

Judges who rule against Trump are getting ‘pizza doxings,’ an ominous gesture that often comes with death threats



This image provided by Esther Salas shows U.S. District Judge Esther Salas, in her courtroom in Newark, N.J., March 20, 2025.

Esther Salas via AP

In 2020, a disgruntled litigant posing as a deliveryman opened fire at the New Jersey home of District Judge Esther Salas, killing her 20-year-old son Daniel Anderl. Five years later, as President Donald Trump [steps up his criticism of federal judges](#) who have blocked some of his agenda, dozens of judges have had unsolicited pizzas delivered to their homes, often in Daniel Anderl's name.

District Judge John J. McConnell, Jr. of Rhode Island, who stalled Trump's initial round of across-the-board spending cuts, is among those who received pizzas in Anderl's name. His courtroom also has been flooded by threatening calls, including one profanity-laced one that called for his assassination.

McConnell, Jr. played a recording of the call during an unusual discussion Thursday where multiple federal judges discussed threats they have received — a notable conversation because judges usually only speak publicly from the bench and through their rulings, and rarely if ever, about personal threats and attacks. Salas and others said the number of attacks has escalated in recent months.

Without using his name, Salas called on Trump and his allies to tone down the rhetoric and stop demonizing the judiciary, for fear of what more could happen.

“We’re used to being appealed. But keep it on the merits, stop demonizing us,” Salas said. “They’re inviting people to do us harm.”

Thursday’s event was sponsored by Speak up for Justice, a nonpartisan group supporting an independent judiciary. District Judge John C. Coughenour of Washington recalled having a police SWAT team called to his home to respond to a false report of an attack after Coughenour in January halted Trump’s executive order ending birthright citizenship for children of people in the country illegally.

District Judge Robert S. Lasnik of Washington also had pizzas delivered in Anderl’s name to both his home and those of his two adult children, each in different cities, after an article in which he was quoted as being critical of attacks on judges was picked up by a television station in the Pacific Northwest, where he hears cases.

“The message to me was ‘we know where you live, we know where your kids live, and they could end up dead like Daniel Anderl did,’” Lasnik said in an interview.

Salas says U.S. Marshals have told her of more than 100 cases of so-called “pizza doxings,” unwanted deliveries to the homes of federal judges and their families, since 2024, with most occurring this year. Salas added that she’s heard of additional cases targeting state judges in states ranging from Colorado to Florida, incidents that wouldn’t be tracked by Marshals, who protect federal judges.

“This is not some random, silly act, this is a targeted, concentrated, coordinated attack on judges,” Salas said in an interview, “and yet we don’t hear any condemnation from Washington.”

Salas, nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, in 2022 was critical of protests at the homes of Republican-nominated Supreme Court justices who revoked women’s right to have an abortion, which were followed by the arrest of a man at the home of Justice Brett Kavanaugh who said he was there to assassinate the justice. Salas said both sides of the political aisle have used worrying rhetoric about judges, but it’s reached a new peak since Trump took office.

“I’ve often referred to it as a bonfire that I believe the current administration is throwing accelerants on,” Salas said.

Trump himself has [led the charge](#) against judges, often going after them by name on social media. He’s said judges who’ve ruled against his administration are “sick,” “very dangerous” and “lunatic.” Trump’s allies have amplified his rhetoric and called for [impeaching judges](#) who rule against the president or simply disobeying their rulings. Earlier this year, several judges at the panel noted, Rep. Andy Ogles of Tennessee had a “wanted” poster of judges who’d crossed the president hanging outside his congressional office.

Lasnik said many judges appointed by presidents of both parties have told him of concerns but are nervous about discussing the issue openly.

“A lot of them don’t know how to speak up and are afraid of crossing a line somewhere where they would get a judicial complaint like judge Boasberg did,” Lasnik said, referring to District Judge James E. Boasberg of D.C., who infuriated the Trump administration by finding they [likely committed criminal contempt](#) by disobeying his order to turn around a deportation flight to El Salvador.

Though Chief Justice John Roberts has [come to Boasberg’s defense](#), Trump’s Department of Justice this week filed a complaint against Boasberg over comments he made at a judicial conference that other judges worry the Trump administration won’t obey their orders. Last month, Trump’s Justice Department took the extraordinary step of [suing every federal judge in Maryland](#) over rules governing how they handle immigration cases.

More than five dozen judges who've ruled against Trump are receiving enhanced online protection, including scrubbing their identifying information from websites, according to [two Trump-appointed judges](#) who wrote Congress urging more funding for judicial security. In 2022, Congress passed a law named after Daniel Aderl allowing judges to sue internet sites to take down identifying information.