

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 6, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Brad S. Karp
Chairman
Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP
1285 6th Avenue
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Karp:

We write today regarding President Trump’s March 14, 2025 Executing Order unlawfully targeting your law firm, Paul, Weiss, for representing clients and hiring lawyers the President dislikes, in blatant violation of the rights guaranteed to all Americans by the First, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments of the United States Constitution. As the Ranking Members of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and House Judiciary Committee, we seek information and records about these troubling decisions.

In an Executive Order, entitled “Addressing Risks from Paul Weiss,” President Trump took aim at Paul, Weiss for representing clients who sued the first Trump Administration and for employing Mark Pomerantz, a distinguished attorney and prosecutor, who left the firm to assist the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office with its investigation into the finances of President Trump.¹ The following week, on March 20, 2025, President Trump announced that, in response to the actions threatened by the Executive Order, including revoking its attorneys’ security clearances, preventing its attorneys from entering any federal building, and seeking to terminate the government contracts of any clients of the firm, Paul, Weiss had decided to submit to certain of the President’s demands.²

The March 14, 2025 Executive Order aimed at Paul, Weiss is part of a broader effort by President Trump to use the powers of the presidency to intimidate and silence his perceived enemies. The Courts that have considered these vendetta orders to date have universally ruled against them and noted that they violate the First Amendment right to free speech as they are plainly “retaliatory action” meant to “chill[] speech and legal advocacy,”³ and that they violate the right to counsel guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment and the Sixth Amendment by banning the targeted firms’ lawyers from federal buildings and terminating their clients’ government

¹ Exec. Order, Addressing Risks from Paul Weiss (March 14, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/addressing-risks-from-paul-weiss/>.

² See Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (March 20, 2025 6:10 P.M.); Exec. Order, Addressing Remedial Action by Paul Weiss (March 21, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/addressing-remedial-action-by-paul-weiss/>.

³ M. Order, ECF No. 10, *Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP v. Executive Office of the President*, Case No. 1:25-cv-00917-RJL (D.D.C March 28, 2025).

contracts.⁴ Indeed, by seeking to intimidate attorneys and prevent them from advocating on behalf of clients and causes at odds with the President, the orders “cast[] a chilling harm of blizzard proportion across the entire legal profession.”⁵

Beyond their specific constitutional infirmities, these executive orders are an open attack on the rule of law, which guarantees the equality of all citizens before the law and prevents the vindictive and arbitrary abuse of government power. These executive orders seek to impose harsh penalties on lawyers for the causes and clients they represent. This express form of viewpoint discrimination—a classic violation of First Amendment rights—runs counter to American values that have been the bedrock of our democracy and the legal profession since the founding era, when lawyer and later President John Adams defended British soldiers accused of participating in the Boston Massacre.⁶ Like so many attorneys since then, Adams did not shrink from taking on unpopular clients and defending them against the government’s prosecution because he “firmly believed that everyone had the right to a lawyer and a fair trial, so he willingly agreed to represent the soldiers even if it meant risking his reputation.”⁷ The same basic principles of fairness and the best defense for all are still cherished by the legal profession and constitutional patriots today.

As far as we can tell from public reports, these executive orders have turned into an illegal shakedown of the legal profession.

Paul, Weiss’s agreement with President Trump raises the troubling prospect that the President has successfully and unlawfully coerced your law firm into spending \$40 million in law firm resources to support his pet issues, making statements that support his agenda, and reversing firm policies he disagrees with. President Trump appeared to then demand even more from Paul, Weiss, unilaterally altering the terms of your agreement mere hours after it was entered into.⁸ When he announced the deal with Paul, Weiss, President Trump stated that the firm “acknowledged the wrongdoing of its former partner Mark Pomerantz” and agreed to no longer implement “‘diversity, equity, and inclusion’ policies.”⁹ These are particularly objectionable terms of the agreement that infringe on your firm and your clients’ constitutional rights, and neither is included in the version of the deal you reportedly shared with your firm’s employees.¹⁰

⁴ See, e.g., *Trump Order Targeting Perkins Coie Is 'Affront to the Constitution,' Suit Says; Judge Sees 'Chilling Harm of Blizzard Proportions'*, ABA JOURNAL (March 13, 2025), <https://www.abajournal.com/web/article/trump-order-targeting-perkins-coie-is-an-affront-to-the-constitution-law-firm-says-in-lawsuit>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Boston Massacre Trial, Nat’l Parks Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/boston-massacre-trial.htm> (last visited Apr. 6, 2025).

⁷ *Id.* In his own words, John Adams reflected on his representation, in part noting “every Lawyer must hold himself responsible not only to his Country, but to the highest and most infallible of all Trybunals for the Part he should Act.” *Id.*

⁸ *How Donald Trump Throttled Big Law*, THE NEW YORKER (March 27, 2025), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/how-donald-trump-throttled-big-law>.

⁹ Addressing Remedial Action by Paul Weiss, *supra* note 2.

¹⁰ *Trump Said he Struck a Deal with Paul Weiss. The Law Firm’s Internal Copy Has a Major Difference*, BUSINESS INSIDER (March 21, 2025), <https://www.businessinsider.com/paul-weiss-trump-executive-order-agreement-language-dei-2025-3>.

Public reporting suggests that Paul, Weiss privately objected to the President's mischaracterization, but was rebuffed by the White House.¹¹

If every law firm targeted by the President were to accede to his unlawful demands, the resulting threat to Americans' constitutional protections would erode our democratic values and cherished civil liberties, as well as cost the legal profession dearly and for many years to come.¹² Indeed, the American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct state that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to "engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice."¹³

The American people and Congress deserve transparency with respect to the President's ongoing assault on constitutional rights and the rule of law. Accordingly, please provide the following information to the House Judiciary Committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations by April 14, 2025:

1. Please describe in detail the circumstances surrounding your March 18, 2025, Oval Office meeting with President Trump.
 - a. Who facilitated your March 18, 2025 meeting with President Trump?
 - b. Who was present for that meeting?
 - c. Did you acknowledge any wrongdoing by Mr. Pomerantz to President Trump during that meeting?
 - d. Did you otherwise acknowledge any wrongdoing for representing causes President Trump finds objectionable?
 - e. To what extent did you or other Paul, Weiss attorneys seek or receive any ethical guidance surrounding the prospect of concluding a deal with President Trump, including from any state, federal, or other bar association?
2. What were the specific terms of the deal Paul, Weiss agreed to with President Trump?
 - a. Does President Trump's March 21, 2025 Executive Order "Addressing Remedial Action by Paul Weiss" accurately reflect the terms of your deal?
 - b. Please detail all client relationships Paul, Weiss has chosen to end from March 14 to the present.
3. Please explain your firm's interaction with any other law firms as you considered whether and how to reach an agreement with President Trump.
 - a. Did any law firms offer to support you in a challenge to President Trump's March 14 Executive Order? Please detail which firms and what they offered to do in support.
 - b. Did any law firms explicitly decline to support you? Please detail which firms and the nature of their decision to not offer support.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² See AM. BAR. ASS'N, MODEL RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT, Preamble ("a lawyer should further the public's understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system because legal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their authority.").

¹³ *Id.* at Rule 8.4(d).

- c. Are you aware of any law firms which sought to take your clients following President Trump's March 14 Executive Order? Which law firms?

In addition, please provide the House Judiciary Committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations with the following records¹⁴ by April 14, 2025, and any subsequently produced records responsive to these requests on a bi-weekly basis thereafter:

1. All records referring or relating to President Trump's March 14, 2025 Executive Order, including but not limited to:
 - a. Any communications¹⁵ regarding the March 14 Executive Order;
 - b. Any communications with any officials in the Trump Administration from March 14, 2025 to the present;
 - c. Draft records constituting or related to any litigation Paul, Weiss contemplated bringing in response to President Trump's March 14, 2025 Executive Order; and
 - d. Any communications regarding efforts by other law firms to recruit Paul, Weiss attorneys or clients following President Trump's March 14, 2025 Executive Order.

Please contact the House Judiciary Committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Senate Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary

¹⁴ For purposes of this request, "records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

¹⁵ For purposes of this request, "communications" include any records, as defined above, transmitted in any way between two or more individuals or entities.