

Countering Disinformation in the Courts: A Threat to Judicial Independence and Democracy



The spread of disinformation by public and private entities on social media platforms has exacerbated the decline in faith in the courts, both in the United States and Canada. Not only have judges and other judicial officers encountered threats of violence; they have been targets of rising real-world violence driven by disinformation. This session will explore how state and non-state actors are threatening judicial independence and democracy itself through social media and what can be done about it.

Learning objectives:

- Understand the role of adversary nations and social media in the declining faith in the courts.
- Understand the relationship between national security and trust in the courts.
- Identify strategies and resources for addressing the threat.

Speakers:



Suzanne Spaulding

Suzanne Spaulding is a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), where she established the Defending Democratic Institutions project. Previously, she served as undersecretary for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), where she led the National Protection and Programs Directorate, now called the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), charged with strengthening cybersecurity and protecting the nation's critical infrastructure, including election infrastructure. She also served as a member of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission. Ms. Spaulding has worked in the executive branch in Republican and Democratic administrations and on both sides of the aisle in Congress. She was general counsel for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and minority staff director for the House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. She also spent six years at the Central Intelligence Agency, where she was assistant general counsel and the legal adviser to the director's Nonproliferation Center. She was executive director of two congressionally created commissions, on weapons of mass destruction and on terrorism. She was managing partner of the Harbour Group, a principal in the Bingham Consulting Group, and of counsel to Bingham McCutchen LLP. Ms. Spaulding currently serves on a number of corporate boards and advisory boards and is a member of the Homeland Security Experts Group (HSEG).