



February 17, 2025

Statement Condemning the Recent Actions of the Trump Administration

Elections Have Consequences-But Sacrificing the Rule of Law Should Never Be One of them.

As the President of the National Bar Association (“NBA”), I raise my voice to express the NBA’s strong and unwavering opposition to the recent actions taken by the Trump administration, which threaten the very foundations of justice, democracy and the rule of law.

Every American citizen should hope and pray that our President has a successful presidency. We hope that he governs with wisdom, fairness and respect for constitutional principles. If he is successful, we are successful. His failure becomes our failure. Sadly, this President and presidency is off to a disheartening start. What we are witnessing is a troubling departure from democratic norms—an administration prioritizing personal retribution, ideological extremism and unchecked executive power over lawful governance.

With control of the executive branch, majorities in both chambers of Congress, and a U.S. Supreme Court dominated by conservatives, the President has ample resources and tools to make orderly political changes through democratic means in accordance with the rule of law. Yet, the President has focused on taking action through unlawful Executive Orders and weaponizing the government in his effort to:

- Dismantle Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Seek retribution for himself, his supporters and followers
- Eliminate Birthright Citizenship
- Illegally freeze funds appropriated by Congress
- Attack the judiciary and question the legitimacy of judicial review
- Dismantle entire federal agencies and cripple others with staff reductions

The upheaval began with a series of troubling and unconstitutional Executive Orders on “Day 1.” It continued with the President showing his utter contempt for a true meritocracy when he nominated candidates who were demonstrably unqualified and lacking in both merit and character to some of the of the highest offices in the land. The President’s measuring stick for service is unwavering loyalty to the President above all else, including the principles expressed in the U.S. Constitution.

Dismantling Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (“DEI”)

The administration's systematic efforts to dismantle all DEI initiatives is an egregious attack on the progress our nation has fought tirelessly to achieve. DEI programs serve as a crucial means of addressing systemic disparities, providing opportunities, and ensuring that all individuals,



regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic background, have a fair chance of succeeding. Rolling back these efforts is a direct affront to the principles of equal justice under the law and to those who have fought to create equal access to education, housing and business opportunities. Rolling back these efforts is also an attempt to pretend that the reasons the initiatives were created were not real and no longer exist. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson rightfully declared that “deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life.”

Retribution and Weaponization of Government

Equally alarming is the administration's continued pattern of political retribution. Retaliating against political opponents, silencing dissent, and leveraging governmental powers for personal vendettas undermines the rule of law and erodes public trust in our institutions. The weaponization of government for political gain is antithetical to the ideals upon which this country was built.

The mass pardons to individuals convicted for their involvement in the January 6th insurrection represent a blatant disregard for justice and accountability. Those who sought to overturn a democratic election through violence and lawlessness must be held accountable for their actions. To pardon these individuals is to condone their assault on democracy and embolden future threats to the rule of law. The pardons send a negative and chilling message about the value of accountability, the importance of justice and the equal application of the rule of law.

The President's compassion toward the January 6th insurrectionists starkly contrasts with his harsh rhetoric about purging the country of all undocumented immigrants, the vast majority of whom have been peaceful, law-abiding members of their communities. In his fury to round-up undocumented immigrants, the President seeks to ignore the sanctity of well-settled and time-honored safe havens like schools and churches. The juxtaposition of his misplaced compassion for the culpable and his disdain for the vulnerable reveals a dangerous double standard and underscores the urgent need for our advocacy and action.

The Assault on Birthright Citizenship

Through an unconstitutional executive order, the President seeks to strip birthright citizenship from individuals born in the United States—an act that directly contradicts the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

This reckless move:

- Violates established constitutional law and decades of legal precedent
- Would render thousands of American-born individuals stateless, creating a legal and humanitarian crisis
- Generally targets communities of color, furthering divisive and discriminatory policies



The courts must act swiftly to block this unconstitutional power grab and reaffirm that citizenship cannot be revoked by a sharpie and executive decree.

Illegally Freezing Funds Appropriated by Congress

The administration's decision to freeze congressionally approved funding to critical organizations that serve marginalized communities here and abroad is not only unconscionable, but also a calculated move to silence those who advocate for justice. These organizations provide essential services, legal representation, and resources that protect the health and rights of the most vulnerable among us. Cutting their funding is an attempt to erode the very mechanisms that uphold our democracy and ensure accountability.

Attacking the Judiciary

There are many cases pending in the courts concerning the actions of the new administration. An independent and unbiased judiciary is a crucial check on the legislative and executive branches of government and a bedrock of our democracy. Judges must be free to interpret and uphold the law without fear of political retaliation. Yet, this administration is:

- Attacking the role of judicial review
- Openly attacking and threatening to take action against judges who issue rulings unfavorable to its agenda

All lawyers, judges and legal scholars—regardless of political ideology—must condemn this blatant attempt to undermine and weaken the courts and weaken the judiciary's ability to act as a constitutional safeguard.

Dismantling Entire Federal Agencies and Crippling Staff Reductions

The President seeks to dismantle or eliminate the Department of Education and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau as well as USAID. These agencies play a critical role in providing educational resources, safeguarding consumer rights, and providing "soft" diplomacy through foreign aid. The executive branch's unilateral decision to dismantle federal agencies encroaches upon the legislative branch's authority to establish and fund these entities, thereby disrupting the balance of power enshrined in our Constitution. Fiscal responsibility is important, but such drastic measures, executed without careful comprehensive analysis and stakeholder engagement, risk undermining institutions that were designed to serve and protect the public.

It is also ironic that the administration is looking to dismantle and defund parts of the FBI, the nation's police force. The hypocrisy is deafening as the President has mocked calls to defund the police for years.



Furthermore, the administration's effort to purge the jobs of many civil servants with an unlawful separation incentive program is not about "efficiency"—it is about loyalty tests and ideological control. This is not the way to reshape government in a democracy.

The Path Forward

There is more power in the people than in the people in power. The fundamental goodness and decency of the American people has consistently risen to meet challenges to our representative democracy and must do so now.

How You Can Take Action:

- Call your elected representatives (local, state and federal) to protest the lawlessness of the Trump administration's actions and demand accountability
- Support the Blackout on Friday, February 28th by refraining from buying anything other than essentials on that date
- Join us in Selma, Alabama on Sunday, March 9th to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Edmund Pettus Bridge crossing and affirm your commitment to the principles fought for on March 7, 1965
- Organize or attend peaceful protests nationwide on March 9th to amplify our voices and impact around the country.
- Join us at the NBA's MidYear Conference in Des Moines, Iowa from March 20th to March 23rd (where we will discuss these issues and strategize around them) and the NBA's 100th Annual Convention & Exhibits in Chicago, Illinois from July 26th through August 1, 2025. Register at www.nationalbar.org
- Meet us in a city near you as we head out on a listening and engagement tour. Dates and locations to be announced.

The National Bar Association remains resolute in its commitment to justice, democracy, and the rule of law. We call upon all legal professionals, elected officials, and citizens to reject the Trump administration's dangerous actions and to stand in defense of the values that define our nation.

Donate or join today at nationalbar.org

About the NBA

The National Bar Association was founded in 1925 and is the nation's oldest and largest bar association comprised predominantly of Black lawyers, judges, law professors, and law students. With a network of over 67,000 lawyers, the NBA has over 80 chapters throughout the United States and has affiliations with lawyer organizations around the world.



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