

Democratic AGs in Action: Holding the Line Since Inauguration Day

By Labriah Lee Holt, Vice President, State and Local Advocacy

Since President Trump's inauguration in January, Democratic Attorneys General have moved swiftly from planning to action. As anticipated, the administration's rapid rollout of executive orders—more than 100 in the first week alone—has spurred an immediate legal and political response from AGs across blue states.

From California to Massachusetts, Democratic AGs have already filed or joined **more than two dozen lawsuits** addressing new federal directives on immigration, environmental regulation, reproductive healthcare, and corporate accountability. California AG Rob Bonta, alongside Governor Gavin Newsom, has emerged as a model of coordinated state resistance—filing suits challenging changes to asylum policies and proposed restrictions on access to medication abortion.

New York AG Letitia James is leading a 23-state coalition opposing proposed changes to federal funding that could impact state programs in education, healthcare, and public safety. Arizona's Kris Mayes is spearheading legal opposition to the administration's restructuring of the U.S. Department of Education and changes to public health funding. Colorado's Phil Weiser has initiated more than a dozen legal actions on issues including election administration and access to gender-affirming care. Connecticut's William Tong has reiterated his office's readiness to respond to federal actions regarding birthright citizenship, and Illinois AG Kwame Raoul has raised concerns about changes to workplace equity programs.

Several AGs, including Connecticut's William Tong and Massachusetts' Andrea Joy Campbell, have pointed to potential impacts on industries such as agriculture and construction, linking immigration policy changes to workforce availability and broader economic implications at the state level.

In addition to individual legal actions, Democratic AGs are coordinating their legal strategies more tightly than ever. Through the Democratic Attorneys General Association (DAGA), offices are sharing resources, aligning strategies, and coordinating litigation on shared priorities to challenge what they describe as “overreach through executive fiat.”

Defending DEI: State AGs Engage the Private Sector

Among the most high-profile flashpoints this year has been the Trump administration's executive orders focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives in both public and private institutions. In response, a coalition of 16 Democratic AGs released detailed guidance in February 2025 to private employers affirming that DEIA practices remain lawful under state and federal law. The document—[Multi-State Guidance Concerning Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Employment Initiatives](#)—aimed to provide clarity to private sector employers navigating federal changes.

Separately, 12 Democratic AGs—including those from New York, California, and Illinois—issued a joint public statement condemning the executive orders as misleading and harmful. They underscored their commitment to supporting companies that maintain legal DEIA programs and emphasized the civil rights and economic case for diversity in the workforce.

Litigation followed, and in late February a federal judge in Maryland issued a preliminary injunction partially blocking implementation of the DEIA-related orders. Democratic AGs have voiced support for the ruling as a development that maintains existing legal standards while broader litigation continues.

Public Engagement: AGs Take the Fight Beyond the Courtroom

In 2025, Democratic AGs also ramped up public engagement as part of their broader resistance strategy. A coalition of AGs—including Colorado’s Phil Weiser, Hawaii’s Anne Lopez, Nevada’s Aaron Ford, and Washington’s Nick Brown—have hosted town hall events across the country to elevate the voices of constituents directly impacted by recent federal actions.

In Denver, AGs met with a packed high school auditorium to listen to stories from individuals affected by funding cuts, deportation enforcement, and programmatic rollbacks. These events serve both to rally opposition and to gather compelling personal stories that may form the factual basis of future litigation. As AG Lopez noted, “If we can’t tell a compelling story, or make the judiciary understand what the harm is... we’re not going to win.”

Town halls in cities such as Phoenix, Portland, and St. Paul, have helped further highlight the lived consequences of federal policies and reinforce the AGs’ message: legal action is most effective when combined with public engagement.

Expanding Oversight: Democratic AGs and the Private Sector

Democratic AGs have intensified their oversight of financial markets in 2025, particularly in areas where federal enforcement has decreased—such as cryptocurrency regulation, securities enforcement, and consumer financial protection.

Antitrust and Competition Enforcement

AGs are scrutinizing proposed mergers across sectors like healthcare and tech, especially when federal agencies approve deals using behavioral remedies. State officials have emphasized the need for structural solutions that preserve competition and protect labor markets.

Environmental and ESG Enforcement

With the federal government rolling back certain climate rules, Democratic AGs have stepped up efforts around Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) accountability. This includes investigations into potentially misleading sustainability claims, scrutiny of emissions reporting, and actions targeting industries such as agriculture, aviation, and plastics. In January 2025, a coalition of Republican AGs sent letters to major financial institutions, claiming that ESG may violate fiduciary duties and antitrust laws. Democratic AGs argue that managing climate risks are not a violation but rather a part of a fiduciary duty.

Securities and Financial Sector Actions

In states like New York, California, and Maryland, AGs are leading investigations into misrepresentations tied to asset-backed securities and digital asset offerings. On April 23rd, New York AG Letitia James announced that she will be filing a multistate lawsuit challenging the Trump administration’s newly imposed global tariffs, calling them unlawful and warning they could raise consumer costs, increase inflation, and damage the U.S. economy. Additionally, Massachusetts AG Andrea Campbell, along with 22

other states, has taken legal action to block the federal government's attempted dismantling of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), citing risks to consumer protection in lending markets.

Privacy and Data Protection

Democratic AGs also launched the Consortium of Privacy Regulators, a multistate coalition that includes California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Oregon, New Jersey and Indiana. While each state's privacy laws vary, the coalition aims to coordinate enforcement and promote core consumer rights—such as the ability to delete or opt out of data sales. “Data knows no borders — state and nationwide coordination is vital for protecting consumers' rights,” said California AG Rob Bonta. This effort reflects the leading role Democratic states are taking on digital privacy in the absence of a comprehensive federal law.

What This Means for Business

As state attorneys general take on an active role in shaping responses to federal actions, businesses operating across jurisdictions are likely to encounter varying compliance landscapes. Democratic AGs have shown a willingness to engage with companies not only through litigation, but also through direct guidance and public communication—particularly in areas like workplace policy, consumer protection, and environmental regulation.

Business Takeaways:

- **Stay Informed:** Monitor AG guidance and litigation trends, especially in states with active coalitions.
- **Review Compliance:** Ensure alignment with both federal and state legal requirements, particularly in areas where new executive orders conflict with existing protections.
- **Engage Early:** Companies that engage with AG offices may benefit from shared dialogue on compliance expectations and evolving policy priorities.
- **Revisit Consumer Privacy Policies:** The formation of the Consortium of Privacy Regulators signals a need for companies to reexamine their privacy practices to avoid additional scrutiny from the Consortium

The early months of 2025 have demonstrated that Democratic AGs are approaching their role with both legal and policy tools. For businesses navigating this environment, the opportunity lies not only in managing risk, but also in contributing to solutions in collaboration with state leaders.

For more insights on state AG activity, federal policy developments, or regulatory strategy, contact your BGR team.

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