

# US Justice Dept bars its attorneys from participating in American Bar Association events



Todd Blanche, then attorney for President-elect Donald Trump, leaves the New York State Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in New York City, U.S., January 7, 2025. REUTERS/Adam Gray/File Photo [Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab](#)

WASHINGTON, April 9 (Reuters) - The U.S. Department of Justice on Wednesday barred its attorneys from traveling to or speaking at American Bar Association events, in the latest salvo by President Donald Trump's administration against the nation's largest voluntary lawyer group.

U.S. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche in a memo seen by Reuters said the ABA had been engaging in "activist causes" contrary to the department's mission, including by suing to block Trump from cutting funding to foreign aid organizations.

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"The Department is actively litigating against the ABA, yet the Department continues to expend taxpayer dollars on ABA events," Blanche wrote.

He said while the ABA is free to "litigate in support of activist causes," he did not want the department to participate in events in their official capacities that might undermine its mission to remain "fair, effective and even-handed."

The ABA had no immediate comment.

Justice Department officials have often used ABA events to roll out new policies on corporate enforcement. Former Attorney General Merrick Garland spoke at the ABA's white-collar conference last year.

However, the Trump administration has criticized the ABA, which has about 150,000 paying members, after the organization made public statements that the Republican president is threatening the rule of law and for condemning government officials' attacks on judges and law firms.

A White House spokesperson in March dismissed the ABA as a "snooty" organization of "leftist lawyers." Federal Trade Commission Chairman Andrew Ferguson in February barred political appointees to the commission from holding leadership positions within the ABA or participating in its events.

The ABA also faces mounting pressure from the Trump administration and other Republicans to end its lawyer and law student diversity and inclusion efforts.

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi in February threatened to revoke the ABA's status as the government-designated accreditor of U.S. law schools while calling for the elimination of its law school diversity and inclusion standard.

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