media Response Team (“Team”) shall be constituted annually and appointed by the President of the Akron Bar. The Team shall consist of five members including the Akron Bar President, President-Elect, Executive Director and two members of the Akron Bar with diverse and relevant experience (including but not limited to political party affiliation). The members of the Team shall be approved by the Akron Bar Board of Trustees. The members of the Team shall work together in formulating timely media response consistent with this policy. At least three of the members of the Team shall agree before responding in the media on behalf of the Akron Bar. The only individuals who are authorized to speak to and/or otherwise communicate with the media on behalf of the Akron Bar are its President and Executive Director.

C. The Team shall determine when a response on behalf of the Akron Bar is appropriate. Generally, a response by the Akron Bar is appropriate when:

1. a criticism is misdirected at a judge;
2. a response is necessary to educate the public about an important aspect of the administration of justice;
3. the critic is misinformed about the judicial system and a factual correction is necessary;
or
4. the criticism is serious and unwarranted and will likely have a negative effect on the community.

D. A response is generally not appropriate when:

1. the dispute is personal;
2. a judge is able to adequately defend himself or herself;
3. the response would prejudice a matter in pending litigation; or
4. the issue is political and a significant disagreement exists within the elements of the bar.

E. The Team should, whenever possible, respond within 24 to 48 hours of the unjust criticism. The response should be concise, accurate and unemotional.

F. Members of the judiciary and all members of the Akron Bar should be advised of the adoption of this policy and of their ability to direct to the Akron Bar Executive Director a request for review and possible response by the Team. All requests for response shall be immediately referred to the Team for consideration.

Adopted and Approved by Akron Bar Board of Trustees – July 2006
Revised and Approved by Akron Bar Board of Trustees – January 2016

II. Endorsement/Advocacy

A. Where appropriate and possible, the Akron Bar may endorse and/or advocate for or against positions related to significant issues involving:

1. the practice of law or the legal profession;
2. the independence or integrity of the judiciary;
3. the effectiveness of or accessibility to the legal system; and
4. public policy issues that are important and consistent with advancing the stated purpose of the Akron Bar that directly or indirectly affect the administration of or access to justice and the legal profession, with a primary focus on local and state issues.

The Akron Bar shall not endorse candidates for public office or judicial appointments.

B. Any request for advocacy or endorsement (“Request”) shall be submitted in writing to the Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee on the form presented as Appendix A. The request must, at minimum, identify and state:

1. the issue or position to be endorsed or advocated;
2. the person or entity making the request; and
3. the category as set forth in Section II, A above and how the Akron Bar’s endorsement would benefit consistent with the requirements of such category.

Individuals and entities submitting such requests understand that there should be no expectation of confidentiality. The request will be shared with the Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee and also may be shared with the Akron Bar Board of Trustees and/or Akron Bar members upon request.

C. The Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee shall be constituted annually and comprised of six members including the Akron Bar President, President-Elect, two members of the Board appointed by President, and two at-large members appointed by President with relevant and diverse experience (including but not limited to political party affiliation). The members of this committee shall be approved by the Akron Bar Board of Trustees.

The Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee will consider requests received by the first of each month and will present its recommendation at the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting.

D. The Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee will take reasonable steps to investigate and evaluate endorsement or advocacy requests including but not limited to soliciting

views and statements from opposing persons and entities. Additionally, as appropriate (*e.g.*, timing, nature of issue presented), the Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee will attempt to solicit input from members and will endeavor to allow for a public comment period. After thoroughly reviewing a Request, the Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee will take a vote of the members present and shall recommend that the Board of Trustees approve or deny the Request. Communication of the decision by the Board of Trustees to approve or deny Request may include but may not be limited to communication on the Akron Bar's website, Akron Bar's social media vehicles, press release, letters to editor and other communication with local newspapers, distribution to membership, and/or any other means deemed by the Akron Bar Board of Trustees appropriate to the issue. Notwithstanding the requirements set forth in II.C. and D. that requires Board of Trustees' approval, if an issue arises as defined by II.A. but not otherwise covered by the Media Response Team Policy, see I.A. that requires a response before the Board of Trustees can be properly convened under the Akron Bar's Code of Regulations, then provided that the Endorsement/ Advocacy Committee unanimously approves, the Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee is authorized to act on behalf of the Akron Bar on the issue in accordance with that approval.

Approved by the Akron Bar Association Board of Trustees – January 2016. Amended March 2018.

III. The Akron Bar Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the Media Response and Endorsement/Advocacy Policy.

Appendix A
Akron Bar Association
Endorsement/Advocacy Request Form

Individuals and organizations requesting endorsement or advocacy by the Akron Bar Association shall complete this Request Form and submit it to the Akron Bar Executive Director. The Endorsement/Advocacy Review Committee will consider requests received by the first of each month and will present its recommendation at the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting.

Nature of Request:

Applicable Endorsement/Advocacy Category (as identified in Section II(A)):

_____ the practice of law or the legal profession;
_____ the independence or integrity of the judiciary;
_____ the effectiveness of or accessibility to the legal system; and
_____ public policy issues that are important and consistent with advancing the stated purpose of the Akron Bar Association that directly or indirectly affect the administration of or access to justice and the legal profession, with a primary focus on local and state issues.

Time Frame or Limitations:

Other Organizations Contacted with this Same Request:

Financial Contribution Requested (if any):

Information of Requesting Individual or Entity:

Name:

Address:

Daytime Telephone Number:

Email:

Tax Status (*e.g.*, individual, corporation)

Individual to Contact regarding Request: