

Cooper Offenbecher
President

Lauren Bramwell
Executive Director

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WACDL Condemns Executive Order Targeting Perkins Coie as an Attack on Due Process and the Legal Profession

The Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (WACDL) strongly opposes President Trump's recent [executive order](#), which imposes sanctions on Seattle law firm Perkins Coie based on the firm's representation of particular clients that are disfavored by the President. The executive order suspends security clearances, terminates federal contracts, and initiates discriminatory investigations against Perkins Coie. It further bars Perkins Coie employees from federal employment. This executive order represents a dangerous escalation in the use of executive power to punish legal professionals for their legal advocacy and undermines the very foundation of our legal system.

The executive order fails to adhere to basic due process requirements. Perkins Coie was not given an opportunity to respond to or challenge the allegations before punitive action was taken. Such a move is inconsistent with constitutional protections and undermines the fair and equal application of the law.

Additionally, the justifications provided for the order are deeply troubling. The administration's claims of "dishonest and dangerous activity" and allegations of racial discrimination appear to be based not on any proven misconduct, but rather on the firm's commitment to [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) in hiring—principles that align with widely accepted professional standards. This politicization of law firm policies sets a dangerous precedent, one that threatens the autonomy of private legal practice.

Particularly concerning is the apparent retaliation against Perkins Coie for representing certain clients and engaging in legal advocacy that the administration disfavors. Targeting a law firm for its professional representation constitutes a clear instance of viewpoint discrimination, which is inconsistent with the First Amendment's constitutional guarantee of free expression. Attorneys must be free to represent clients without fear of government retribution; to erode this principle is to undermine the foundation of our justice system.

Further, this order risks having a chilling effect on the broader legal community. If firms face government sanctions for advocating on behalf of clients that are disfavored by a particular administration, it will deter lawyers from taking on cases that are vital to preserving the rule of law. The ability to seek legal counsel without government interference is a cornerstone of our democracy. Any effort to undermine it must be met with resolute opposition.

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As Perkins Coie is headquartered in our home state of Washington, this action hits particularly close to home. WACDL denounces President Trump's abuse of power and calls for the executive order to be rescinded.



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