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Rule of Law Advocates Call on Florida Supreme Court to Order State Bar Investigation of A.G. Pam Bondi

WASHINGTON – Advocates for the rule of law have asked the Florida Supreme Court to order The Florida Bar to follow its own rules and fully investigate claims that Pamela Bondi, who is a member of the Bar and the Attorney General of the United States, has acted unethically. The advocates have [filed a petition for a writ of mandamus](#) for this purpose.

The filing comes after The Florida Bar rejected a complaint submitted early last month by Florida lawyer Jon May and joined by [Democracy Defenders Fund](#) (DDF), [Lawyers Defending American Democracy](#) (LDAD), Lawyers for the Rule of Law, and a group of 70 prominent attorneys, law professors, and former judges. [The complaint](#) urged an investigation and appropriate sanctions against Bondi for engaging in professional misconduct that threatens the rule of law and the administration of justice.

It details how Ms. Bondi has sought to compel Department of Justice lawyers to violate their ethical obligations under the guise of “zealous advocacy,” as announced in her memorandum to all department employees on her first day in office. That memorandum threatens lawyers with discipline and possible termination for falling short, even though the rules of professional conduct limit the “zeal” of attorneys to “lawful and ethical measures.” The complaint focuses on three cases in which department lawyers were terminated or forced to resign as a result of demands that they act unethically, either by Ms. Bondi or a member of her senior management team.

“Since her first day on the job, Pam Bondi has made clear that she plans to use the Department of Justice for political pursuits, and she has done just that,” said **Amb. Norm Eisen (ret.), executive chair of Democracy Defenders Fund**. “The Florida Bar has a responsibility to hold Bondi – and every lawyer under its purview who is implicated in her conduct – to account for actions that threaten the rule of law and the administration of justice.”

Jamie Conrad, a volunteer with Lawyers Defending American Democracy and co-author of the complaint and the petition, said: “Attorney General Bondi and her team cannot be allowed to operate the Justice Department free from compliance with the same ethics rules applicable to all other lawyers. The AG frequently states that ‘no one is above the law.’ The Florida Bar needs to demonstrate that this includes her.”

Daniel N. Arshack, President of Lawyers for Rule of Law said, "Supreme Court Chief Judge Earl Warren said, 'In civilized life, law floats in a sea of ethics.' Without strict obedience to the rules of ethics that have guided lawyers for over two centuries, the rule of law sinks, and our civilized society goes down with it. We look to the Disciplinary Committees and the courts to protect the rule of law and our 'civilized life'."

"What sets us apart from all the nations of the world is the role that the legal profession plays in preserving our democratic institutions," said **Jon May, Creative Criminal Defense Consultants**. "Because we are governed by a set of principles common throughout the United States that require duties of candor to the courts and to the administration of justice, we are the final bulwark against autocratic rule that would seek to undermine the rule of law. The Florida Bar cannot shirk from its responsibility to hold all lawyers accountable to those principles."

A copy of the original complaint can be found [here](#).

A copy of the petition for writ of mandamus can be found [here](#).

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[Democracy Defenders Fund](#) brings together a nonpartisan team to work with national, state, and local allies across the country to defend in real-time the foundations of our democracy.

[Lawyers Defending American Democracy](#) is a coalition of lawyers united in the defense of our democracy and committed to galvanizing the legal profession to protect the rule of law.