

ACLU Massachusetts

CHARGES AGAINST STATE JUDGE HAVE MORE TO DO WITH POLITICS THAN JUSTICE

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[Carol Rose](https://www.aclum.org/en/carol-rose-executive-director) (<https://www.aclum.org/en/carol-rose-executive-director>), executive director of the ACLU of Massachusetts, today released the following statement in response to federal prosecutors [charging](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/us/judge-shelley-joseph-indicted.html) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/us/judge-shelley-joseph-indicted.html>) a Newton District Court judge and former court officer with obstruction of justice:

"The Department of Justice's decision to bring this case is preposterous, ironic, and deeply damaging to the rule of law.

"In contrast to Attorney General William Barr's famously narrow view of what constitutes obstruction of justice—at least when it comes to President Trump—the Department of Justice has now charged a state judge and court security officer based on a theory of obstruction that is shockingly aggressive. In this case, like so many others across Massachusetts, an ICE officer staked out a state court and made it difficult for court officials to do their job, which is to ensure that people in state court have access to justice. But instead of rethinking its own awful behavior, the federal government has now charged a judge and a court officer with crimes. This decision seems to have little to do with the actual facts, and everything to do with enforcing the president's anti-immigrant agenda.

"This prosecution is nothing less than an assault on justice in Massachusetts courts, and it will further undermine community trust and safety. If Attorney General Barr really meant what he said about obstruction of justice when he held his press conference about

President Trump—and even if he didn't mean a word of it—he should immediately order that this case be dropped.”