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State AGs to Play Larger Role With Trump Back in Office

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Chris Carlson, a partner in Troutman Pepper Locke’s State Attorneys General Practice Group, was quoted in the March 20, 2025 *Law360* article, [“State AGs to Play Larger Role With Trump Back in Office.”](#)

But they could focus first on consumer protection, given all the CFPB litigation that has been dropped by the Trump administration, according to Troutman Pepper Locke LLP partner Christopher Carlson, who served as an assistant attorney general in the Office of the West Virginia Attorney General.

“I know for a fact the states are looking at those and saying, ‘OK, if the CFPB thought that that was warranted, I’m going to give that a hard look,’” Carlson said.

“So it really has been how do we plug perceived holes in the boat from a consumer protection perspective.”

In fact, the number of lawyers handling consumer protection cases in the West Virginia Attorney General’s Office has doubled since he worked in that office, Carlson said.

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Texas’ Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton, for instance, announced in September a settlement with healthcare technology company Pieces Technologies, which uses AI to assist hospitals with clinical notes, under the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices-Consumer Protection Act. It’s the first attorney general settlement pursuant to a state consumer protection act involving generative artificial intelligence, according to Carlson.

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The legal challenges to grocery chain Kroger’s \$24.6 billion bid to buy Albertsons is “a perfect case study” of this trend, according to Carlson. Nine states joined the Federal Trade Commission in opposing the merger, but Colorado and Washington state sued separately and got to trial first.

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In the past, multistate legal actions usually involved both red and blue states’ attorneys general. But in recent years there have been more multistate actions involving just Democratic attorneys general — focused on issues like climate change, for instance — or just Republicans — focused on areas like consumer protection, according to

Carlson.

That trend is likely to continue and even accelerate under the Trump administration, Carlson said, adding, “partisan multistate actions are definitely increasing.”

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Some attorneys general may be more intent on making businesses change their practices, so they may say, “The money may be right for a multistate, but we really need to use some of our resources to make sure the industry is practicing in a better way,” Carlson said.

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In the absence of the federal government enacting cannabis reform or data privacy legislation, the preeminent attorney addressing cannabis right now is Colorado’s attorney general, and California’s attorney general is leading the charge on data privacy, Carlson said.

“Congress isn’t essentially being aggressive enough or doing enough to regulate in some of these areas, so the state attorneys general are stepping in,” Carlson said. “I expect them to continue to keep having more and more expanded influence.”

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