

Targeting of law firms and lawyers under the second Trump administration

The second administration of U.S. president Donald Trump has taken unprecedented actions targeting American law firms and lawyers that had previously represented positions adverse to Trump.^{[1][2][3]} This targeting of political opponents includes issuing executive orders and presidential memoranda limiting the ability of attorneys to obtain access to government buildings, stopping any consideration for future employment with the government, canceling government contracts, and preventing any company that uses such a firm from obtaining federal contracts.^{[4][5]}

President Trump signed memoranda and orders that both threatened attorneys in general and targeted certain law firms and lawyers in particular.^{[4][6]} The Trump administration made efforts to influence practices by law firms, such as directing the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to send letters to 20 law firms demanding information about each firm's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) employment practices.^[7] Law firms and lawyers have responded in a variety of ways to these actions, with some firms and attorneys that were specific targets suing the Trump administration in response, resulting in six separate lawsuits against the administration.^{[8][9]} Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison (Paul Weiss) is the sole law firm targeted by an executive order that did not sue the administration and instead made a deal with the administration to avoid sanctions and restore access.^{[7][8]}

In addition to Paul Weiss, eight other firms made preemptive deals with Trump to avoid being similarly targeted by executive orders.^{[10][7][8]} As part of the settlements, the nine law firms have agreed to provide a total of \$940 million in *pro bono* work to efforts supported by the president and the firms.^[11] Trump later issued an executive order stating that the attorney general should create a mechanism to provide *pro bono* services to law enforcement officers who unjustly incur expenses defending their actions.^[10] Some have asserted that Trump intends to have the firms that settled

Targeting of law firms and lawyers under the second Trump administration

Dates: February–April, 2025

Firms specifically targeted by a presidential memo or executive order:

- Covington & Burling
- Elias Law Group
- Jenner & Block
- Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison
- Perkins Coie
- Susman Godfrey
- Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

Attorneys specifically targeted by a presidential memo or executive order:

- Alvin Bragg
- Norman Eisen
- Marc Elias
- Letitia James
- Peter Koski
- Lisa Monaco
- Mark Pomerantz
- James Quarles
- Jack Smith
- Andrew Weissmann
- Mark Zaid
- Aaron Zebley

Litigation:

- *Doe 1 v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

provide such legal work.^[10] The administration also threatened to bring attorneys before disciplinary proceedings in an executive order, while individuals close to the administration simultaneously campaigned to become officials of the District of Columbia Bar, who would then oversee those proceedings for many of the attorneys.^{[7][12]}

Legal experts have stated that this effort of targeting of lawyers and law firms for the clients they represent could intimidate lawyers from representing certain clients in the future.^[4] Those firms that have sued over Executive Orders, to June 2025, have each prevailed in court, with favorable judicial rulings.^[13]

Actions by the Trump administration

Presidential memorandum against Covington & Burling

On February 25, 2025, Trump issued a presidential memorandum directing the suspension of security clearances for Peter Koski and all members, partners, and employees of Covington & Burling LLP who assisted former special counsel Jack Smith during his tenure.^[14] The memorandum also instructed federal agencies to terminate any engagements with Covington & Burling and to review all government contracts with the firm, aligning agency funding decisions with the administration's priorities.^[14] Koski worked as a prosecutor at the U.S. Department of Justice investigating and prosecuting public corruption with Jack Smith, and later represented him on a *pro bono* basis.^[7] Smith led federal investigations and prosecutions of Trump in both an election obstruction case and a classified documents case.^[1] Covington & Burling responded by affirming that they would continue to represent Jack Smith despite the action against the firm.^[8]



Jack Smith in 2023

- *Jenner & Block LLP v. Department of Justice*
- *Perkins Coie LLP v. Department of Justice*
- *Susman Godfrey LLP v. Executive Office of the President*
- *Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr v. Executive Office of President*
- *Zaid v. Executive Office of the President*

\$940 million *pro bono* services promised:

- A&O Shearman: \$125 million
- Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft: \$100 million
- Kirkland & Ellis: \$125 million
- Latham & Watkins: \$125 million
- Milbank: \$100 million
- Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison: \$40 million
- Simpson Thacher & Bartlett: \$125 million
- Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom: \$100 million
- Willkie Farr & Gallagher: \$100 million

Executive Order 14230 against Perkins Coie and related lawsuit

On March 6, 2025, Trump issued Executive Order 14230 titled "Addressing Risks from Perkins Coie LLP."^[15] The order suspended security clearances for the firm's employees, restricted their access to federal buildings, directed agencies to review and potentially terminate contracts with the firm, and ordered the government not to hire attorneys from the firm.^[15] The administration cited the firm's prior association

Perkins Coie LLP v. DOJ

with Hillary Clinton in her 2016 presidential campaign and its involvement in commissioning the opposition research that led to the Steele dossier, as well as criticizing the firm's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies as undermining national interests.^[15]

In response to this action, Perkins Coie sued the Trump administration and stated that it was taking this action to protect the firm, to protect its clients, and to protect the legal system from an "unlawful attack on the Freedom of all Americans to select their counsel of choice without fear of retribution or punishment."^{[7][8]} Perkins Coie also stated that they believed Trump's executive action was retribution against the firm for connections with Trump's political opponents and designed to "chill future lawyers from representing particular clients."^[7]

On March 12, Judge Beryl Howell of the US District Court for the District of Columbia temporarily blocked part of the order against Perkins Coie related to barring attorneys in the law firm from entering government buildings as a violation of the First Amendment.^{[4][16][7]} Howell said that the order likely violated several constitutional amendments and "casts a chilling harm of blizzard proportion across the entire legal profession."^[17] Howell also stated that many lawyers were watching this case in horror.^[4] Howell, an appointee of former president Barack Obama, rejected a motion by the Department of Justice to have her removed from the case for being "insufficiently impartial".^[18] Perkins Coie was the first law firm to file suit to block the executive orders, and others would later file similar suits.^[19] Over 500 law firms signed an amicus brief in support of Perkins Coie's lawsuit.^[20]

On May 2, Howell permanently blocked the executive order, characterizing it as "an unprecedented attack" on the legal system and ruling that it "violates the Constitution and is thus null and void."^[21] The Department of Justice filed a notice on June 30 that it would appeal Howell's ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.^[22]

Executive Order 14237 against Paul Weiss and settlement

On March 14, 2025, Trump issued Executive Order 14237 titled "Addressing Risks From Paul Weiss" that suspended security clearances for the firm's employees, restricted their access to federal buildings, and directed agencies to review and potentially terminate contracts with the firm.^[23]

In support of this action, the administration cited the firm's prior association with attorney Mark Pomerantz, who had helped prosecute Trump for falsifying business records; the firm's involvement in pro bono suits against those who participated in January 6; and asserted that the firm used diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies to discriminate against its employees.^{[23][1][24][25][26]} On March 19, Paul Weiss told a judge in a New Jersey case that it had been fired by a client because of the order.^[27]



Court United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Started March 11, 2025

Docket nos. 1:25-cv-00716 (https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69725919/perkins-coie-llp-v-us-department-of-justice/)

Court membership

Judge sitting Beryl Howell



Judge Howell in 2018

On March 20, the firm struck a deal with the Trump administration that the government would rescind the executive order in return for Paul Weiss committing \$40 million toward *pro bono* legal services in support of Trump administration goals, ending diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, and issuing a public statement that Pomerantz had committed wrongdoing.^[28]

Trump then issued Executive Order 14244 titled "Addressing Remedial Action by Paul Weiss", rescinding order 14237, and stating that Paul Weiss recognized the "wrongdoing" of Pomerantz, agreed to policy changes to promote equality, agreed to a policy of political neutrality for hiring and representing clients, agreed to take on *pro bono* that would represent the "full political spectrum", committed to merit-based employment practices instead of DEI, and dedicated \$40 million *pro bono* legal services during Trump's term to support "assisting our Nation's veterans, fairness in the justice system, and combating anti-Semitism; and other similar initiatives."^{[29][30][31]}

In response to the statements by the firm and the Trump administration, Pomerantz said that he had done nothing wrong in his role as a prosecutor.^[27]

The settlement by Paul Weiss was widely criticized,^[32] and viewed as "humiliating" in the legal profession, since no explicit requests were made of the firm by Trump.^[33] Journalist and legal commentator Mike Masnick described Paul Weiss's actions as "In short, they caved. They folded like a cheap suit. They made it clear that Paul Weiss not only won't fight for its clients, it won't fight for itself."^[34] Harvard Law School lecturer Deepak Gupta similarly asked: "Would you want to be represented by a law firm that can't even stand up for itself? A law firm that might sell you out to the federal government to save its own skin?"^[35]

The firm said that it deliberated on whether to fight the executive order but that even fighting it would be problematic because doing so "would not solve the fundamental problem, which was that clients perceived our firm as being *persona non grata* with the Administration."^[7] Brad Karp wrote an email to staff stating that the firm struck the deal because the firm could not stop the effects of the executive order, that clients had told the firm that they were going to leave the firm as a result of the order, and that the firm "would not be able to survive a protracted dispute with the Administration."^[7] The head of Paul Weiss stated that the executive order could have easily "destroyed our firm."^[7]

In February 2026, the revelation of Brad Karp's personal relationship with convicted criminal and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein was followed by Karp's resignation as the chair of Paul Weiss.^{[36][37][38]} The following month, Bloomberg Law reported, in March 2026, that the firm — which had positioned itself "as a bulwark against Trump" in 2018 — agreeing to provide \$40 million in legal services to the Trump administration, one year prior, had weakened its reputation, and that other law firms struggled to meet the needs of *pro bono* work no longer performed by Paul Weiss as a result.^[39]

Presidential memorandum against specific lawyers and related lawsuit

On March 21, 2025, Trump issued a presidential memorandum, "Rescinding Security Clearances and Access to Classified Information from Specified Individuals".^[40] It revoked the clearances and access of 14 individuals,^[41] including several lawyers: Alvin Bragg, Norman Eisen, Letitia James, Lisa Monaco, Andrew Weissmann, and Mark Zaid.^[40] Zaid has represented whistleblowers in both

Zaid v. Executive Office of the President

Republican and Democratic administrations, among them the whistleblower whose complaint led to Trump's first impeachment, and he has filed suit challenging the constitutionality of the memorandum.^[42]

Memorandum generally against firms including Elias Law Group

On March 22, Trump issued a presidential memorandum, "Preventing Abuses of the Legal System and the Federal Court", targeting lawyers and law firms more generally if they filed "frivolous, unreasonable, and vexatious litigation" against the administration, as judged by the attorney general.^[6] The memo, again including revocation of security clearances and preventing any company that uses such a firm

from getting federal contracts, has been seen as a threatening escalation and broadening of the president's campaign of retaliation against judges and lawyers who do not share his political views.^{[43][44]} A variety of people in the legal profession condemned the memorandum as an attempt to intimidate firms so that they would not take on clients who oppose government actions.^[45]

In the memorandum, Trump specifically mentioned the Elias Law Group LLP as being "deeply involved" in creating the "false" Steele dossier to influence the 2016 United States presidential election and sought to conceal the involvement of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in the creation of the dossier.^[6] Marc Elias, the chair of Elias Law Group, responded to the allegations by claiming that Trump's goal was to have "lawyers and law firms to capitulate and cower until there is no one left to oppose his Administration in court" and that the Elias Law Group will continue to "fight for democracy" by not negotiating with Trump about who they represent and what cases they bring.^[8]

Executive Order 14246 against Jenner & Block and related lawsuit

On March 25, 2025, Trump issued Executive Order 14246 titled "Addressing Risks From Jenner & Block."^[4] The order suspended security clearances for the firm's employees, restricted their access to federal buildings, and directed federal agencies to review and potentially terminate contracts with the firm.^[4] The administration cited the firm's prior association with attorney Andrew Weissmann, who had been involved in the Mueller special counsel investigation, as well as criticizing the firm's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies.^{[4][18]}

Jenner & Block had represented clients that were against the Trump administration's positions in both its first and second term including supporting lawsuits regarding gender transition treatments, asylum rights, and funding of the Environmental Protection Agency.^[4] The firm also employs



Court	<u>United States District Court for the District of Columbia</u>
Started	May 5, 2025
Docket nos.	<u>1:25-cv-01365 (https://www.courtlisten.com/docket/70139392/zaid-v-executive-office-of-the-president/)</u>

Jenner & Block LLP v. U.S. Department of Justice



Court	<u>United States District Court for the District of Columbia</u>
Started	March 28, 2025
Docket nos.	<u>1:25-cv-00916 (https://clearinghouse.net/case/46298/)</u>

various individuals that served in Obama and Biden administrations, along with those who assisted with the investigation of the January 6 attack and Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.^[4] Officials from the White House stated that the administration was taking actions against Jenner & Block because of the firm's "weaponization of the legal system against American principles and values."^[4] Jenner & Block stated that this order is very similar to those found unconstitutional, and that the firm was dedicated to serving its clients interest with integrity and would pursue its legal remedies to address the order.^{[4][8]}

On March 28, Jenner & Block sued the administration, and Judge John D. Bates, an appointee of President George W. Bush, quickly issued a temporary restraining order holding that the executive order likely violated the First, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.^[46] In May 2025, it was revealed through litigation that the government had suspended the security clearance for a Jenner & Block lawyer due to the outstanding executive order.^[47] On May 23, Bates ruled that the executive order was unconstitutional, as it "seeks to chill legal representation the administration doesn't like" in an effort to insulate the government from challenges.^[48] On July 21, the Department of Justice filed notice that it would appeal Bates' ruling.^[49]

Court membership

Judge sitting John D. Bates



Andrew Weissmann in 2024

Executive Order 14250 against WilmerHale and related lawsuit

On March 27, 2025, Trump issued Executive Order 14250 titled "Addressing Risks From WilmerHale," targeting the law firm Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr (WilmerHale).^[50] The order suspended security clearances for the firm's employees, restricted their access to federal buildings, and directed federal agencies to review and potentially terminate contracts with the firm.^[50] The administration cited the firm's prior association with Special Counsel Robert Mueller and his team, as well as criticizing the firm's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies.^[50]

On March 28, 2025, WilmerHale filed suit against the executive order and hired famed conservative jurist Paul Clement to represent them. Clement said that this case was "absolutely critical to vindicating the First Amendment, our adversarial system of justice, and the rule of law."^[8]

In response to the lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Richard Leon issued a temporary restraining order blocking parts of the executive order stating in his opinion that "[t]here is no doubt this retaliatory action chills speech and legal advocacy, or that it qualifies as a constitutional harm"; that WilmerHale "faces crippling losses and its very survival is at stake"; that the harms suffered by the firm "would be so severe and would spill over to its clients and the justice system at large"; and that the "public interest demands protecting

Wilmer v. Executive Office of President



Court United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Started March 28, 2025

Docket nos. 1:25-cv-00917 (https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69807328/wilmer-cutler-pickering-hale-and-dorr-llp-v-executive-office-of-the/)

Court membership

Judge sitting Richard J. Leon

against harms of this magnitude."^[51]^[46] In May 2025, the firm said that the government had suspended the security clearance for two WilmerHale lawyers due to the outstanding executive order.^[47] On May 27, Judge Leon struck down the executive order as unconstitutional, writing that "to rule otherwise would be unfaithful to the judgment and vision of the Founding Fathers!"^[52] The DOJ filed a notice of appeal on July 25.^[53]



Aaron Zebley at Robert Mueller's House Intelligence Committee testimony in 2019

Executive Order 14263 against Susman Godfrey and related lawsuit

On April 9, 2025, Trump issued Executive Order 14263 titled "Addressing Risks From Susman Godfrey."^[54] The order alleged that the firm engaged in activities detrimental to U.S. interests, including representing Dominion Voting Systems in its lawsuits related to false claims that the 2020 presidential election was rigged against Trump including lawsuits against Fox News; Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal attorney; and Sidney Powell, Trump's previous campaign attorney.^[54] The order sought to suspend the firm's security clearances, restrict access to federal buildings, and direct agencies to review and potentially terminate contracts with the firm.^[54]

On April 11, Susman Godfrey LLP filed suit against the Trump administration, challenging the executive order as unconstitutional and asking the judge to freeze the order.^[55] The firm is represented by Donald Verrilli, who was solicitor general in the Obama administration.^[55] Susman Godfrey said that it believed in the rule of law, took the duty to uphold it seriously, and would fight the "unconstitutional order".^[56]

On April 15, after a hearing that same day, District Judge Loren AliKhan granted^[57] Susman Godfrey LLP's motion for a temporary restraining order, saying "The executive order specifically targets lawyers because of the clients that they represented. The executive order is based on a personal vendetta against a particular firm. And, frankly, I think the framers of our Constitution would view it as a shocking abuse of power."^[58]

On April 23, Susman Godfrey filed a motion for summary judgement and permanent injunction.^[59] Judge AliKhan ruled that the executive order was unconstitutional and granted the permanent injunction on June 27.^[60]

Susman Godfrey LLP v. Executive Office of the President



Court	<u>United States District Court for the District of Columbia</u>
Started	April 11, 2025
Docket nos.	1:25-cv-01107 (https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69881953/susman-godfrey-llp-v-executive-office-of-the-president/)
	Court membership
Judge sitting	<u>Loren AliKhan</u>

Deals with firms that wanted to avoid being subject to an executive order

On March 28, 2025, it was announced that the law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP (Skadden) had agreed to make a deal with the Trump administration.^[46] This was the second deal, following the one that Paul Weiss had struck with the administration on March 20, and the first deal from a firm that had not been the subject of an executive order.^[46] As part of the deal, the Trump administration would not issue an executive order against the firm, and in return the firm agreed to provide \$100 million in "pro bono" work "to causes that the President and Skadden both support."^{[8][46]} Trump stated on Truth Social that the firm had also committed to not engage in the future in any "illegal DEI discrimination and preferences".^[46] Jeremy London, Skadden's executive partner, stated that it was "pleased to have achieved a successful agreement with President Trump and his Administration" and that it believed "that this outcome is in the best interests of our clients, our people, and our Firm."^[46] Following the announced deal, senior associate Brenna Frey resigned publicly with a statement issued on LinkedIn.^[8]

On April 1, 2025, it was announced that Willkie Farr & Gallagher (Willkie), a firm notable for having former second gentleman of the United States Douglas Emhoff as a partner, had reached a similar deal with Trump that Skadden had to avoid being targeted by the Trump administration.^[61] As with Skadden, Willkie agreed to "provide \$100 million in legal services and not engage in diversity, equity and inclusion programs."^[61]

On April 2, Trump announced that he had a deal with Milbank similar to the deals with Skadden and Willkie.^[8] According to Trump's announcement, Milbank would agree to end "any DEI-based hiring practices", and "to perform at least \$100 million worth of pro bono legal work to advance causes supported by the Trump administration, such as 'assisting veterans' and 'combatting antisemitism.'"^[8] Milbank also promised that its *pro bono* commitment would ensure that the firm took on cases that included "the full political spectrum, including Conservative ideals."^[8] Milbank's chairman, Scott Edelman, stated that the firm was "pleased we were so quickly able to find common ground" with the administration and stated in a letter to his staff that "[w]ith this agreement, we believe we have gone a long way to putting these issues behind us...in a way that allows us to continue to focus on the Firm's values and missions, including with respect to *pro bono* and our hope to foster an inclusive, non-discriminatory community where all of our members have an equal opportunity to succeed."^[8]

A similar deal to those above was reached on April 11, with firms Kirkland & Ellis, Latham & Watkins, A&O Shearman, and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett each agreeing to provide \$125 million in pro bono legal services towards causes supported by Trump; while firm Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft (Cadwalader) agreed to provide \$100 million of such services.^[62]

In July Reuters reported that Skadden and Milbank had "joined efforts to challenge the administration".^[63]

Congressional investigation

Representative Jamie Raskin, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, and Senator Richard Blumenthal, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, wrote to the White House and the firms, requesting information about the deals.^[64] On April 22, 2025, Raskin and Blumenthal stated that the replies they had received so far were "inadequate".^[64] Blumenthal voiced concern that the minimal responses suggest that the firms are hiding details and underscore the need to find out if they are being coerced "into providing free legal services to the president's pet causes".^[64]

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission letters and related lawsuit

In addition to the executive actions and presidential memoranda that focused on specific law firms, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) also sent letters on March 17, 2025, to twenty law firms, demanding information about their employment practices, and telling them that they were being investigated in relation to their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices.^{[65][7]}

The law firms that received letters from Acting Chair Andrea Lucas include: A&O Shearman; Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; Cooley LLP; Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP; Goodwin Procter LLP; Hogan Lovells LLP; Kirkland & Ellis LLP; Latham & Watkins LLP; McDermott Will & Emery; Milbank LLP; Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP; Morrison & Foerster LLP; Perkins Coie; Reed Smith; Ropes & Gray LLP; Sidley Austin LLP; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; White & Case LLP; and WilmerHale.^{[7][65]}

On April 15, three law students filed suit against the EEOC, alleging that it had exceeded its authority when it demanded information about firms' employment practices.^[9] The students had applied to a number of the firms targeted by the EEOC, and also claimed that the release of their information would constitute a breach of privacy.^[9]

On May 22, 2025, Bloomberg Law reported that Goodwin in response to the EEOC investigations had provided "more than 200 pages" to the Trump administration regarding its employment practices, had ended its association with Sponsors for Educational Opportunities legal fellowship, suspended its relationship with the Leadership Council for Legal Diversity, would no longer participate in Mansfield certification, and ended requirements for applicants to its fellowship program to demonstrate a "commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion".^[66]

Executive Order 14288 on pro bono for law enforcement

On April 28, 2025, Trump issued Executive Order 14288 titled "Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens" that ordered the Attorney General to "create a mechanism" to provide resources to "law enforcement officers" that "unjustly" incurred legal expenses in the performance of their duties and that this "mechanism" includes the use of pro bono assistance from lawyers.^[67]

Of the nine firms that struck deals with the Trump administration for up to \$940 million, eight of the agreements discuss providing pro bono services to "law enforcement."^[10] As a result, some have asserted that Trump intends to use those firms that he settled with to provide the pro bono services to law enforcement under a term of their deal. One "big lawyer partner" stated on Bluesky in response to the announcement: "Bet the Skadden associates are jazzed to learn they will be representing the DEFENSE side of Sec. 1983 cases pro bono."^[10]

Doe 1 v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission



Court	<u>United States District Court for the District of Columbia</u>
Started	April 15, 2025
Docket nos.	<u>1:25-cv-01124 (https://www.courtlist.com/docket/69895267/doe-1-v-eoc/)</u>
	Court membership
Judge sitting	<u>Reggie Walton</u>

Marc Elias, who was specifically mentioned in a different executive order, posted on social media: "Hey Paul Weiss associates — meet your new pro bono clients. It's ok, the Skadden associates are getting the coal companies."^[10]

Attempt to win positions in the District of Columbia Bar

The District of Columbia Bar (DCB), which has over 120,000 members, has the power to decide who gets to be barred to practice within the District of Columbia as a lawyer and also oversees disciplinary actions including disbaring attorneys due to misconduct.^[12] The Trump administration has been critical of bar associations' review of Trump officials' actions and disbarment proceedings in the past.^[12]

In its executive actions, Trump made threats of potential disciplinary actions against lawyers.^[7] Critics claimed that President Trump's actions "will have a chilling effect on those taking on litigation against the administration — encouraging the attorney general to refer attorneys for disciplinary action if it is determined they have filed 'frivolous, unreasonable, and vexatious litigation' ".^[7] The media noted that these threats also corresponded with people linked to the Trump administration running for the DCB, the organization that oversees disciplinary actions for lawyers barred in DC.^[7] Bradley Bondi, who is the brother of the Attorney General Pam Bondi, ran for president of the DCB, and Alicia Long, a deputy to Ed Martin who was Trump's interim US attorney for the District of Columbia, ran for treasurer of the DCB.^[12] The election for these positions runs from April to June 2025.^[12]

On June 9, 2025, Bradley Bondi lost the DCB presidential election with less than 10% of the vote to employment attorney Diane Seltzer with a record turnout of more than 38,000 voters more than "five times as many voters in a typical election".^[68] Alicia Long also lost, to Microsoft attorney Amanda Molina who won about 75% of the vote.^[69]

Reactions

The series of actions against lawyers and law firms quickly started having the effect of making it harder for those who oppose Trump administration actions to find lawyers who would agree to represent them.^{[63][70][71]} Law firms that had not been targeted by Trump responded to his attacks on the profession in varied ways. The initial response was often silence, although a few firms issued public statements early on, such as Albert Sellars LLP, whose response was a concise "Fuck that fascist nonsense."^[72] *Reuters* analyzed the websites of the 50 highest-grossing law firms, and found that as of July 31, 2025, 46 had removed or edited content related to diversity, equity and inclusion; 17 had edited text about their *pro bono* services in areas like immigration and racial justice; and three featured work consistent with the administration's public goals, for example, combating antisemitism and assisting veterans. A *pro bono* director at one firm said that its *pro bono* work was now carried out confidentially. The Applesseed Center for Law and Justice in the District of Columbia similarly reported that firms providing *pro bono* assistance had asked to remain anonymous. *Reuters'* assessment of court dockets found "a sharp decline in major firms challenging government policies".^[63]

A significant number of firms signed on to an open letter to the attorney general, asking her "to oppose attacks on the legal profession, on judges, and on the rule of law and to ensure that the Department of Justice uses its full power to protect the legal profession and equal justice under law for all people."^{[73][74]} Signatories to the

letter also included over 4,000 lawyers and legal organizations.^{[75][73]}

Claire Finkelstein, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said the goal of these executive orders was to "intimidate professionals, to intimidate the legal profession from engaging in professional activities that go against Donald Trump and the current administration."^[41] University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) law professor Scott Cummings and a former senior Justice Department official have both called Trump's moves attacking law firms and targeting lawyers "authoritarian".^{[76][18]} Cummings, who directs UCLA's program on legal ethics and democracy, also wrote about Trump's strategic inclusion of *pro bono* work in the agreements he made with law firms: not only does this provide legal support for causes Trump wants to support, but it reduces the amount of *pro bono* services that the firms can donate to organizations whose work Trump wishes to thwart, and it creates conflicts of interest for the firms.^[77] Senior American Civil Liberties Union attorney Ben Wizner said Trump's threats are an attempt to "chill and intimidate" lawyers who challenge him.^[78] Former UK Supreme Court Justice Lord Sumption said: "It's the kind of thing that happened in Italy and Germany between the wars. It is something that is a disgrace to the political and legal traditions of the most ancient democracy in the world."^[79]

The American Bar Association released a statement encouraging everyone in the profession to stand up against Trump's "efforts to undermine the courts and the legal profession", following that with another statement joined by over 50 smaller bar associations across the country.^{[80][81]} The deans of nearly 80 law schools from across the country signed a joint letter condemning the administration's actions, stating that "Punishing lawyers for their representation and advocacy violates the First Amendment and undermines the Sixth Amendment."^[82] Democratic state attorneys general sent a joint letter as well, condemning Trump's attempts to undermine the rule of law.^[83] Eighty-two law school professors of Harvard Law School's 118 active professors signed an open letter condemning the Trump administration's actions against law firms.^[84] Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) attorney and agency pro bono leader Justin B. Finn called on bar associations to obscure the nature of pro bono service by adopting Helpers' Verification Programs "to provide pro bono attorneys with subject-neutral and organization-anonymous verification of pro bono service upon request."^[85]

On June 16, 2025, the American Bar Association (ABA) sued the Trump administration, describing the executive orders as part of a policy intended "to intimidate and coerce law firms and lawyers to refrain from challenging the President or his Administration in court, or from even speaking publicly in support of policies or causes that the President does not like." The ABA is represented in the suit by Susman Godfrey, a firm targeted by one of the executive orders.^{[86][87]}

Attorney departures and related actions

Rachel Cohen, an associate at Skadden, organized an open letter in mid-March, inviting other associates to sign on.^[88] The letter, addressed to large law firms, called on them to take a stand. As of March 27, 2025, over 1500 associates had signed it.^{[88][89]} On March 21, Cohen also submitted a conditional resignation letter, urging Skadden to fight Trump's actions; instead, they locked her out of their systems the same day.^[90] Cohen called the administration's actions an "existential" risk to the matter of law, stating that firms need to be united in condemnation, and that high-profile U.S. lawyers "have an obligation to protect [the] legal system itself."^[7]

After Skadden approached the Trump administration to reach an agreement before being targeted with an executive order, two other associates, Brenna Trout Frey and Thomas Sipp, resigned.^[91] Trout Frey characterized the agreement as "a craven attempt to sacrifice the rule of law for self-preservation", and added

that "if my employer cannot stand up for the rule of law, then I cannot ethically continue to work for them."^[91] She encouraged her colleagues to join her.^[91] Sipp said that "we are sliding into an autocracy where those in power are above the rule of law. ... Skadden is on the wrong side of history. I could no longer stay knowing that someday I would have to explain why I stayed."^[92] Many alumni from both Skadden and Paul Weiss signed open letters condemning their choice to agree to Trump's terms, expressing disappointment and outrage.^[93] The letter from Paul Weiss alumni stated "Instead of a ringing defense of the values of democracy, we witnessed a craven surrender to, and thus complicity in, what is perhaps the gravest threat to the independence of the legal profession since at least the days of Senator Joseph McCarthy."^[93]

Abbe Lowell, a defense attorney who has represented high-profile clients such as Hunter Biden and Jared Kushner, decided to leave his partnership at Winston & Strawn and launch a small firm, Lowell & Associates, to represent those who were targeted by the Trump administration.^[94] He hired Rachel Cohen and Brenna Trout Frey, who had left Skadden in protest of its deal with the administration.^[95] The firm also represents Mark Zaid and New York Attorney General Letitia James, two of the lawyers singled out by Trump. Lowell said that although the firm's most important commitment is to his clients, he also aims to defend the legal system by upholding the rule of law.^[95]

There were reports in April and May 2025 that Cadwalader was suffering from numerous attorney departures as a result of the deal made with the Trump administration that was testing the firm.^{[96][97]}

Above the Law published a "Biglaw Spine Index: Response to EOs targeting Biglaw" chart on April 4.^[98]

On April 17, 2025, Rachel Cohen and University of Virginia law professor Kevin Cope, writing in Slate, argued that the law firm executive order incident created a prisoner's dilemma, and they called for law students seeking employment to solve the dilemma by boycotting the capitulating firms.^[99] Others, such as Berkeley Law School Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, also urged law students making career decisions to consider how the targeted firms responded.^[100]

On May 14, 2025, Rachel Cohen along with Andrew Silberstein (a previous associate at Willkie) and a former Kirkland & Ellis associate launched an effort to remove those attorneys that had been executive committee members at the firms that decided to make a deal with Trump from boards of other non-profit organizations and companies.^[101]

Paul, Weiss attorneys Steven Banks and former Homeland Security secretary Jeh Johnson announced their departures from the firm, followed, on May 23, 2025, by The New York Times reporting that partners Karen Dunn, Bill Isaacson, Jeannie Rhee and Jessica Phillips would leave and form their own firm, avoiding President Trump's executive order, which is expected to restrict firm business.^[102]

Administration reaction

In remarks delivered with the Governor of Louisiana, President Trump told reporters that he thinks "The law firms have to behave themselves, and we've proven that."^{[103][104]} White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told The New York Times: "Big Law continues to bend the knee to President Trump because they know they were wrong, and he looks forward to putting their *pro bono* legal concessions toward implementing his America First agenda."^[105]

Following similar deals agreed with the Trump presidency by major law firms Willkie Farr & Gallagher and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom,^[106] the president was quoted as stating^{[106][107][108]}

They're all bending and saying: "Sir, thank you very much." Nobody can believe it. Law firms are just saying: "Where do I sign? Where do I sign?"

On April 8, 2025, Donald Trump commented further on the situation, stating "Have you noticed that lots of law firms have been signing up with Trump?... \$100 million, another \$100 million for, uh, damages that they've done. They give you \$100 million and then they announce that, 'But we have done nothing wrong.' And I agree, they've done nothing wrong. But what the hell, they give me a lot of money considering they've done nothing wrong."^[109]

On March 2, 2026, Department of Justice voluntarily asked the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to dismiss its appeals of the four lower court judgments in the cases.^[110] The Trump administration then changed its mind, and the next day the Department of Justice asked the appeals court to allow it to continue its appeals in the four cases.^[111] Two weeks later, the court granted the Department's motion to withdraw its motion to dismiss the appeals.^[112]

Client responses to firm actions

By June 2025, 11 law firm client companies, including Oracle, Morgan Stanley, Microsoft, and McDonald's were reported as shifting business toward those targeted firms that did not settle with the Trump administration, away from those that had caved in.^{[113][114]} In court filings, among law firms acting against targeted EOs, are reports of some "anxious clients" and loss of business.^[113]

Firms that fought the Executive Orders

Perkins Coie, Wilmer Hale, Jenner & Block and Susman Godfrey are the firms that went to court against these Executive Orders and won favorable judgment. The Department of Justice dropped the cases.^[115]

Firms that did not fight the Executive Orders

Paul Weiss, A&O Shearman; Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft; Kirkland & Ellis; Latham & Watkins; Milbank; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett; Skadden Arps; and Willkie Farr & Gallagher.^[115]

See also

- 2025 dismissals of inspectors general
- 2025 U.S. Department of Justice resignations
- American Bar Association § 2025 federal lawsuit and member targeting by the Trump administration
- *United States v. Russell* (2025)

References

1. Lucas, Ryan (March 19, 2025). "Experts say Trump's targeting of law firms is unprecedented" (<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/19/nx-s1-5323890/experts-say-trumps-targeting-of-law-firms-is-unprecedented>). *NPR*. Retrieved March 20, 2025.
2. Polantz, Katelyn (March 28, 2025). "Law firms with ties to politics and Mueller probe take Trump to court over his executive order" (<https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/28/politics/law-firms-challenge-trump-executive-order>). *CNN*. Retrieved July 30, 2025.
3. Cotter, Dan (April 10, 2025). "Law Firm Independence Under Attack With Executive Orders" (<https://www.acslaw.org/inbrief/law-firm-independence-under-attack-with-executive-orders/>). *American Constitution Society*. Retrieved July 30, 2025.
4. Scarcella, Mike; Thomas, David (March 25, 2025). "Trump targets Jenner & Block in latest executive order aimed at law firms" (https://www.yahoo.com/news/trump-signs-executive-order-against-190149483.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall). *Yahoo News*. Retrieved March 25, 2025.
5. Scarcella, Mike; Merken, Sara; Sloan, Karen (March 21, 2025). "Law firm Paul Weiss defends deal with Trump as lawyers sound alarm" (<https://www.reuters.com/legal/trumps-deal-with-law-firm-paul-weiss-sparks-alarm-among-lawyers-2025-03-21/>). *Reuters*. New York, N.Y. Retrieved March 27, 2025. "[...] marked an unprecedented attack on their ability to do business."
6. Trump, Donald J. (March 22, 2025). "Preventing Abuses of the Legal System and the Federal Court" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/preventing-abuses-of-the-legal-system-and-the-federal-court/>). *whitehouse.gov*. Retrieved April 17, 2025.
7. Beitsch, Rebecca (January 29, 2025). "Law firms divided over response to Trump orders" (<https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/5211686-trump-administration-targets-law-firms/>). *The Hill*. Retrieved March 25, 2025.
8. Balevic, Katie; Dorman, John; Li, Katherine; Tangalakis-Lippert, Katherine; Shamsian, Jacob (April 2, 2025). "Here's where all the firms in the Trump-Big Law fight stand" (<https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-big-law-fight-firms-legal-dilemma-2025-3>). *Business Insider*. Retrieved April 2, 2025.
9. "Law students sue US civil rights agency over crackdown on law-firm DEI policies" (<https://www.reuters.com/legal/law-students-sue-us-civil-rights-agency-over-crackdown-law-firm-dei-policies-2025-04-15/>). *Reuters*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20250416010426/https://www.reuters.com/legal/law-students-sue-us-civil-rights-agency-over-crackdown-law-firm-dei-policies-2025-04-15/>) from the original on April 16, 2025. Retrieved May 13, 2025.
10. Adcox, Abigail (April 29, 2025). "Will Trump See Resistance From Pro Bono Lawyers? Trump's Law Enforcement EO Fuels More Uncertainty" (<https://www.law.com/nationallawjournal/2025/04/29/will-trump-see-resistance-from-pro-bono-lawyers-trumps-law-enforcement-eo-fuels-more-uncertainty/>). *The National Law Journal*. Retrieved May 1, 2025.
11. Baker, Sam (April 12, 2025). "Law firms pledge almost \$1 billion in free work to Trump" (<https://www.axios.com/2025/04/12/big-law-pro-bono-legal-work-trump>). *Axios*. Retrieved May 2, 2025.
12. Smith, Allan (March 7, 2025). "Trump allies launch a bid to take control of a powerful Washington legal group" (https://www.yahoo.com/news/trump-allies-launch-bid-control-043721366.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall). *NBC News*. Retrieved March 30, 2025.
13. Barrett, Devlin "American Bar Association Sues Trump Administration" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/16/us/american-bar-association-sues-trump-administration.html>) *The New York Times*, June 16, 2025. Retrieved June 19, 2025.
14. "Suspension of Security Clearances and Evaluation of Government Contracts" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/suspension-of-security-clearances-and-evaluation-of-government-contracts/>). *The White House*. February 25, 2025.
15. "Addressing Risks from Perkins Coie LLP" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/addressing-risks-from-perkins-coie-llp/>). *The White House*. March 6, 2025.

16. Durkin Richer, Alanna (March 12, 2025). "Judge temporarily blocks parts of Trump's executive order seeking to punish law firm Perkins Coie" (<https://apnews.com/article/trump-executive-order-law-firm-perkins-coie-202888161fed64ac0e01adbc72be267e>). *AP News*. Retrieved March 20, 2025.
17. Lucas, Ryan (March 12, 2025). "Judge blocks Trump from enforcing 'chilling' order against law firm" (<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/12/g-s1-53422/judge-blocks-trump-law-firm>). *NPR*. Retrieved March 26, 2025.
18. Birnbaum, Michael (March 25, 2025). "Law firms refuse to represent Trump opponents in the wake of his attacks" (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/03/25/trump-law-firms/>). *The Washington Post*. ISSN 0190-8286 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0190-8286>). Retrieved March 27, 2025.
19. Schmidt, Michael S.; Goldstein, Matthew; Barrett, Devlin (March 28, 2025). "Law Firms Jenner & Block and WilmerHale Sue Trump Administration to Block Executive Orders" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/28/business/jenner-block-wilmer-hale-trump-lawsuit.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved March 28, 2025.
20. Protes, Ben (April 4, 2025). "More Than 500 Law Firms Back Perkins Coie in Fight With Trump" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/04/business/law-firms-perkins-coie-trump.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved April 5, 2025.
21. Reilly, Ryan J. (May 3, 2025). "Judge strikes down 'unprecedented' Trump order targeting Perkins Coie law firm" (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/judge-strikes-trump-order-targeting-perkins-coie-law-firm-rcna204564>). *NBC News*. Retrieved May 3, 2025.
22. Monnay, Tatyana (June 30, 2025). "Trump to Appeal Perkins Coie Ruling, Extending Law Firm Duel" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/trump-fights-on-against-law-firms-appeals-perkins-coie-ruling>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved June 30, 2025.
23. "Addressing Risks from Paul Weiss" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/addressing-risks-from-paul-weiss/>). *The White House*. March 15, 2025.
24. Barrett, Devlin; Pager, Tyler (March 15, 2025). "Trump Expands Attacks on Law Firms, Singling Out Paul, Weiss" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/14/us/politics/trump-law-firm.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved March 20, 2025.
25. Tribe, Megan; Wise, Justin (March 19, 2025). "Paul Weiss Fired by Cognizant Executive Over Trump Order" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/paul-weiss-fired-by-cognizant-executive-over-trump-order>). *Bloomberg Law*.
26. Rubino, Kathryn (March 17, 2025). "Undeterred By Massive Court Loss, Trump Goes After Another Biglaw Firm" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/undeterred-by-massive-court-loss-trump-goes-after-another-biglaw-firm/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved March 20, 2025.
27. Ward, Jasper; Scarcella, Mike (March 20, 2025). "Trump withdraws order targeting Paul Weiss, says law firm promised free legal work" (<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-withdraws-executive-order-targeting-paul-weiss-law-firm-2025-03-20/>). *Reuters*. Retrieved March 20, 2025.
28. Henry, Justin (March 20, 2025). "Trump Rescinds Paul Weiss Order as Firm Pledges \$40 Million (2)" (<https://news.bloombergtax.com/daily-tax-report-international/trump-rescinds-executive-order-that-targeted-paul-weiss-law-firm>). *Bloomberg Tax*. Retrieved March 20, 2025.
29. Tucker, Eric (March 21, 2025). "White House rescinds executive order targeting prominent law firm" (<https://apnews.com/article/trump-law-firm-security-clearances-4e0a8f152ccfea86ae2c383bfc41c586>). *AP News*. Retrieved March 21, 2025.
30. Ahmadi, Ali Abbas (March 21, 2025). "Trump cancels executive order against law firm after \$40m promise" (<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2d4kex0w2ro>). *BBC News*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.

31. Schmidt, Michael S. (March 20, 2025). "Law Firm Bends in Face of Trump Demands" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/20/us/politics/paul-weiss-deal-trump-executive-order-withdrawn.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved March 21, 2025.
32. Kaye, Danielle; Hirsch, Lauren; Farrell, Maureen (March 22, 2025). "Paul Weiss Deal With Trump Faces Backlash From Legal Profession" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/21/business/paul-weiss-trump-reaction.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved March 22, 2025.
33. Lowell, Hugo (March 22, 2025). "White House buoyed up by submission of major law firm attacked by Trump" (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/22/white-house-paul-weiss>). *The Guardian*. ISSN 0261-3077 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0261-3077>). Retrieved March 22, 2025.
34. Masnick, Mike (March 21, 2025). "Paul Weiss's Shameful Surrender Makes Every Lawyer There Complicit In Trumpian Constitutional Desecration" (<https://www.techdirt.com/2025/03/21/paul-weiss-shameful-surrender-makes-every-lawyer-there-complicit-in-trumpian-constitutional-desecration/>). *Techdirt*. Retrieved March 22, 2025.
35. Rubino, Kathryn (March 21, 2025). "Will Clients Trust Paul Weiss Again?" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/will-clients-trust-paul-weiss-again/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved March 22, 2025.
36. "MSN" (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/brad-karp-a-union-college-trustee-resigns-top-post-at-law-firm-after-epstein-revelations/ar-AA1VJgDz>). *www.msn.com*. Retrieved February 5, 2026.
37. "Epstein Corresponded With Former Cornell Undergraduate, According to Latest Batch of Files" (<https://www.cornellsun.com/article/2026/02/epstein-corresponded-with-cornell-undergraduate-son-of-powerful-law-firm-chairman>). *Epstein Corresponded With Former Cornell Undergraduate, According to Latest Batch of Files - The Cornell Daily Sun*. Retrieved February 5, 2026.
38. Schmidt, Matthew; Goldstein, Michael S.; Silver-Greenberg, Jessica (February 5, 2026). "Brad Karp Resigns as Paul Weiss Chairman Amid Epstein Fallout" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/04/business/brad-karp-paul-weiss-resigns-epstein.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved February 5, 2026.
39. Strom, Roy (March 19, 2026). "Paul Weiss Deal With Trump Haunts Industry One Year Later" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/paul-weiss-deal-with-trump-haunts-legal-industry-one-year-later>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved March 19, 2026.
40. Schneid, Rebecca (March 22, 2025). "Trump Revokes Security Clearance for Biden, Harris, and More" (<https://time.com/7270771/trump-revokes-security-clearance-biden-harris-clinton-full-list-meaning/>). *Time*. Retrieved May 9, 2025.
41. Rubino, Kathryn (May 6, 2025). "Another Lawsuit Filed Over Vindictive Executive Orders Targeting Lawyers" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/05/another-lawsuit-filed-over-vindictive-executive-orders-targeting-lawyers/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved May 9, 2025.
42. Rubin, Olivia (May 6, 2025). "Whistleblower attorney sues Trump administration to restore revoked security clearance" (<https://abcnews.go.com/US/whistleblower-attorney-sues-trump-administration-restore-revoked-security/story?id=121488961>). *ABC News*. Retrieved May 9, 2025.
43. Barrett, Devlin (March 22, 2025). "With New Decree, Trump Seeks to Cow the Legal Profession" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/22/us/politics/trump-memo-lawyers.html>). *The New York Times*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
44. Jacobs, Shayna (March 23, 2025). "New Trump memo seen as threat to lawyers, attempt to scare off lawsuits" (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/03/22/trump-litigation-lawyers-pam-bondi/>). *The Washington Post*. New York City. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
45. Perez, Chris (March 23, 2025). "'Consistently violated the law': Trump slammed for using AG to issue memo targeting law firms" (<https://lawandcrime.com/high-profile/the-president-has-consistently-violated-the-law-trump-slammed-for-using-ag-pam-bondi-to-target-lawyers-and-law-firms-with-preventing-abuses-of-the-legal-system-memo/>). *Law & Crime*. Retrieved March 25, 2025.

46. Quinn, Melissa (March 28, 2025). "Law firm Skadden cuts \$100 million pro bono deal with Trump to avoid executive order" (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/law-firm-skadden-cuts-100-million-pro-bono-deal-trump-avoid-executive-order/>). *CBS News*. Retrieved March 30, 2025.
47. Tribe, Meghan (May 15, 2025). "Jenner Says Justice Department Pulled Lawyer Security Clearance" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/jenner-says-justice-department-pulled-lawyer-security-clearance>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved May 17, 2025.
48. Cole, Devan (May 23, 2025). "Federal judge overturns Trump's executive order targeting law firm Jenner & Block" (<https://www.cnn.com/2025/05/23/politics/jenner-and-block-executive-order>). *CNN*. Retrieved May 23, 2025.
49. Lee, Ella (July 21, 2025). "Trump administration appeals Jenner & Block win over executive order" (<https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/5412357-trump-administration-appeals-jenner-block-win-over-executive-order/>). *The Hill*. Retrieved July 21, 2025.
50. Executive Order titled "Addressing Risks From WilmerHale" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/addressing-risks-from-wilmerhale/>)
51. Cameron, Chris (March 28, 2025). "Trump Targets WilmerHale, Citing Law Firm's Connection to Robert Mueller" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/27/us/politics/trump-wilmerhale-law-firm-mueller.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved March 28, 2025.
52. Watson, Kathryn; Rosen, Jacob (May 27, 2025). "Federal judge strikes down Trump executive order targeting law firm WilmerHale, calling it 'unconstitutional' " (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/federal-judge-strikes-down-trump-executive-order-wilmerhale/>). *CBS News*. Retrieved May 27, 2025.
53. O'Brien, Amanda; Adcox, Abigail (July 25, 2025). "DOJ Files Appeal in Wilmer Executive Order Case" (<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2025/07/25/doj-files-appeal-in-wilmer-executive-order-case/>). *Law.com*. Retrieved July 26, 2025.
54. Executive Order titled "Addressing Risks From Susman Godfrey" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/addressing-risks-from-susman-godfrey/>)
55. Henry, Justin; Monnay, Tatyana (April 11, 2025). "Susman Godfrey Sues Trump to Fight 'Unconstitutional' Order" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/susman-godfrey-sues-trump-to-fight-unconstitutional-order>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved April 11, 2025.
56. "Trump signs executive order targeting law firm Susman Godfrey" (<https://www.reuters.com/legal/trump-signs-executive-order-targeting-susman-godfrey-law-firm-2025-04-09/>). *Reuters*. April 9, 2025. Retrieved April 10, 2025.
57. *Susman Godfrey LLP v. Executive Office of the President* (United States District Court for the District of Columbia April 15, 2025), Text (<https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69881953/15/susman-godfrey-llp-v-executive-office-of-the-president/>).
58. Rubino, Kathryn (April 16, 2025). "Granting Susman Godfrey A Temporary Restraining Order, Judge Calls Out The Cowardly Biglaw Firms Inking Deals With Trump" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/04/granting-susman-godfrey-a-temporary-restraining-order-judge-calls-out-the-cowardly-biglaw-firms-inking-deals-with-trump/>). *Above The Law*. Retrieved May 22, 2025.
59. "MOTION for Summary Judgment and Declaratory and Permanent Injunctive Relief" (<https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69881953/susman-godfrey-llp-v-executive-office-of-the-president/#entry-51>). April 23, 2025. Retrieved May 22, 2025.
60. Montague, Zach (June 28, 2025). "Judge Strikes Down Trump Order Targeting Another Top Law Firm" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/27/us/politics/trump-susan-godfrey-law-firm-order.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved June 30, 2025.
61. Queen, Jack (April 1, 2025). "Doug Emhoff's law firm Willkie Farr & Gallagher reaches deal with Trump" (https://finance.yahoo.com/news/trump-says-reached-settlement-deal-210256246.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall). *Reuters*. Retrieved April 1, 2025.

62. Goldstein, Matthew (April 11, 2025). "Five More Big Law Firms Reach Deals With Trump" (https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/11/business/trump-law-firms-kirkland-ellis-latham-watkins.html?unlock_ed_article_code=1.-04.V0qN.L6cKsxzOloNM&smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved April 11, 2025.
63. Spector, Mike; Heath, Brad; Cooke, Kristina; Tanfani, Joseph; Thomas, David (July 31, 2025). "How Trump's crackdown on law firms is undermining legal defenses for the vulnerable" (<https://www.reuters.com/investigations/trumps-war-big-law-leads-firms-retreat-pro-bono-work-underdogs-2025-07-31/>). *Reuters*. Retrieved August 1, 2025.
64. Thomas, David (April 22, 2025). "Democratic lawmakers press more law firms about their deals with Trump" (<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/democratic-lawmakers-press-more-law-firms-about-their-deals-with-trump-2025-04-22/>). *Reuters*. Retrieved April 23, 2025.
65. Rubino, Kathryn (March 17, 2025). "Trump Sics EEOC On 20 Biglaw Firms" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/trump-sics-eecoc-on-20-biglaw-firms/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
66. Monnay, Tatyana (May 22, 2025). "Goodwin Procter Bows to EEOC Demand to Supply Diversity Data(1)" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/goodwin-procter-bows-to-eecoc-demands-hands-over-diversity-data>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved May 28, 2025.
67. Executive Order titled "STRENGTHENING AND UNLEASHING AMERICA'S LAW ENFORCEMENT TO PURSUE CRIMINALS AND PROTECT INNOCENT CITIZENS" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/strengthening-and-unleashing-americas-law-enforcement-to-pursue-criminals-and-protect-innocent-citizens/>)
68. Johnson, Carrie (June 9, 2025). "Pam Bondi's brother overwhelmingly defeated in heated race to lead the D.C. Bar" (<https://www.npr.org/2025/06/09/g-s1-71568/pam-bondi-brother-race-election-dc-bar>). *NPR*. Retrieved June 16, 2025.
69. Spiegel, Anna (June 9, 2025). "D.C. Bar voters reject Trump-linked candidates in record election" (<https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2025/06/09/dc-bar-election-bondi-trump>). *Axios*. Retrieved June 16, 2025.
70. Scarcella, Mike (March 26, 2025). "Why target these law firms? For Trump, it's personal" (<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/why-target-these-law-firms-trump-its-personal-2025-03-26/>). *Reuters*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved March 27, 2025. "[...] his perceived grievance that an attorney linked to the firm has personally done him wrong. [...] 'The administration is going after law firms that the president perceives as having been hostile to him personally.'"
71. Juana Summers (March 24, 2025). "Trump targets Big Law, and Big Law appears intimidated" (<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/24/1240552685/trump-targets-big-law-firms-rachel-cohen-responds>). *Consider This* (Podcast). *NPR*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
72. Rose, Neil (March 24, 2025). "Trump escalates attack on lawyers with disciplinary threat" (<https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/trump-escalates-attack-on-lawyers-with-disciplinary-threat>). *Legal Futures*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
73. Zaretsky, Staci (March 28, 2025). "Thousands Of Lawyers Make Bipartisan Bid To Urge AG Pam Bondi To Do Her Job" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/thousands-of-lawyers-make-bipartisan-bid-to-urge-ag-pam-bondi-to-do-her-job/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved April 4, 2025.
74. "Letter to Attorney General Bondi" (<https://democracyforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Letter-in-Defense-of-the-Legal-Profession-4.2.25.pdf>) (PDF). *Democracy Forward*. April 2, 2025. Retrieved April 2, 2025.
75. Schwartz, Mattathias (April 2, 2025). "Trump Administration Highlights, timestamp: 11:37 a.m." (<https://web.archive.org/web/20250402172808/https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/04/02/us/trump-news>) *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Archived from the original (<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/04/02/us/trump-news>) on April 2, 2025. Retrieved April 5, 2025.

76. Rohde, David (March 24, 2025). "Trump targets lawyers who he says file 'frivolous' lawsuits against his administration" (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/trump-targets-lawyers-frivolous-lawsuits-administration-rcna197698>). *NBC News*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
77. Cummings, Scott (May 15, 2025). "Opinion | Trump's Law Firm Crackdowns Aren't Just About Revenge. They're About Something Darker" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/15/opinion/trump-law-firms-attacks.html>). *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved May 16, 2025.
78. Scarcella, Mike; Goudsward, Andrew; Merken, Sara (March 22, 2025). "Trump targets lawyers in immigration cases, lawsuits against administration" (<https://www.reuters.com/legal/trump-signs-memo-aimed-preventing-abuse-legal-system-federal-courts-2025-03-22/>). *Reuters*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved March 27, 2025. "[...] said the new directive sought to 'chill and intimidate' lawyers who challenge the president's agenda."
79. Simmons, Richard (April 25, 2025). "Lord Sumption slams Trump's 'sinister' war on rule of law" (<https://www.thelawyer.com/lord-sumption-slams-trumps-sinister-war-on-rule-of-law/>). *The Lawyer*. Retrieved June 12, 2025.
80. "The ABA rejects efforts to undermine the courts and the legal profession" (<https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/03/aba-rejects-efforts-to-undermine-courts-and-legal-profession/>). *American Bar Association*. March 3, 2025. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
81. Cassens Weiss, Debra (March 25, 2025). "ABA, more than 50 bar associations condemn 'government actions that seek to twist the scales of justice'" (<https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/aba-and-more-than-50-bar-associations-condemn-government-actions-that-seek-to-twist-the-scales-of-justice>). *ABA Journal*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
82. Zaretsky, Staci (March 27, 2025). "Law School Deans Denounce Trump's Attacks On Biglaw Firms As Unconstitutional" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/law-school-deans-denounce-trumps-attack-s-on-biglaw-firms-as-unconstitutional/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
83. "21 attorneys general call on legal community to stand in 'defense of rule of law' in wake of president's actions" (https://www.ojavalleynews.com/news/government/21-attorneys-general-call-on-legal-community-to-stand-in-defense-of-rule-of-law/article_e55cdac9-4165-4cc1-ad18-07e16f6fa27d.html). *Ventura County Sun | Ojai Valley News*. March 26, 2025. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
84. Hennigan, Caroline; Kimball, Bradford (March 29, 2025). "More Than 80 HLS Professors Denounce Trump Admin Attacks on Law Firms in Letter to Students" (<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2025/3/30/hls-faculty-letter/>). *The Harvard Crimson*. Retrieved March 30, 2025.
85. Finn, Justin (March 29, 2025). "Justin B. Finn: Do more to cultivate pro bono work" (https://www.unionleader.com/opinion/op-eds/justin-b-finn-do-more-to-cultivate-pro-bono-work/article_b357ebbd-8715-48b8-b759-aab4f6e37b72.html). *New Hampshire Union Leader*. Retrieved December 26, 2025.
86. Monnay, Tatyana (June 16, 2025). "Trump Sued Over 'Intimidation' Campaign Against Major Law Firms" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/trump-sued-over-intimidation-campaign-against-major-law-firms>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved June 16, 2025.
87. "Trump-Targeted Law Firms Clash With DOJ Over Future of Cases" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/trump-targeted-law-firms-clash-with-doj-over-future-of-cases>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved January 27, 2026.
88. Lat, David (March 27, 2025). "Skadden Associate Says Peers Have Role in Standing Up to Trump" (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/skadden-associate-says-peers-have-role-in-standing-up-to-trump>). *Bloomberg Law*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.
89. Zaretsky, Staci (March 17, 2025). "Hundreds Of Associates Sign Open Letter Calling On Biglaw Leaders To 'Defend' The Legal Profession" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/hundreds-of-associates-sign-open-letter-calling-on-biglaw-leaders-to-defend-the-legal-profession/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.

90. Zaretsky, Staci (March 21, 2025). "A Third-Year Skadden Associate Is The Only Person In Biglaw Willing To Publicly Condemn Trump's Threat To The Rule Of Law" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/a-third-year-skadden-associate-is-the-only-person-in-biglaw-willing-to-publicly-condemn-trumps-threat-to-the-rule-of-law/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved April 5, 2025.
91. Rubino, Kathryn (March 29, 2025). "Skadden Senior Associate Quits After Firm's Craven Capitulation To Trump" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/03/skadden-senior-associate-quits-after-firms-craven-capitulation-to-trump/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved March 29, 2025.
92. Rubino, Kathryn (April 1, 2025). "Skadden Associate Gives Rousing Speech Before Quitting Fraidy-Cat Firm" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/04/skadden-associate-gives-rousing-speech-before-quitting-fraidy-cat-firm/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved April 5, 2025.
93. "80+ Skadden Alumni Protest Firm's Deal with Trump" (<https://www.commoncause.org/press/80-skadden-alumni-protest-firms-deal-with-trump/>). *Common Cause*. April 4, 2025. Retrieved April 5, 2025.
94. Rubin, Olivia; Bruggeman, Lucien (May 2, 2025). "Newly launched law firm says it will represent those 'inappropriately targeted' by Trump" (<https://abcnews.go.com/US/newly-launched-law-firm-represent-inappropriately-targeted-trump/story?id=121396758>). *ABC News*. Retrieved May 9, 2025.
95. Johnson, Carrie (May 2, 2025). "Legal veteran starts new firm to defend targets of Trump actions" (<https://www.npr.org/2025/05/02/nx-s1-5383195/trump-targets-new-law-firm>). *NPR*. Retrieved May 9, 2025.
96. "At Least 10 Lawyers Plan Exit From Cadwalader" (<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2025/04/09/at-least-10-lawyers-plan-exit-from-cadwalader-to-sidley/>). *Law*. Retrieved April 12, 2025.
97. Mulvaney, Erin (2025). "Venerable New York Firm That Struck a Deal With Trump Is Losing Lawyers" (<https://www.wsj.com/us-news/law/new-york-law-firm-cadwalader-wickersham-taft-trump-10a87928>). *WSJ*.
98. Rubino, Kathryn "Biglaw Is Under Attack. Here's What The Firms Are Doing About It." (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/04/biglaw-is-under-attack-heres-what-the-firms-are-doing-about-it/>) *Above the Law*, April 4, 2025. Retrieved May 25, 2025.
99. Cope, Kevin; Cohen, Rachel (April 17, 2025). "There's Only One Real Way to Reverse Big Law's Capitulation to Trump" (<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2025/04/big-law-school-trump-executive-order-skadden.html>). *Slate*. Retrieved May 12, 2025.
100. Zaretsky, Staci (April 29, 2025). "T14 Law School Dean Encourages Students To Take Into Account Whether Biglaw Firms 'Capitulated' When Making Career Decisions" (<https://abovethelaw.com/2025/04/t14-law-school-dean-encourages-students-to-take-into-account-whether-biglaw-firms-capitulated-when-making-career-decisions/>). *Above the Law*. Retrieved May 12, 2025.
101. Roe, Dan (May 14, 2025). "Ex-Associates Say Trump Deals Render Big Law Leaders Unfit for Board Positions, Launch Campaign for Their Removal" (<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2025/05/14/ex-associates-say-trump-deals-render-big-law-leaders-unfit-for-board-positions-launch-campaign-for-their-removal/>). *Law.com*. Retrieved May 28, 2025.
102. Schmidt, Michael S. "Karen Dunn and Other Top Lawyers Depart Paul Weiss to Start Firm" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/23/business/karen-dunn-paul-weiss-partners.html>) *The New York Times*, May 23, 2025. Retrieved June 15, 2025.
103. Stein, Shira (March 25, 2025). "As Trump ramps up law firm attacks, S.F. lawyers are starting to push back" (<https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/donald-trump-biglaw-20239927.php>). *San Francisco Chronicle*. Washington, D.C.: Hearst Communications, Inc. Retrieved March 27, 2025. "The law firms have to behave themselves, and we've proven that," Trump told reporters Monday."
104. President Trump (March 24, 2025). *President Trump and the Governor of Louisiana Deliver Remarks* (<https://www.youtube.com/live/qggmQUBuGrg?t=1156s>). *Official White House YouTube channel*. Retrieved March 27, 2025.

105. Protes, Ben; Haberman, Maggie; Schmidt, Michael S. (April 9, 2025). "How Trump Is Putting Law Firms in a No-Win Situation" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/09/us/politics/trump-law-firms-orders.html>). *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 9, 2025.
106. Levine, Sam (April 2, 2025). "Two more law firms reach deals with Trump to avoid executive orders" (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/02/trump-law-firm-executive-order?ref=crisisnotes.com>). *The Guardian*. New York. Retrieved August 30, 2025.
107. Bagchi, Aysha (March 28, 2025). "Every law firm for themselves? Skadden strikes \$100M deal with Trump as others sue" (<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/03/28/law-firms-donald-trump-executive-orders-lawsuits/82703595007/>). *USA Today*. Retrieved August 30, 2025.
108. McHardy, Martha (April 3, 2025). "Neal Katyal's Law Firm Striking Trump Deal Stuns MSNBC Viewers" (<https://www.newsweek.com/neal-katyal-trump-deal-msnbc-2054900>). *Newsweek*. Retrieved February 8, 2025.
109. Benen, Steve (April 9, 2025). "As the White House's campaign against law firms continues, Trump says a bit too much" (<https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/white-houses-campaign-law-firms-continues-trump-says-bit-much-rcna200417>). *MSNBC*. Retrieved April 9, 2025.
110. E.Bromwich, Jonah; S.Schmidt, Michael (March 2, 2026). "Trump Administration Abandons Efforts to Impose Orders on Law Firms" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/02/us/politics/trump-executive-orders-law-firms.html>). *The New York Times*. Retrieved March 3, 2026.
111. S.Schmidt, Michael; E.Bromwich, Jonah; Barrett, Devlin (March 3, 2026). "Trump Administration, in Reversal, Tries to Continue Fight Against Law Firms" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/03/us/politics/trump-law-firm-orders-reversal.html>). *The New York Times*. Retrieved March 3, 2026.
112. Adcox, Abigail (March 19, 2026). "Law Firm EO Appeals Move Forward After DOJ Flip-Flop" (<https://www.law.com/nationallawjournal/2026/03/19/law-firm-eo-appeals-move-forward-after-doj-flip-flop/>). *Law.com*. Retrieved March 20, 2026.
113. Mulvaney, Erin; Glazer, Emily; Barber, C. Ryan; Dawsey, Josh "The Law Firms That Appealed Trump—and Angered Their Clients" (<https://www.wsj.com/us-news/law/law-firms-trump-deals-clients-71b3616d>) *The Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 2025. Retrieved June 3, 2025.
114. Ferguson, Malcolm "Law Firms That Caved to Trump Suddenly Lose a Lot of Big Business" (<https://newrepublic.com/post/195999/big-companies-law-firms-trump-deals>) *The New Republic*, June 2, 2025. Retrieved June 3, 2025.
115. "Nine Law Firms Surrendered. Four Law Firms Won" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/03/opinion/law-firms-resistance-trump.html>). *The New York Times*. March 3, 2026. Retrieved March 3, 2026.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Targeting_of_law_firms_and_lawyers_under_the_second_Trump_administration&oldid=1344511900"