
LAWYERS DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2025

Media Contact:
Lauren Stiller Rikleen
Executive Director
LRikleen@Rikleeninstitute.com

LAWYERS DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND OTHER KEY LEGAL GROUPS ISSUE AN OPEN LETTER TO ELITE LAW FIRMS

“Elite Lawyers Must End Their Silence and Unite to Protect the Justice System”

BOSTN, MA - Today, leading American lawyers from the highest levels of the profession have issued an open letter calling on the country’s elite law firms to join forces against President Donald Trump's baseless Executive Orders. In these executive edicts, President Trump seeks to punish law firms by prohibiting them from representing clients and causes the President disfavours and otherwise involving himself in the operations of the firms’ hiring policies and choice of pro bono representation.

Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD), Lawyers Allied Under Rule of Law (LAUROL), and The Steady State, represent over a thousand lawyers who have worked at the highest levels of the profession including as Senior Partners in AmLaw 200 firms, Judges, State Attorneys General, Senior Justice Department Officials, General Counsel of Fortune 500 Companies, and State Bar Presidents.

In their open letter, these organizations call on the nation’s top firms to develop a unified response in opposing the President’s unconstitutional actions and threats to the rule of law and the justice system.

Scott Harshbarger, chair of Lawyers Defending American Democracy and a former two-term Massachusetts Attorney General, stated, “The top echelons of the legal profession must end their silence and work to end the Administration’s efforts to intimidate the legal profession and, by extension, the entire system of justice in America. If the profession does not stand together to defend the simple and fundamental concept that lawyers - not the President - choose their clients, then there is no law. Negotiating, capitulating, or remaining silent is a betrayal of our oath, and the people we are sworn to serve.”

The letter notes that, to date, the courts have made clear that the President's actions are a "shocking abuse of power" and that the firms have established a high likelihood that the Executive Orders violate numerous constitutional provisions.

LDAD Executive Director Lauren Stiller Rikleen noted that, "The choice is clear. Lawyers take an oath to uphold the rule of law and the justice system. The law is nothing more than words on

LAWYERS DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

paper if lawyers do not zealously advocate to enforce them. Here law firms are being threatened by the most powerful person in the world for doing their job. This is the time for the legal profession to protect the very foundation of the law.”

Nine of these elite law firms have already acquiesced to the President's demands. As the open letter describes, these so-called agreements will not protect the firms from further demands and unwarranted intrusions. Instead, they compromise the rule of law and the role of the legal profession in defending our system of justice.

The letter calls on the 170 AmLaw firms that have remained silent not to follow the path of the now notorious nine firms who capitulated to the President, and to instead support amicus briefs and otherwise speak out on behalf of those firms that have taken the matter to Court.

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia is hearing oral argument today in two matters seeking a permanent injunction of Executive Orders against the law firms of Wilmer Hale and Jenner & Block. We call on every law firm -- including firms that are their competitors and rivals -- to speak out in favor of these actions, and those of other firms challenging the legality of these Executive Orders.

About Lawyers Defending American Democracy

Founded in 2019, Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the protection of the rule of law, democracy, and the Constitution. LDAD regularly authors Calls-to-Action, research reports, amicus briefs, and articles calling for adherence to the rule of law and encourages the legal profession and the public to join in speaking out against threats to the norms, freedoms and principles of our democratic institutions and the rule of law. For further information about LDAD, see <https://ldad.org/>.