



The American Board of  
Trial Advocates  
Fort Lauderdale Chapter

Editor

Re: FLABOTA Condemnation of Political Partisanship in Judicial Elections

Dear Editor:

Imagine going to Court knowing that a political party is in control and has all but torn up the US Constitution that guarantees three separate but equal divisions of Government. That is, in essence, what the Republican Party of Florida (RPF) is trying to accomplish with its September 21, 2012 decision to actively oppose the merit retention of three Florida Supreme Court Justices in the upcoming November 6, 2012 election.

In 1976, the Florida merit retention system for judicial officers was established to rid the Courts of politics. Since that time, no Florida political party has ever crossed the non-partisan line to actively campaign against individual Justices in an effort to sway justice toward a particular ideological platform.

The campaign being waged to remove Justices Lewis, Pariente and Quince from their respective positions on the Florida Supreme Court is a political power-grab, designed to weaken and adversely influence the power of all Florida courts.

The Fort Lauderdale Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) is made up of civil trial lawyers, both Republicans and Democrats, committed to preserving and protecting the 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment right to jury trial and the independence of the judiciary. As a group we are committed to the rule of law and not to any political party. We believe in and strive to preserve an independent judiciary, as envisioned by the U.S. Constitution, with the rule of law being free from political influence.

The Fort Lauderdale Chapter of ABOTA calls upon all citizens who believe in the objective rule of law, equal protection, and an independent judiciary to tell the Florida Republican leadership to immediately cease all efforts to stack the Court and weaken Florida's Justice System.

Sincerely,

*Diana Santa Maria*

Diana Santa Maria  
President, Fort Lauderdale Chapter  
American Board of Trial Advocates

cc: Mitchell Chester, Esq.  
[www.abotafll.org](http://www.abotafll.org)