

March 26, 2025

As deans of law schools, we have a special responsibility for the legal profession. Recently, the federal government has imposed significant sanctions on the law firms of Perkins Coie, Covington & Burling, Paul Weiss, and Jenner & Block seemingly because of the clients they and their lawyers represented and litigation in which their lawyers participated.

We write to reaffirm basic principles: The government should not punish lawyers and law firms for the clients they represent, absent specific findings that such representation was illegal or unethical. Punishing lawyers for their representation and advocacy violates the First Amendment and undermines the Sixth Amendment.

We thus speak as legal educators, responsible for training the next generation of lawyers, in condemning any government efforts to punish lawyers or their firms based on the identity of their clients or for their zealous lawful and ethical advocacy.

[Those signing are expressing their personal views and are not speaking for their institutions]

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