

Paul Weiss Rainmakers Bolt To Start New Firm Free Of Trump Deal Restrictions

High-powered litigators bolt Paul Weiss to form new firm.

Paul Weiss

Well, well, well. If it isn't the consequences of Paul Weiss's own actions.

Earlier today, American Lawyer reported that [Karen Dunn](#), [Bill Isaacson](#), [Jessica Phillips](#), and [Jeannie Rhee](#) are leaving Paul Weiss in the wake of its surrender to the Trump administration. They apparently dropped this news on the firm at today's partnership meeting.

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Stone. Cold.

Just the other day, we reviewed a letter from [Paul Weiss responding to a legislative inquiry](#). In blowing off any suggestion that the deal breached legal or ethical standards, the firm wrote, “the agreement does not (and could not) permit the Administration to determine what matters we take on.”

It seems several of the firm’s most prominent litigators disagreed with that assessment. The group plans to start their own firm to take on the Trump administration without being constricted by the vague Paul Weiss “settlement” agreement that Trump believes gives him a level of control over the firm’s work. And while the firm itself denies Trump’s reading, it’s difficult to imagine how the firm that — in its own words — claims that Trump’s retaliatory executive order if allowed to go into effect “would destroy the firm, even if we ultimately prevailed in court” can [put up much of a fight](#) when Trump chooses to define the deal his way.

I mean... if the firm honestly believes the threat of an executive order is existential, then it doesn’t really have much leverage when Trump inevitably comes back around.

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By [Jennifer Petersen](#)

And the American Lawyer article suggests that at least Dunn and Rhee see it... more or less exactly that way:

One Paul Weiss partner, speaking anonymously to speak freely, said that both Rhee and Dunn were involved in the internal discussions over the Trump administration's executive order against the firm and both supported the firm's decision to make a deal with Trump to rescind the order. But, the source said, they wanted to be able to sue the Trump administration "without limitations."

In other words: yes, an executive order would be existential for Paul Weiss, and yes, the deal hamstring the firm's ability to act freely with regard to the Trump administration.

The partner source said the firm believed the moves would have "no impact" on the financials of Paul Weiss but would not elaborate further.

Sure. Losing *checks notes* GOOGLE is probably not going to make a dent at all. In all seriousness, Paul Weiss makes a lot of its bread on the transactional side, so the firm gravy train won't stop over this. But that's a lot of litigation dough leaving the building.

And so they're off to set up a new firm. Expect several other lawyers to come along for the ride.

[Karen Dunn and 3 Other Paul Weiss Partners Exiting Firm](#) [American Lawyer]

Earlier: [Trump's Biglaw Bootlickers Say Quiet Part Out Loud In Letters To Congress](#)

