LAWYERS DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov 10, 2026

Media Contact:
Lauren Stiller Rikleen
Executive Director, LDAD
LRikleen@RikleenInstitute.com

**LDAD Files Ethics Complaint Against Three Senior DOJ Officials Over Lawsuits Demanding Voter Records**

Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD), joined by 53 retired judges and scholars, has filed an ethics complaint with the State Bar of California against three senior Department of Justice officials: Harmeet Dhillon, the former Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division; Robert Keenan, Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division; and Eric Neff, Acting Chief of the Voting Section.

The complaint alleges that Ms. Dhillon, Mr. Keenan, and Mr. Neff violated their professional and ethical obligations by pursuing lawsuits against 30 states and the District of Columbia that refused to provide DOJ with unredacted voter records containing millions of Americans' sensitive personal information, including Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, addresses, and voting histories.

The complaint alleges that Ms. Dhillon, Mr. Keenan, and Mr. Neff violated their ethical duties, through their own conduct and through their management and supervision of other DOJ attorneys, by continuing to pursue claims that courts repeatedly rejected as legally unsupported. It also alleges that they failed to fulfill their obligations to pursue only legally meritorious claims, exercise candor toward the courts, and ensure that attorneys under their supervision complied with applicable professional responsibility rules.

As of October 23, 2026, DOJ has lost all 27 cases in which courts issued a ruling, as well as the first appellate decision addressing the DOJ's demands for this voter information. Despite repeated defeats, DOJ continued to pursue the same baseless legal theories rejected by the courts.

The complaint points to the first decision rejecting DOJ's demands, in January 2026, as an example of the legal and factual deficiencies in its claims. In *United States v. Weber*, U.S. District Judge David O. Carter found that DOJ had failed to establish a legitimate basis for demanding California's unredacted voter records. Judge Carter characterized DOJ's request as "unprecedented and illegal," and questioned DOJ's stated purpose of investigating compliance with voter-registration laws, citing evidence that the government was seeking to assemble a centralized federal database containing sensitive information about millions of voters.

"Government lawyers have a special responsibility to uphold the rule of law, not simply advance the objectives of the officials they serve," said Ellen Hornstein, former Senior Counsel at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and an LDAD volunteer who served as a principal author of the complaint. "When senior DOJ officials continue to pursue legal claims that courts across the

country have repeatedly rejected, it raises serious questions about their commitment to those obligations. The duty of good faith and to be candid with judges is fundamental to our justice system. To do otherwise undermines public confidence in our elections and raises serious concerns about the Justice Department's commitment to the rule of law."

The complaint requests the State Bar of California to investigate the allegations and impose appropriate discipline.

**The ethics complaint is available** here**.**

Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that mobilizes lawyers to protect democracy, the rule of law, and the justice system. LDAD remains a pioneer in the meticulous work of preparing and filing detailed ethics complaints with state bar disciplinary authorities, seeking to hold accountable attorneys who have violated the rules of professional responsibility in service of efforts to undermine core principles of our Constitution and the rule of law. LDAD frequently files in coalition with key partners, including renowned ethics practitioners, and seeks accountability *only* where the record, legally and factually, strongly supports the case that an investigation by the state disciplinary authorities is merited.

In 2026, LDAD has participated in the filing of ethics complaints against former Attorney General Pamela Bondi, then Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, a personal lawyer to the President, Boris Epshteyn, Senior DOJ official Drew Ensign, United States Attorney Jeannine Pirro, and FBI agent and attorney Hugh Evans.

Detailed information about LDAD's past accountability work can be reviewed in its 2025 Year-End Report: Meeting the Moment in an Unprecedented Year, its 2024 Year-End Report: A Year in Review, and Defending Democracy: Our First Four Years.

###

*Lawyers Defending American Democracy (LDAD) is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization composed of attorneys, law professors, former judges, and former government officials dedicated to preserving the rule of law, constitutional democracy, and the independence of the legal profession. LDAD's work includes filing amicus briefs, authoring Calls to Action, presenting public education programs, and encouraging lawyers and the public to speak out against threats to the rule of law and our democratic institutions. LDAD's nationwide* Meeting the Moment *initiative mobilizes lawyers across the country to engage with their communities in defense of constitutional democracy. For more information, visit* ***www.ldad.org***