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Attorney General Brown Moves for Temporary Restraining Order to Stop Mass Firings and Seek Reinstatement of Federal Probationary Employees

BALTIMORE, MD (March 7, 2025) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown, leading a coalition of 20 attorneys general, has moved for a temporary restraining order of numerous federal agencies ([click here for TRO motion and memo](#)), asking that a federal court order them to cease the illegal mass layoffs of federal probationary employees, and to reinstate those who have been fired.

“President Trump’s unlawful mass firings of federal workers have forced thousands of hardworking families into financial insecurity,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “These unexpected and ongoing layoffs have strained State resources as we help those caught in the crossfire of the president’s war on the civil service. This temporary restraining order would preserve Marylanders’ livelihoods and protect Maryland’s assets as we continue this fight in court.”

To view the statement that Attorney General Brown issued via video, upon filing of the original lawsuit late last night, please click [here](#).

This motion, seeking immediate relief, is necessary because the mass firings by federal agencies are causing irreparable injuries to Maryland and the other plaintiff states. The ongoing and sudden mass firings are straining state resources to support recently unemployed workers, and to review and adjudicate claims of unemployment assistance. Moreover, the unlawful layoffs will harm state finances and undermine vital state-federal partnerships.

“Maryland’s public servants are dedicated patriots whose service should be praised—not villainized,” **said Governor Wes Moore**. “We strongly support Attorney General Brown’s swift action to seek relief from the federal court on behalf of the thousands of federal employees in Maryland whose livelihoods will sustain detrimental impact from the unjust actions of the Trump-Vance Administration.”

In an effort to dramatically reduce the size of the federal government, the Trump administration initiated mass terminations of federal employees, ordering numerous federal agencies to fire thousands of probationary employees. These personnel are newly hired or have recently been promoted or changed offices, and they are generally subject to a probationary period of one or two years before they are entitled to full protections under federal employment laws.

Maryland Secretary of Labor Portia Wu noted, “Hundreds of thousands of Maryland residents work for the federal government – the largest concentration of federal workers outside of the District of

Columbia. The federal government's personnel actions are causing immediate harm to Marylanders who have dedicated their lives and careers to public service, as well as harm to the state of Maryland."

While federal agencies claimed, in the form of termination letters, that these probationary employees were fired for unsatisfactory performance or conduct, the firings were actually part of the administration's attempt to restructure and downsize the entire federal government. In the lawsuit filed today, the coalition of attorneys general claims that the administration was therefore required to follow federal laws and regulations that govern large-scale federal "Reductions in Force" (RIF). These critical protections ensure that personnel such as military veterans are given preference in retaining their jobs.

When a RIF results in a layoff of 50 or more employees, the agency must generally give at least 60 days' advance notice to states governments, so they can provide vital "rapid response" information, resources, and services to affected workers. The federal agencies named in the lawsuit failed to provide any advance notice to Maryland, causing significant expense, injury, and burden on the state as it scrambles to respond to the sudden mass layoffs of its residents.

Over 800 terminated federal employees in Maryland have already applied to the state for unemployment benefits. Further, in addition to straining our unemployment system, and harming Marylanders, these actions threaten Maryland's finances. According to the Office of the Comptroller, our state's labor market and state budget are heavily reliant on personal income tax revenues. In fiscal year 2024, revenue generated from personal income taxes represented 55% of Maryland's total general fund revenue and approximately 250,000 federal workers reside in Maryland.

"These slash-and-burn cuts to federal agencies will harm every American, but the impact will be particularly detrimental to Maryland, where we are proud to host many federal workers, contractors, and agencies," **said Comptroller Brooke Lierman**. "Although about 85% of federal workers reside and work outside the DMV, our tax data indicates that approximately 9% of Maryland households report receiving wages from the federal government. The sudden layoffs of thousands of Maryland federal employees will adversely affect our state's economy, contributing to the reduction of our state's revenues, extended periods of mass unemployment, downward pressure on wages, and possible migration of residents out of the state."

In today's motion, Attorney General Brown is seeking an immediate ruling by the Court to:

- Reinstatement unlawfully fired employees;
- Stop further similar terminations; and
- Identify affected employees

Joining Attorney General Brown are the attorneys general of Minnesota, the District of Columbia, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawai'i, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

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