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A Blind Eye on Judges

To the Editor:

"Judges Should Police Themselves" (editorial, May 18) is right. A judicial inspector general to investigate sitting federal judges, an idea being considered by Congress, would threaten judicial independence.

That does not mean, though, that Congress has no role to play. The time to deal with the problem is when the Senate exercises its obligation of advice and consent on nominations to the federal bench. Repeatedly, senators have ignored serious ethical violations in confirming judges.

In particular, lower court judges have been promoted to appellate courts, and even to the Supreme Court, despite violations of their obligations to recuse themselves when required to do so by federal law.

If senators continue to overlook ethical violations, they should not then profess to be shocked that judges and justices are increasingly disregarding those ethical obligations.

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