



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2021

Prominent Attorneys File Extraordinary Ethics Complaint Against Texas Attorney General Paxton

AUSTIN, TX – Four former State Bar of Texas Presidents joined Texas legal ethics experts and other distinguished state bar members to file a complaint today urging bar regulators to discipline Texas Attorney General Warren Kenneth Paxton Jr.

The [31-page complaint](#) asserts a pattern of serious ethical misconduct, including having filed a frivolous Supreme Court lawsuit seeking to overturn the 2020 election results in four states.

The complaint, filed Wednesday with the State Bar of Texas by [Lawyers Defending American Democracy](#) and 16 distinguished Texas lawyers, is an extraordinary repudiation of a Texas State Attorney General by leaders of the legal profession.

Signers of the complaint include former State Bar of Texas Presidents, members of the State Bar Board of Directors, scholars in professionalism and in the training of Texas lawyers, former grievance panel members, a former member of the Standing Committee on the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, and the former chair of the Texas Supreme Court Grievance Oversight Committee.

“Attorney General Paxton’s conduct has demonstrated his disregard for the ethical rules which govern lawyers and for our country’s democratic principles,” says complaint signer **Jim Harrington**, a retired founder of the Texas Civil Rights Project and former Adjunct Professor at the University of Texas School of Law. “The injunction Mr. Paxton sought with the Supreme Court would have usurped the presidency for the next four years and cast doubt on whether truly democratic presidential elections would ever have been restored in America.”

Gershon (Gary) Ratner, co-founder of Lawyers Defending American Democracy and principal author of the complaint, adds, “The standing to sue Mr. Paxton sought from the Supreme Court had no basis in law and would have been a prescription for an autocratic President to perpetuate his power indefinitely against the will of the voters.”

In addition to its repudiation of Paxton’s Court filings, today’s complaint outlines ethical concerns related to Paxton’s urging of Americans to march on the Capitol on January 6 in support of then-President Trump’s efforts to overturn the election.

The complaint asserts: “When Mr. Paxton urged people to come to Washington, D.C ... he was not just calling for an ordinary political demonstration. He was urging the marchers to pressure

Representatives and Senators not to carry out their constitutional duty to count all States' electors' votes in the Electoral College.”

The complaint calls for Paxton's suspension from practice or permanent disbarment.

“Mr. Paxton's misconduct has brought dishonor not only to his fellow Texas lawyers but to the American legal profession as a whole,” Ratner says. “After investigation, if the allegations in this complaint are validated, Mr. Paxton should be suspended from the practice of law or be permanently disbarred.”

Read the [complaint at this link](#).

###

About Lawyers Defending America Democracy

Founded in 2019, Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD) is a 501(c)(4) organization seeking to galvanize lawyers to defend the rule of law in the face of unprecedented threats to American democracy. Its open letters and statements have been signed by over 14,000 lawyers nationwide. LDAD's efforts to seek attorney disciplinary action against former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former Attorney General William Barr for legal ethics violations have been covered by national media, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, Newsweek, and USA Today. Letters, ethics complaints, statements, and briefs are available at ldad.org.