

# Jenner & Block Secures Victories Protecting Research Funding at Higher Education Institutions

## News

July 1, 2025

In major back-to-back victories for research in quantum computing, AI, cybersecurity, semiconductors, and other technologies vital to national security and competitiveness, Jenner & Block secured critical court orders halting federal funding cuts at US universities.

On June 17, a Massachusetts federal judge issued a nationwide temporary restraining order (TRO) blocking the US Department of Defense (DOD) from implementing a new policy that would have slashed research funding for university-led projects. Just three days later, on June 20, another Massachusetts federal judge granted summary judgment for university clients in a separate lawsuit, ruling that a similar policy at the National Science Foundation (NSF) violated multiple federal laws.

Both lawsuits were brought on behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the American Council on Education (ACE), and at least a dozen impacted US universities.

The courts found that both the DOD's and NSF's funding policies were unlawful and arbitrary, threatening to cripple university research efforts. Without this relief, universities faced annual losses ranging from \$3 million to \$50 million, potential facility shutdowns, and the elimination of hundreds of research positions.

These wins follow Jenner & Block's successful challenges to similar policies issued by the National Institutes of Health and Department of Energy, which posed similar threats to university clients and their groundbreaking research but have been permanently blocked by federal courts.

Partners Betsy Henthorne and Zachary C. Schauf, alongside co-counsel, led the litigation team in the DOD matter, and were recognized with a shout-out in *The American Lawyer's* Litigator of the Week for securing the TRO. The Jenner team also includes Co-Managing Partner Ishan K. Bhabha; Partners Steve Englund, Lindsay Harrison, Lauren J. Hartz, and Shoba Pillay; Associates Kara V. Brandeisky, Brantley Butcher; Illyana A. Green, Hilary Ledwell, Michelle A. Li, Mary Marshall, Sophie Montgomery, and Logan Wren; Paralegal Supervisor Cheryl L. Olson; Senior Paralegal Sandra M. Mielke Gentile; and Paralegal Mary Frances Patston.

The schools in the NSF matter are represented by by Co-Managing Partner Ishan K. Bhabha; Partners Steve Englund, Lindsay Harrison, Lauren J. Hartz, Betsy Henthorne, Anjali Motgi, Zachary C. Schauf, and Kirsten Hicks Spira; Associates Kara V. Brandeisky, Brantley Butcher; Illyana A. Green, Hilary Ledwell, Tanner Lockhead, Mary Marshall, Sophie Montgomery, and Logan Wren; Paralegal Supervisor Cheryl L. Olson; Senior Paralegals Sandra M. Mielke Gentile and Cheryl J. Kras; Paralegal Mary Frances Patston; and Executive Assistant Beth Gulden.

In all of these matters, Jenner & Block has collaborated with co-counsel from Clement & Murphy PLLC, led by Paul Clement.

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