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Attorney General Bonta Alerts Businesses: It Remains Illegal to Bribe Foreign-Government Officials

Press Release / *Attorney General Bonta Alerts Businesses: It Remains Illegal...*

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OAKLAND — California Attorney General Rob Bonta today issued a legal alert reminding businesses operating in California that it is illegal to make payments to foreign-government officials to obtain or retain business — regardless of the Trump Administration’s order temporarily suspending federal enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Violations of the FCPA remain actionable under California’s Unfair Competition Law (UCL), and businesses are expected to follow the law.

“Illegal activity is still illegal. Paying bribes to foreign officials is not only unethical, it’s also bad for business. Bribery erodes consumer confidence in the market and rewards corruption instead of competition. As the fifth largest economy in the world, California

has a vested interest in defending honest business,” **said Attorney General Bonta.** “Despite the Trump Administration’s actions, I remind businesses in California that bribing foreign officials is illegal under California law and will not be tolerated.”

The FCPA prohibits U.S. businesses and citizens from offering or paying anything of value to a foreign-government official, foreign political party or politician, or official of a public international organization in order to attempt to obtain or retain business.

On February 10, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order purporting to pause enforcement of the FCPA for at least 180 days and directing the U.S. Attorney General to update guidelines and policies governing the FCPA within 360 days to “restore proper bounds on FCPA enforcement and preserve Presidential foreign policy prerogatives.”

In the alert, Attorney General Bonta reminds businesses and individuals to continue complying with all applicable laws, including the FCPA, regardless of the federal administration’s pronouncements. Violations of the FCPA are actionable under California’s UCL, which was enacted to preserve fair business competition and protect consumers. Accordingly, businesses should continue to ensure that they and their agents do not offer or pay anything of value to foreign officials to obtain or retain business.

The full legal alert can be found [here](#).

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