



THE RULE OF LAW IS UNDER ATTACK: RELMAN COLFAX DOESN'T BACK DOWN

President Trump's second term has been defined by its unapologetic hostility toward the rule of law, with a cascade of attacks against fair housing laws, disability rights, consumer protections, people of color, educational institutions, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and vulnerable communities across the country. While many have chosen to remain silent or comply to avoid retaliation, these attacks have only sharpened our sense of purpose and reminded us why Relman Colfax built its civil rights litigation practice in the first place. Along with our allies and partners, we're called to resist these efforts to undermine our democracy, stand up for the rule of law, and advocate on behalf of those whose voices have too often been muted. Our role is more important than ever, particularly as many of our friends and counterparts in this work are being targeted for their views on inclusion and their dedication to equality.

Since its founding in 1999, Relman Colfax has seen political shifts and discriminatory agendas come and go, and we have learned to recognize moments that demand more of us. The present moment is just one of many in which we have had to hold fast and strengthen our resolve. When an administration deliberately floods the media and public with rapid-fire announcements, executive orders, and legal threats, confusion and exhaustion can take hold, breeding fear, apathy, and ultimately silence. We believe it is our responsibility to disrupt these cycles by speaking out and standing up. This requires publishing reliable information about the rule of law, taking legal action to protect our civil rights and consumer laws, and providing blueprints for seeking justice during these challenging times. The work showcased below demonstrates that the rule of law can and will prevail when action is taken.

Defending LGBTQIA+ Rights

The Firm reacted swiftly the moment the Trump administration took office. Beginning with his inaugural speech and continuing through his earliest executive orders, the President threatened federal funding for hospitals and clinics providing gender-affirming care to transgender children and young adults. In response to these orders, several providers reduced or halted care out of fear of federal retaliation, despite continued protections under state law. Recognizing the uncertainty facing patients and providers alike, Relman Colfax created an explainer, [State Antidiscrimination Laws and Gender-Affirming Care in the Wake of the Trump Administration Executive Orders](#), to provide clarity and legal context.

Upholding Disparate Impact Law

The Firm responded to Executive Order 14281, signed on April 23, 2025, which targeted disparate impact. Disparate impact is a foundational principle of civil rights law recognized by courts, Congress, and the executive branch for decades. In [Executive Order On Disparate Impact: An Explainer](#), authored by our attorneys, we made clear that the Executive Order has no immediate effect on disparate impact law and institutions should continue their existing compliance efforts. Our attorneys further spoke out publicly on this issue [here](#) and [here](#).

Supporting Small Businesses

In September of 2025, Relman Colfax filed an amicus brief in [Rise Economy et al. v. Vought et al.](#), supporting a legal challenge to the Trump Administration's delays in implementing Dodd-Frank Section 1071. That provision requires public reporting of demographic data about lending to small businesses and the terms of such loans. Without it, it is impossible to know whether lenders are discriminating on the basis of race, national origin or gender.

Defending Consumer Protections

The current administration has taken unprecedented actions to dismantle the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), despite the agency having returned more than \$21 billion to consumers who have fallen victim to abusive and illegal activity. The Firm worked closely with civil rights, consumer protection, and other organizations to submit comments opposing those changes, and will continue to fight against the CFPB's unlawful actions to roll back civil rights protections.

This year, Relman Colfax [filed](#) a suit in federal court on behalf of fair housing advocates and fair lending firms to stop a devastating CFPB rule that reverses 50 years of fair lending protections and opens the door to widespread discrimination against women, Black, Latino, Asian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Native people, the elderly, and other underserved communities that have long been denied a fair chance to receive safe and affordable credit. The suit challenged a [final rule the CFPB issued on April 22, 2026](#) implementing the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), the nation's landmark civil rights law protecting against credit discrimination.

In working to further uphold the promises made by the CFPB, in March of 2026, Relman Colfax, [represented](#) a coalition of the nation's premiere nonprofits defending fair housing, civil rights, and immigration advocacy in submitting an amicus brief asking the federal court in Houston, Texas to refuse to enter a proposed settlement agreement in *Consumer Financial Protection Bureau et al. v. Colony Ridge Development LLC, et al.* that was unlawful and motivated by the proposed by the Trump administration's political priorities.



Fighting for Fair Housing

When the administration threatened massive financial cuts through the short-lived Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), we witnessed unlawful attacks on critical fair housing funding. We launched into action by moving for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in *Massachusetts Fair Housing Center, et al. v. HUD and DOGE*. Relman Colfax has continued to push back against HUD, including a case last fall. After taking further legal action this summer, a federal judge blocked HUD's attempts to overhaul funding practices to nonprofits that pursue housing discrimination claims, as featured in *The New York Times*.

Protecting Equity in Education

Following the Department of Justice's announcement of its Civil Rights Fraud Initiative, the administration sought to intimidate colleges and universities, particularly Harvard, by claiming that equity and diversity efforts constituted fraud. The Firm addressed the administration's attempt to weaponize the False Claims Act through an explainer that underscores that this effort is legally baseless and urged institutions to resist intimidation. The firm wrote on this issue here and here.

In June 2025, the firm filed an amicus brief in *President and Fellows of Harvard College v. United States Department of Health and Human Services, et al.*, challenging the administration's unlawful termination of millions of dollars in federal funding without following required Title VI procedures. And on July 22, 2026, Relman Colfax submitted a court of appeals brief to the court of appeals on this issue.

Defending the Rule of law

When the legal profession itself came under assault, Founding partner John Relman spoke out publicly, writing a piece in Bloomberg Law for all of the legal profession to heed. John continued to sound the alarm, frequently writing pieces such as the ones here and here to reaffirm the importance of not folding to political intimidation and attacks. The firm joined more than 4,000 individuals and organizations in signing the letter "Stand Up for the Legal Profession — and the Rule of Law."

Conclusion

Justice does not come only in sweeping victories, it is also built through daily action, persistence, and the willingness to keep going and speak out in the toughest of times. Together, step by step, we move closer to the future we know is possible. We look forward to continuing on this journey towards equality with you through the current administration and beyond.