



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS OPPOSES GOVERNMENT RETALIATION AGAINST LAWYERS FOR REPRESENTING CLIENTS

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA (March 7, 2025) – The Rule of Law is a central pillar of any democratic government. We speak today to affirm that the Rule of Law depends upon lawyers being free to advocate for all causes, to represent those in need of legal representation, and to challenge government actions that may violate statutory and constitutional norms.

The current administration ignores these principles when it seeks to impose through a series of Executive Orders a variety of punitive measures against lawyers and law firms that represent federal prosecutors, federal agents, presidential candidates and political parties that the Executive Branch disfavors. Similarly, these Executive Orders threaten lawyers and law firms merely for advocating for positions that the administration disfavors. These actions taken against lawyers and law firms include a wide range of punitive actions, including suspending security clearances, terminating government contracts, threatening federal contractors who hire those lawyers, banning future federal employment, and even presumptively banning lawyers with those firms from entering federal buildings, including – one must suppose – the federal courthouses.

The threats posed by these actions are escalating. Initially, steps were taken against Covington & Burling for providing pro bono representation to former Special Counsel Jack Smith. This was followed on March 6 by even more draconian sanctions imposed against Perkins Coie for having represented Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election campaign, and for having represented the Democratic Party in challenges to voter access restrictions.

Lawyers throughout the country should unite in condemning these actions in the strongest possible terms.

The White House's retaliating against a law firm merely because it represented a client against whom the Executive Branch has a grievance, threatens the bedrock principles of our system of justice. Under those principles, everyone is entitled to legal representation. In criminal matters, that right is enshrined in the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution. Lawyers cannot be denied access to the courts nor should their advocacy be throttled merely because the government disagrees with the positions asserted or because litigants seek to enjoin



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Executive actions that may violate statutory and constitutional rights of a free people. When government retaliation is grounded in efforts to punish lawyers for the parties that they represent or the positions that they assert, our system of justice is undermined. These Executive Orders must be condemned.

The American College of Trial Lawyers opposes such retaliatory actions. We call upon all lawyers and their professional organizations to do the same and to rededicate ourselves to preserving both the Rule of Law and the essential role of lawyers in our system of justice. Our obligations as lawyers demand no less of us.

About The American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers comprises the best of the trial bar from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in North America. Founded in 1950, the College is an invitation only fellowship. The College thoroughly investigates each nominee for admission and selects only those who have demonstrated the very highest standards of trial advocacy, ethical conduct, integrity, professionalism and collegiality. The College maintains and seeks to improve the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics, and the administration of justice through education and public statements on important legal issues relating to its mission. The College strongly supports the independence of the judiciary, trial by jury, respect for the rule of law, access to justice, and fair and just representation of all parties to legal proceedings.

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