

# In Trump's Washington, 'You Don't Leave Home Without Your Lawyer'

There's a lot of work for lawyers in the nation's capital these days: Over 400 lawsuits have been filed against President Trump's administration since the start of his second term.



*Most of the lawsuits that have been filed against President Trump's administration since the start of his second term are being fought in the nation's capital. Credit...Kenny Holston/The New York Times*

You're reading the On Politics newsletter. How Trump is changing Washington, the country and its politics.

For the roughly 80,000 lawyers in Washington and its environs, this is the worst of times and the best of times.

Worst because President Trump's threats have prompted some of the nation's biggest firms to capitulate and pledge a collective \$1 billion in free legal work for the White House.

But it is best, at least in the volume of work, for the firms handling some of the astounding number of lawsuits — more than 400, according to a [New York Times tracker](#) — that have been filed against Trump's administration since the start of his second term. Some of those cases are in other states, but most are being fought in the nation's capital.

"This is a good time to be a lawyer in Washington," said Gregory B. Craig, who was a White House counsel to former President Barack Obama. "Good lawyers, like other humans, want to be wanted. And these days in Trump's world, whether you're an immigration lawyer or a university president or the head of an independent agency, you don't leave home without your lawyer."

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Craig, who worked for more than four decades for two big-name firms, Williams & Connolly and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, retired in 2019 after [his acquittal on a charge](#) of lying to the Justice Department. He came out of retirement last week to work in the Washington office of Foley Hoag, a firm based in Boston.

Donald B. Verrilli Jr., a partner at Munger, Tolles & Olson who was solicitor general under Obama, agreed that this was an extraordinary moment to be a Washington lawyer, but he sounded less chipper about it. Verrilli was the author of a brief supporting Perkins Coie, the first law firm targeted by Trump. Ultimately, 500 firms, mostly boutique and medium-sized, signed the brief, but only eight of them were among the nation's top 100 firms.

"We are besieged with work, and I'm personally working harder than I have in many, many years," Verrilli said. "The reason is because there are so few law firms willing to take cases challenging the administration."

Most of that work has gone to big public legal organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and Democracy Forward, which has filed more than 70 legal actions against the administration, including for its use of the Alien Enemies Act for mass deportations. Democracy Forward's legal team has grown from seven people in the first Trump term to 50 people now.

Skye Perryman, the group's president and chief executive, said that in the Washington legal community, "We have seen some rise to the occasion and we have seen others who have not. There's a lot of great concern, but you also have a lot of energy."

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For those counting, the American Bar Association reports that Washington has more lawyers per capita than any other region in the country — one lawyer for every 80 people in the District of Columbia and the surrounding Maryland and Virginia suburbs. New York, which has more lawyers per capita than any other state, has one for every 103 people.

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Image



*Voters don't like President Trump's sprawling domestic policy bill, and they would also like to see Republicans in Congress act as a stronger check on Trump's power, according to a new poll from Quinnipiac University. Credit...Kenny Holston/The New York Times*

One Number

## Trump's big bill not so beautiful, poll finds

*My colleague Ruth Igielnik, a Times polling editor, looks at a key number that helps explain the political moment. Today, she looks at approval of President Trump's signature legislation.*

Just 27 percent of voters nationally say they approve of President Trump's sprawling domestic policy bill, according to a [new poll from Quinnipiac University](#). More than half of voters oppose it.

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Among Republicans, just 67 percent support [the Big Beautiful Bill Act](#), which remains stalled in the Senate and has been championed by Trump and his allies as an improvement to domestic policy.

That is a strikingly low figure compared with the support presidents typically receive from their own party for signature legislation. By contrast, around 90 percent of Democrats [supported Joe Biden's spending bills](#) in 2021.

Voters are not just unhappy with the bill, which provides for tax cuts and a wide array of spending cuts while steering more money to the military and immigration enforcement. They would also like to see Republicans in Congress act as a stronger check on Trump's power: 58 percent of voters, including 16

percent of Republicans, want to see congressional Republicans stand up to him.

One of the bill's least popular provisions has been cuts to Medicaid, even though Trump has insisted, against evidence, that it would [not cut](#) the government health care program. Just 10 percent of voters favor Medicaid cuts. Nearly half want Medicaid funding to increase; 40 percent would like it to stay the same.

There appears to be little appetite for these cuts among the president's base. More than half of Republicans want Medicaid funding to remain the same; just 18 percent want to see it cut.

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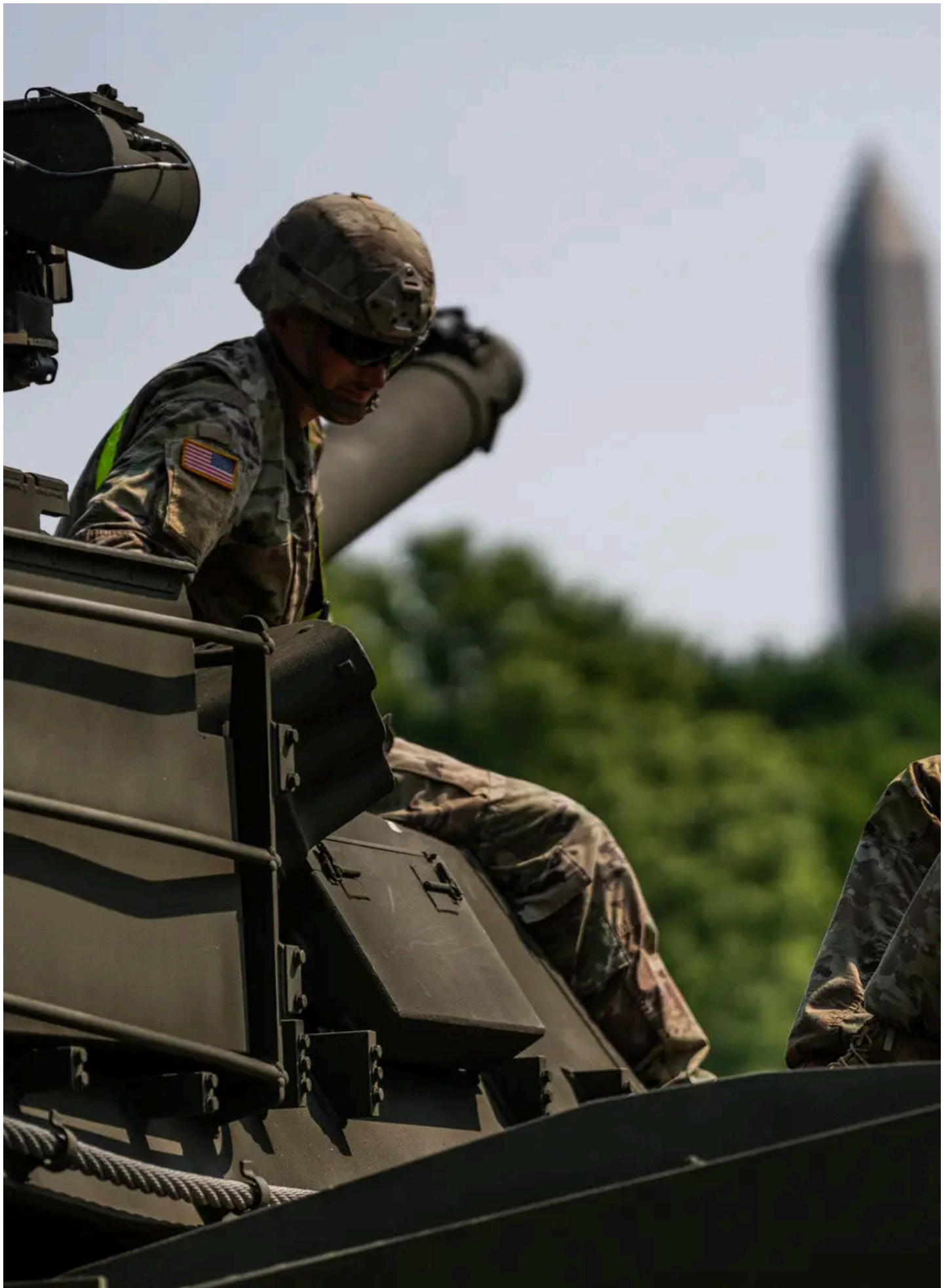
The poll also asked about Trump's signature issue: Amid immigration crackdowns and ICE raids, support for his immigration policies remains largely unchanged since he took office — but that's not saying much. Around 40 percent of voters, including 38 percent of independents, support how Trump is handling deportations. A similar share said the same in April.

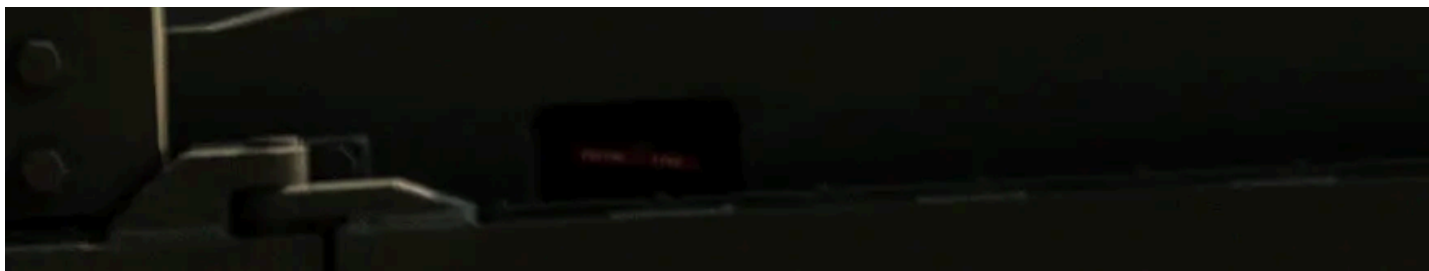
— Ruth Igielnik

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Image







*Soldiers prepared Army vehicles on Wednesday for the military parade in Washington. Credit...Tierney L. Cross/The New York Times*

on parade

## Deploying the military in political displays

President Trump talked about “my generals” in his first term and now has deployed the National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles over the objections of the mayor and governor. This Saturday he is staging a military parade in Washington, complete with columns of tanks, to celebrate his 79th birthday (and the Army’s 250th).

The president seems to be embracing the military as his own personal force, and his moves have made many in the officer ranks deeply uneasy. But what really disturbed one retired general was Tuesday’s spectacle at Fort Bragg, N.C., where Trump delivered a partisan speech against a made-for-television backdrop of uniformed soldiers in red berets, who booed when he mentioned Joe Biden.

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Such partisan displays in uniform are prohibited in the military, which prides itself as a professional force without loyalty to any political party.

“What happened at Fort Bragg was embarrassing,” said Paul D. Eaton, a retired Army major general and a veteran of the Iraq war. He said that Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, should write a one-page letter to the armed forces reminding them that their loyalty is “to the American people and the defense of the United States.”

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IN his words

## Soldiers and swords and shields, oh my

*President Trump has also flooded his social-media feed over the past 24 hours with militaristic posts. My colleague Chris Cameron, a reporter in the Washington bureau, is keeping track.*

On Tuesday evening, President Trump repeatedly shared video clips from the speech at the Army base at Fort Bragg — [its name, memorializing a Confederate general, newly restored](#) — showing hundreds of uniformed soldiers cheering as he attacked political opponents and the news media.

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“YOU are the righteous sword of American Justice, and the ultimate shield of American Freedom,” he wrote on his social-media site.

Early Wednesday morning, Trump also denounced the protests in Los Angeles and defended his decision to deploy the National Guard to quell them: “If our troops didn’t go into Los Angeles, it would be burning to the ground right now.”

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— Chris Cameron

ONE LAST THING

## The force is strong in this TikTok feed

My colleague Kellen Browning has an engaging report on the latest turn in the feud between President Trump and Gov. Gavin Newsom of California.

On Tuesday, the official X account for Newsom’s office posted a series of TikTok videos featuring Trump’s own social-media posts about the protests in Los Angeles, read by a narrator imitating Emperor Palpatine, the Star Wars villain, and with Darth Vader’s “Imperial March” providing the soundtrack.

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The implication was clear, Kellen writes.

Steven Cheung, the White House communications director, responded that Newsom was “posting like a schoolchild on social media.”

Chris Cameron and Ruth Igielnik contributed to this newsletter. Kitty Bennett contributed research.