



STATE OF HAWAI'I
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

ANNE LOPEZ
ATTORNEY GENERAL
LOIO KUHINA

**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ ANNOUNCES INITIAL VICTORY IN
LAWSUIT CHALLENGING PRESIDENT TRUMP'S ILLEGAL FEDERAL
FUNDING FREEZE**

News Release 2025-12

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2025

HONOLULU – Attorney General Anne Lopez announced an initial victory in her lawsuit challenging President Donald Trump's Office of Management & Budget's (OMB) memo freezing federal grants and loans. Today, a federal judge in Rhode Island issued a temporary restraining order in the lawsuit filed by Hawai'i and a coalition of 22 other states. The temporary restraining order prohibits the Trump administration from pausing, freezing, impeding, blocking, canceling, or terminating access to federal funding. This temporary restraining order is valid until the Court rules on a motion for preliminary injunction.

“Since the founding of our nation, the constitutional system of government has been based upon mutual cooperation and respect between states and the federal government,” said Attorney General Lopez. “The citizens of Hawai'i pay taxes to the federal government, and the federal government, in return, provides federal funds to Hawai'i for programs that pay for crucial services such as law enforcement and healthcare. Hawai'i will stand up for its right to receive federal funds to which it is legally entitled.”

The State of Hawai'i is being represented in this lawsuit by Solicitor General Kaliko'onālani Fernandes and Special Assistant to the Attorney General Dave Day who stated: "We are pleased with the court's decision in issuing a temporary restraining order, which prohibits the Trump administration from impeding access to federal funding that has been lawfully granted to Hawai'i. The Department of the Attorney General is committed to fight for the rights of Hawai'i and its people."

The lawsuit, filed by the coalition Tuesday, argued that the Trump administration's memo violates the U.S. Constitution and federal law by creating new conditions on funding that has already been awarded. On Wednesday, only hours before an initial hearing in this case, the President hastily rescinded the memo, but public messaging both by the White House Press Secretary and on the White House's official X account indicated that the funding freeze was still in effect. The states argued that rescinding the memo without unfreezing funding was an attempt by the administration to evade the lawsuit. Indeed, a lawyer for the Department of Justice argued during the hearing that since the memo had been rescinded, the states no longer had standing to sue. The Court, Judge John J. McConnell presiding, called this a "distinction without a difference," and asked the parties to submit a proposed order for his review.

Today, Judge McConnell announced the temporary restraining order, agreeing with the states that the President overstepped his authority by overriding policy choices made by Congress and has violated his obligation to execute the laws passed by Congress by refusing to spend the money Congress has appropriated. Judge McConnell, in his order, stated, "Congress has not given the Executive limitless power to broadly and indefinitely pause all funds that it has expressly directed to specific recipients and purposes and therefore the Executive's actions violate the separation of powers."

Since the order has taken effect, communities and families across Hawai'i and the country have been harmed. The federal funding that has been frozen supports programs such as: WIC, a nutrition program for pregnant parents and infants; Head Start, providing preschool and support services for low-income children and their families; LIHEAP, providing home energy assistance for households that struggle to stay warm through the winters; the Medicare enrollment assistance program; school meals for low-income students; programs supporting homeless veterans reintegrating into our communities; programs that help victims of domestic violence seeking support to make safety plans and exit unsafe situations; and programs supporting refugees that have already arrived in our communities, by providing clothing, household goods, and rent assistance, as well as English classes and job placement. These programs also support critical public safety programs including those housed within the Department of

the Attorney General, supporting the investigation and prosecution of Medicaid fraud and child sexual abuse cases.

Joining Hawai'i as plaintiffs in this suit are Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia.

A copy of the decision can be found [here](#).

#

Media contacts:

Dave Day
Special Assistant to the Attorney General
Office: 808-586-1284
Email: david.d.day@hawaii.gov
Web: <http://ag.hawaii.gov>

Toni Schwartz
Public Information Officer
Hawai'i Department of the Attorney General
Office: 808-586-1252
Cell: 808-379-9249
Email: Toni.E.Schwartz@hawaii.gov
Web: <http://ag.hawaii.gov>