



# Attorney General Loretta Lynch in Conversation with Thomas Kim

On November 4, 2020, Thomson Reuters and Paul, Weiss hosted a joint fireside chat with former Attorney General and current Paul, Weiss partner Loretta Lynch. The discussion was facilitated by Thomas Kim, Chief Legal Officer and Company Secretary at Thomson Reuters, and Dave Curran, Paul, Weiss Chief Sustainability and ESG Officer.

The discussion came on the heels of one of the most interesting election nights in recent history and focused on the intersection of politics, law and the media. Attorney General Lynch offered her thoughts on myriad topics including voter suppression; racial justice; shifting perspectives on the Rule of Law; and how lawyers and the media can help engage disenfranchised citizens.

## The Electoral System

The conversation opened with a discussion of the mechanics of the 2020 Presidential election and the current electoral system. AG Lynch noted that the shadow of Covid-19 hung over this election, as more Americans than ever before grappled with the question of alternative forms of voting and the legitimacy of mail-in and absentee ballots. While this election saw historic voter turnout, AG Lynch believes it was largely due to fear of voter suppression and concern regarding ability to cast ballots. The failure to adjust our system's protection of the right to vote is one of the reasons this was such an interesting election season.

## The Rule of Law

The conversation then shifted to the Rule of Law and how we can restore faith among young and disenfranchised citizens who believe their voices may not matter. AG Lynch compared the Rule of Law to a pendulum that swings back and forth between a greater government hand that suppresses the individual voice and one that allows for the fuller expression of individualism.

To the disillusioned; we need to only look to our history for guidance – we have been in this situation many times, and have managed to right the ship every time. Democracy is hard, it's a marathon not a sprint, and you have to fight for it. AG Lynch's advice: if you want to see change, you need to take action at the local level and focus equal attention on your vote for senator, congressperson, mayor and police chief, among others. They have the potential to enact visible change in your communities, especially in regards to criminal justice and police reform.

## Lawyers and the Media

The conversation concluded with a discussion on the role of the media and lawyers. AG Lynch offered thoughts on how both can help restore faith in the Rule of Law and foster connection between the opposing parties. Americans have a tendency to adopt an "us" versus "them" mentality and to talk rather than listen. AG Lynch advised that we leave behind the idea that more equality for some groups (in particular immigrants and people of color) means less equality for others and reminded listeners that equality is "not a pie... A rising tide lifts all boats." Lawyers and the media have the ability to better inform the public about issues relating to social and economic equality through factual and verified information that cuts above the emotion driving this mentality. They can also help expand access to information and technology in order to enable Americans to better understand their rights as citizens.

## Parting Thoughts

AG Lynch concluded the conversation by saying she is, and always has been, optimistic about the future. Americans have always found a way to come back together, and we can do so again: "When we stop talking at each other and talk to each other, we can make a huge difference."

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