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Law Firm Disrupted: The Ongoing 'Cloud' Over Big Law Amid the EO Fight

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While the threat to big law firms from the Trump administration has waned, firms remain hesitant to take up public interest litigation against the Trump administration and hire lawyers who have previously pursued Trump in investigations or in court, reports Law.com. The article comes on the heels of the administration announcing a decision to drop its appeal against law firms, only to reverse the decision a day later.

Many lawyers who have filed amicus briefs in support of firms targeted by the executive orders say the administration's pressure campaign has had lasting effects. Keker founding partner John Keker said that is especially the case for immigration pro bono work.

"What we hear is that pro bono immigration organizations used to get a lot of support from big firms, including Paul Weiss, and now they don't," Keker said. "Big firms have learned to avoid Trump's wrath."

Keker said that any "firm that depends [on] its clients getting approvals from the feckless government, whether it's the (DOJ) antitrust division or the SEC, … are gun shy" in taking on matters against the administration's interests. The DOJ is continuing to keep up the appeal because Trump "wants to continue to be a bully and continue to intimidate the big firms," he said.

The article notes that the firms that agreed to deals with the Trump administration ended up losing clients and talent. Even if the Trump administration ultimately loses the appeals, it's unlikely that the negotiated deals could be voided.

"These firms ran to the White House to make a deal without even having an executive order against them," Keker said. "I don't know how they would argue they would get out of them."

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