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How Foley Hoag Became the 'Anti-Trump' Big Law Firm

By Patrick Smith

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What You Need to Know

- Foley Hoag has become a go-to firm for litigation against the Trump administration.
- Firm leadership said the “ethos” of the firm hasn’t changed, but the environment has, and Foley Hoag is meeting the moment.
- The firm has also added several notable partners since its renewed foray into the world of Trump.

If Sullivan & Cromwell has become President Donald Trump’s “favored” law firm—and there are a lot of reasons that can be true—then perhaps Foley Hoag, the Am Law 200 firm based out of Boston, would be considered decidedly not favored.

The firm is currently representing various parties in at least three litigation matters, most of which have seen ample press coverage, against the Trump administration.

Those include representing the National Trust for Historic Preservation before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit against the Trump administration’s bunker/ballroom project, acting as counsel for a coalition of eight cultural heritage organizations suing to halt the alterations (or demolition) of the Kennedy Center until the legally required public review is complete and working with Power Forward Communities in their lawsuit against the Environmental Protection



Agency and the termination of the former party’s \$2 billion federal clean energy grant.

One could see those data points and say the firm is “going after” the Trump administration and its loose association with the law of the land.

But the firm’s managing partner, James “Jim” Bucking, said that is not the case. The firm didn’t change. How the government behaves did.

“When things started in January of 2025 (when the Trump administration started firing off executive orders), we were already there,” Bucking said in an interview. “It’s just that the circumstances changed to help us take advantage of it. We had both paying and pro bono clients who came to us because of who we are and the fact that we were

speaking out about these actions and not muzzling our partners.”

Bucking went on to say he was surprised the legal industry didn’t come together during that moment.

“Our law firm exists to solve complicated problems and difficult cases,” he said. “And it seemed strange not to take those (executive orders and subsequent legally questionable acts taken by the Trump administration) on. If the steel industry were under attack, what do you think they would do?”

That statement could be a small slight pointed toward the grouping of much larger and better-resourced Big Law firms that saw fit to either make deals with the Trump administration when he attacked the legal industry, or, as many other Big Law firms did, sit by, nice and quiet, hoping not to be next.

The firm was one of the larger firms to sign the amicus brief that went around in 2025 in support of the four firms that were pushing back against the Trump administration’s draconian executive orders. Fewer than a dozen Am Law 100 firms signed the brief, and several of those were also being targeted.

Bucking said the firm’s history, one of the first to promote female partners, the first firm in Boston to have a Black partner, the only firm to receive an “A+” ranking from the Law Students for Climate Accountability scorecard this year, and the type of attorneys who want to work at a place like that set the firm up nicely for this moment.

“We didn’t start doing anything differently in January of 2025, but we do a lot of work with industries that were targeted by the administration, like clean energy,” Bucking said. “I think the amount of conflict a firm has with the administration depends on whether the administration puts its toe over the line. And we have a lot of material to work with.”

Beth Neitzel, partner at Foley Hoag and co-chair of the firm’s litigation and appellate practice groups, is handling the firm’s work for Power Forward

Communities against the Environmental Protection Agency, which, in total, has cut off around \$27 billion in clean energy grants the administration is holding onto.

Unlike most firms, Neitzel said Foley Hoag hopes that its recent work does in fact solidify the firm’s reputation in the market as one that will stand up to executive overreach.

“I think it is already there,” she said. “And I do hope this will extend any reputation that wasn’t already clear before. Our goal is to be thought of as a go-to for high-stakes litigation. Government regulation is my bread and butter, and that is true for some of my colleagues as well.”

Those colleagues are increasing. The firm has added several notable partners since its renewed foray into the world of Trump.

Ambassador David Pressman, formerly of Boies Schiller Flexner and Jenner & Block, joined the firm last month. The firm also added First Amendment litigators Mike Grygiel and Kelly McNamee in April of this year, as well as former U.S. Special Counsel Hampton Dellinger and former White House Counsel Greg Craig since the beginning of 2025.

Bucking sees a moment for the firm, one he hopes can build on itself.

“*Marbury v. Madison* was over 200 years ago,” Bucking said, referencing what is widely believed to be the most consequential decision in the history of U.S. Constitution law. “Clients are seeing our cases and coming to us. And as more lawyers come to us, their clients will as well. I hope that process continues.

“Our door is open to lawyers who want to be in an environment that stands up for what is right and are willing to take on matters of national importance,” he continued. “I don’t see there being any major change in the administration’s behavior in the next couple of years, and we are ready.”