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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Paul, Weiss Launches Dedicated DEI Strategic Advisory Group

New York, September 27, 2023 - Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP today announced the launch of a new DEI Strategic Advisory practice aimed at helping companies navigate the increasingly challenging legal landscape surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs, policies and commitments.

The practice launch comes in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision holding that race-conscious admissions policies are unconstitutional, as well as a groundswell of novel challenges of corporate DEI initiatives from a variety of actors.

"Companies today face mounting pressure and ever-greater complexity in delivering on their DEI commitments while facing urgent legal challenges from activists, shareholders and other stakeholders," said Brad S. Karp, Chairman at Paul, Weiss. "As a firm long dedicated to advancing diversity and defending clients in their highest-stakes litigation and investigations matters, we are uniquely equipped to help clients navigate this complex terrain."

Among other matters, the team conducts strategic DEI audits to identify potential liabilities and mitigation measures; provides critical guidance on strengthening DEI governance with the goal of minimizing reputational and legal risks; and defends clients in the event of active litigation challenges, including reverse discrimination claims and derivative suits, among others.

Leaders of the group bring unmatched credibility in the area, including former U.S. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch; former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson; firm Chairman Brad S. Karp; former federal prosecutor Jeannie S. Rhee; litigation partners Audra J. Soloway and Liza M. Velazquez; and counsel Lissette Duran, a member of the Civil Rights and Racial Equity Audits practice. The team also includes Sustainability & ESG Advisory Practice co-chair David Curran, a nationally recognized leader in helping companies build resilience against reputational risk. Collectively, they have conducted numerous groundbreaking internal investigations and audits; guided companies and boards in their response to DEI-related investor, vendor, government and shareholder demands; and successfully defended clients in novel DEI policy-related discrimination and securities derivative litigation, including cases of first impression.

“With companies across America facing challenges to their DEI public commitments from all directions, the need for clarity in the DEI area is acute,” said Loretta Lynch, a litigation partner and co-chair of Paul, Weiss’s Racial Equity Audit practice. “Our team brings unparalleled experience advising on fast-moving crises, helping clients reduce potential legal and reputational risks, and conducting sensitive DEI audits.”

The group has unparalleled experience helping companies safely resolve reputation- and franchise-threatening crises and litigation, and is led by the lawyers who pioneered among the nation’s first civil rights and racial equity audit practices. The practice is bolstered by a deeply experienced cross-disciplinary team of ESG attorneys and professionals, who likewise pioneered one of the industry’s first dedicated ESG advisory practices, and draws on our firm’s own groundbreaking history of leadership in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within the firm and across the industry, under the leadership of our Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Danyale Price.

In a testament to our stature in this area, in the wake of the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions v. President & Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* holding that Harvard and the University of North Carolina’s race-conscious admissions policies are unconstitutional, Loretta Lynch, Brad Karp and Jeh Johnson were selected to co-chair a New York State Bar Association blue-ribbon task force to develop strategies for businesses on legal avenues to preserve diversity. The [much-anticipated report](#) was issued in September.

"Companies seek our counsel to pressure-test their diversity efforts in an increasingly fraught landscape," said Liza Velazquez, a litigation partner at Paul, Weiss and a key drafter of the NYSBA report. "We bring a strategic litigation lens to help clients refine inclusive policies and governance that withstand legal scrutiny."

About Paul, Weiss

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP is a premier firm of about 1,000 lawyers with diverse backgrounds, personalities, ideas and interests who provide innovative and effective solutions to our clients’ most complex legal and business challenges. The firm represents many of the world’s largest and most important public and private corporations, asset managers and financial institutions, and clients in need of pro bono assistance.