



# CFPB Political Appointee Paul Watkins Hid His Work For An Anti-LGBT Hate Group—And Could Soon Have The Authority To Exempt Industry From Crucial Anti-Discrimination Laws

## Summary

Paul Watkins is a conservative ideologue who has deep ties to anti-LGBT causes throughout his career. Since being [installed by Mick Mulvaney](#) last year to slash regulations as head of the CFPB's Office of Innovation, Watkins has spearheaded the bureau's no-action letter initiative, which would allow him to [exempt industry from anti-discrimination laws](#) that protect LGBT consumers.

Watkins' conservative credentials go back to his undergraduate years at Hillsdale College, consistently ranked by the Princeton Review as one of the [least LGBT-friendly schools](#) in the country. In law school, Watkins participated in the [Blackstone Legal Fellowship](#), a program run by Alliance Defending Freedom, which he later worked for as an attorney.

Alliance Defending Freedom is an anti-LGBT [hate group](#) that has worked to legalize discrimination against the LGBT community. (That might be why Watkins left it off his [LinkedIn profile](#).)

Watkins was employed by the group while it worked with the State of Arizona to legalize discrimination against LGBT individuals and ban same-sex marriage. He took a job in the Arizona Attorney's General Office (which employed [numerous alums](#) of the hate group), where his new boss signed an [amicus brief](#) in support of Masterpiece Cakeshop, the business that wanted to discriminate against same-sex couples in the landmark Supreme Court case—which happened to be represented by Watkins' former colleagues at Alliance Defending Freedom.

Today, Watkins is behind the CFPB's efforts to exempt businesses from consumer protection regulations, including crucial anti-discrimination laws like the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, even though there is strong [bipartisan](#) and [corporate](#) support for expanding civil rights laws to include protections for LGBT individuals. The CFPB is responsible for protecting all consumers, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity—and Paul Watkins must be prevented from putting industry wishes and personal beliefs ahead of that mission.

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# **As Head Of The CFPB's Office Of Innovation, Paul Watkins Could Soon Have The Authority To Exempt Businesses From Anti-Discrimination Laws That Protect LGBT Consumers**

**Paul Watkins, Mick Mulvaney's Pick To Reduce Regulatory "Red Tape" In The CFPB's Office Of Innovation, Is Spearheading The Bureau's Efforts To Grant Industry "Immunity" From Regulations Including Anti-Discrimination Laws That Protect LGBT Consumers.**

## **Paul Watkins Leads The CFPB's Office Of Innovation, Which Is Responsible For The Bureau's No-Action Letter And Product Sandbox Initiatives.**

**In July 2018, Then-Acting Director Mick Mulvaney Appointed Paul Watkins To Lead The CFPB's New Office Of Innovation And Reduce Regulatory "Red Tape."** "Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (Bureau) Acting Director Mick Mulvaney today announced he has selected Paul Watkins to lead the Bureau's new Office of Innovation. [...] 'I am confident that, under his leadership, the Office of Innovation will make significant progress in creating an environment where companies can advance new products and services without being unduly restricted by red tape that belongs in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.'" [[Press Release](#), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 07/18/18]

**Paul Watkins And Office Of Innovation Staff Are The Primary Contacts For The CFPB's No-Action Letter And Product Sandbox.** [["Policy on No-Action Letters and the BCFP Product Sandbox,"](#) Federal Register, 12/13/18]

## **The CFPB's Proposed No-Action Letter Policy Would Grant Businesses Potentially Indefinite Exemptions From Fair Lending Laws, Safe Harbor From Federal And State Enforcement Actions, And Immunity From Private Lawsuits.**

**The CFPB's No-Action Letter Proposal Issued Under Former Acting Director Mick Mulvaney Would Make "The Recipient Immune From Enforcement Actions By Any Federal Or State Authorities, As Well As From Lawsuits Brought By Private Parties."** "By operation of the applicable statutory provision(s), the recipient would have a 'safe harbor' from liability under the applicable statute(s) to the fullest extent permitted by these provisions as to any act done or omitted in good faith in conformity with the approval; i.e., the recipient would be immune from enforcement actions by any Federal or State authorities, as well as from lawsuits

brought by private parties.” [[“Policy on No-Action Letters and the BCFP Product Sandbox,”](#) Federal Register, 12/13/18]

**The CFPB’s No-Action Letter Proposal States That The Bureau Will “Not Make Supervisory Findings Or Bring A Supervisory Or Enforcement Action Against The Recipient.”** “[...] the Bureau will not make supervisory findings or bring a supervisory or enforcement action against the recipient predicated on the recipient’s offering or providing the described aspects of the product or service under (a) its authority to prevent unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices; or (b) any other identified statutory or regulatory authority within the Bureau’s jurisdiction.” [[“Policy on No-Action Letters and the BCFP Product Sandbox,”](#) Federal Register, 12/13/18]

**The Product Sandbox Proposal Would Grant Businesses Exemptions From “Fair Lending Laws That Prohibit Discrimination.”** “Among others, the policy would permit exemptions from provisions of the laws governing mortgages, credit cards, and other forms of lending; fair lending laws that prohibit discrimination; and the laws protecting bank accounts and electronic payments.” [[Press Release](#), National Consumer Law Center, 12/11/18]

**The No-Action Letter Proposal Would “Effectively Grant Companies An Unlimited Enforcement Reprieve” By Eliminating The Original Policy’s 3-Year Limit.** “The agency also would do away with the three-year time limit for companies to be protected from potential enforcement actions when testing out products. That change would effectively grant companies an unlimited enforcement reprieve for products or services permitted through the no-action letter process.” [Lydia Beyoud, [“CFPB Reboots No-Action Letter Policy With New Enforcement Relief,”](#) *Bloomberg*, 12/07/18]

**The National Consumer Law Center Has Argued, “The Default Assumption Will Be That The Letters Would Last Indefinitely.”** [[Press Release](#), National Consumer Law Center, 12/11/18]

**Under The CFPB’s No-Action Letter Proposal, Any Letters Granted To Companies Would Need To Be Signed By Someone In The Office Of Innovation.** “When the Bureau decides to grant an application for a No-Action Letter, it intends to provide the recipient(s) with a No-Action Letter signed by the Assistant Director of the Office of Innovation or other members of the Office of Innovation, duly authorized by the Bureau, that sets forth the specific terms and conditions of the no-action relief provided. (42) The Bureau expects the No-Action Letter will.” [[“Policy on No-Action Letters and the BCFP Product Sandbox,”](#) *Regulations.gov*, accessed 06/04/19]

**Paul Watkins Has Said That The Proposed No-Action Letter Policy Could Shield Companies Not Only From CFPB Enforcement Of The Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), But Also From Liability To Other Agencies And Private Lawsuits.**

**Paul Watkins Has Explained That The Proposed No-Action Letter Policy Could Eliminate Companies’ Liability “Not Just For The Bureau But Other Agencies Or Private Litigants.”** Paul Watkins explained on a podcast in February 2019, “There are several statutes that identify approval authority, TILA, ECOA, and EFTA, allowing the bureau to approve practices as

compliant. The difference with a no action letter is when the bureau makes that determination, then there is not liability under that statute, not just for the bureau but other agencies or private litigants.” [[“Bonus Episode: The CFPB Innovation Director Paul Watkins,”](#) Barefoot Innovation Group, 02/04/19 (21:01)]

**Paul Watkins Emphasized That Agencies Have As Much Power To Exempt Companies From Rules As They Do To Issues Those Rules In The First Place.** “It does provide more of a comprehensive sandbox like safe harbor. That’s a core element of the sandbox proposal. The other element, the other main element, is inherent authority that agencies have, when the agencies are granted the authority to issue rules, they’re also granted the authority to exempt from those rules so long as they’re not conflicting with the statute that generated the rule.” [[“Bonus Episode: The CFPB Innovation Director Paul Watkins,”](#) Barefoot Innovation Group, 02/04/19 (21:28)]

**Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) Said The CFPB’s Proposal To Loosen Its No-Action Letter Policy “Could Let Bad Actors That Abuse Consumers Off The Hook.”**

**Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) Said She Was Concerned By The CFPB’s Proposal “To Significantly Loosen Its ‘No-Action Letter’ Policy In A Way That Could Let Bad Actors That Abuse Consumers Off The Hook Entirely From Enforcement Action By The Agency.”** “[On December 11, 2018], following a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Consumer Bureau) proposal to weaken its ‘no-action letter’ policy and reduce enforcement, Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), Ranking Member of the Committee on Financial Services, made the following statement: ‘I am very concerned by the Consumer Bureau proposal, issued in the last days of Mick Mulvaney’s leadership, to significantly loosen its ‘no-action letter’ policy in a way that could let bad actors that abuse consumers off the hook entirely from enforcement action by the agency. This is yet another step to weaken the Consumer Bureau and curtail its enforcement tools. While it is important for our financial regulators to encourage responsible innovation, this is a deeply irresponsible overreach that instead encourages and abets consumer abuses by putting certain financial institutions in an enforcement-free-zone.’” [[Press Release](#), Rep. Maxine Waters, 12/11/18]

**There Is Widespread Bipartisan And Corporate Support For The Equality Act, Which Would Expand Civil Rights Laws Like The Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) To Protect LGBT Individuals—A Stance Already Taken At The CFPB Under Former Director Richard Cordray.**

**The Equality Act, Which Passed The House On May 17, 2019, Would Extend The Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) To Protect Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity From Discrimination.**

**The Equality Act Would Amend The Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), Among Other Civil Rights Laws, To “Explicitly Include Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity As Protected Characteristics.”** “The Equality Act would amend existing civil rights law—including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Jury Selection and Services Act, and several laws regarding employment with the federal government—to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics.” [[The Equality Act](#),” The Human Rights Campaign, 03/20/19]

**The Equality Act Passed The House Of Representatives On May 17, 2019.** [[H.R. 5 – The Equality Act](#), U.S. House of Representatives, 03/13/19]

## **There Is Bipartisan And Corporate Support For The Equality Act.**

**The Equality Act Has Bipartisan Support—It Was Sponsored By Both Republicans And Democrats When It Was First Introduced In 2015 And Received A Significant Number Of Republican Votes When It Passed The House In May 2019.** “Today’s vote of 236-173 in the House included 8 Republicans joining 228 Democrats to vote in favor of the legislation. The bipartisan Equality Act, first introduced in Congress in July 2015, is sponsored by Representatives David Cicilline (D-RI) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) in the House and Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Susan Collins (R-ME), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) in the Senate.” [Sarah McBride, [“HISTORIC: U.S. House of Representatives Passes the Equality Act,”](#) Human Rights Campaign, 05/17/19]

**The Equality Act “Has 161 Corporate Backers.”** “When the LGBTQ Equality Act was first introduced in 2015, three companies publicly supported it: Apple, The Dow Chemical Company and Levi Strauss & Co. Now as the bill — which would expand the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity — heads back to Capitol Hill, it has 161 corporate backers.” [Noah Higgins-Dunn, [“The LGBTQ Equality Act heads back to Capitol Hill, this time with massive corporate support,”](#) CNBC, 03/08/19]

## **In August 2016, Then-Director Richard Cordray Asserted The CFPB’s Stance That ECOA’s Protections Extended To Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity, A Position The Bureau’s Website Still Maintains.**

**In August 2016, Then-CFPB Director Richard Cordray Clarified The Bureau’s Stance That ECOA Protects Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity.** “While CFPB officials have suggested in public remarks that the Equal Credit Opportunity Act’s prohibition against discrimination on the basis of ‘sex’ includes discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, a letter dated August 30, 2016 from Director Cordray goes further by describing how, in the CFPB’s view, current law provides strong support for that position.” [John L. Cuhane, Jr., [“CFPB builds case for ECOA protection for gender identity and sexual orientation: Ballard to conduct Nov. 3 webinar,”](#) Ballard Spahr LLP, 09/22/16]

**The CFPB’s Website Currently Says It Observes “Arguments That The Prohibition Against Sex Discrimination Also Affords Broad Protection From Discrimination Based On A Consumer’s Gender Identity And Sexual Orientation.”** The CFPB’s own website says it is illegal for a creditor to discriminate on the basis of Sex and explains, “Currently, the law

supports arguments that the prohibition against sex discrimination also affords broad protection from discrimination based on a consumer's gender identity and sexual orientation." [[What protections do I have against credit discrimination?](#)," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, accessed 05/31/19]

## **Paul Watkins Enabled Discrimination While Working For Alliance Defending Freedom, An Anti-LGBT Hate Group, And In The Arizona Attorney General's Office, Where He Was Charged With Protecting Civil Rights**

**Paul Watkins Worked As An Attorney For Alliance Defending Freedom, An Anti-LGBT Hate Group That Supports Recriminalizing Homosexuality—But He's Opted For A Gap In His Resume Rather Than Acknowledging It In His LinkedIn profile.**

### **Paul Watkins Was Senior Legal Counsel For Alliance Defending Freedom From 2012 To 2015...**

According To His Resume, Paul Watkins Was Senior Legal Counsel For Alliance Defending Freedom From 2012 To 2015. [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

### **...Even Though He Left It Off His LinkedIn Profile.**

**Paul Watkins Does Not List Any Employers Between 2013 and 2015 On His LinkedIn Profile.** Paul Watkins' LinkedIn Profile does not list any employers between 2013 and 2015, between his time at law firm Covington & Burling and the Arizona Attorney General's Office. [[LinkedIn Profile for Paul Watkins](#), accessed 05/30/19]



**Chief Counsel, Civil Litigation Division**

Arizona Attorney General's Office

Jan 2015 – Jul 2018 · 3 yrs 7 mos

Phoenix, Arizona Area

Lead 150-person Civil Litigation Division enforcing state law related to consumer fraud, antitrust, tobacco, collections, environmental, bankruptcy, and civil rights. Civil Litigation Division also represents state agencies including Department of Financial Institutions, Insurance, Real Estate and Game & Fish.



**Associate**

Covington & Burling LLP

2008 – 2012 · 4 yrs

San Francisco Bay Area

Securities litigation, general commercial litigation.

## **Alliance Defending Freedom Is Classified As A Hate Group By The Southern Poverty Law Center For Its Homophobic Agenda.**

**Alliance Defending Freedom Has Been Designated A Hate Group By The Southern Poverty Law Center For Its Homophobic Agenda.** Alliance Defending Freedom is an “SLPC Designated Hate Group. [[Alliance Defending Freedom](#),” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed 05/30/19]

- **Alliance Defending Freedom “Supported The Recriminalization Of Homosexuality In The U.S. And Criminalization Abroad” And “Claims That A ‘Homosexual Agenda’ Will Destroy Christianity And Society.”** [[Alliance Defending Freedom](#),” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed 05/30/19]

**While Paul Watkins Worked There, Alliance Defending Freedom Actively Worked To Legalize Discrimination Against LGBT Individuals And Ban Same-Sex Marriage.**

## **While Paul Watkins Worked There, Alliance Defending Freedom Co-Wrote An Arizona Bill That Would Have Allowed Businesses To Discriminate Against LGBT Individuals.**

**Alliance Defending Freedom Co-Wrote An Arizona Bill Allowing Businesses, Individuals, And Groups To “Use Their Religious Beliefs As A Defense In A Discrimination Lawsuit.”** “The Arizona bill, which is headed to Gov. Jan Brewer’s desk for her signature, would allow people who object to same-sex marriage to use their religious beliefs as a defense in a discrimination lawsuit. [...] The Arizona bill would broaden the state’s definition of the exercise of religion to include both the practice and observance of religious beliefs. It would expand those protected under the state’s free-exercise-of-religion law to ‘any individual, association, partnership, corporation, church, religious assembly or institution or other business organization.’ The law was written by the conservative advocacy group Center for Arizona

Policy and Alliance Defending Freedom, a prominent Arizona-based Christian law firm.” [Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “[Kansas, Arizona bills reflect national fight over gay rights vs. religious liberty](#),” *The Washington Post*, 02/21/14]

- **In February 2014, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer Vetoed The Bill In Response To Public Backlash.** “Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoed a bill Wednesday that would have allowed businesses that asserted their religious beliefs the right to deny service to gay and lesbian customers. The controversial measure faced a surge of opposition in recent days from large corporations and athletic organizations, including Delta Air Lines, the Super Bowl host committee and Major League Baseball.” [Catherine E. Shoichet and Halimah Abdullah, “[Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoes controversial anti-gay bill, SB 1062](#),” *CNN*, 02/26/14]
- **Paul Watkins Was Senior Legal Counsel For Alliance Defending Freedom From 2012 To 2015.** [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

### **While Paul Watkins Worked There, Alliance Defending Freedom Petitioned The Supreme Court To Hear Their Case Defending A Photographer Who Refused Service To A Lesbian Couple.**

**In 2014, Alliance Defending Freedom Petitioned The Supreme Court To Hear Their Case Defending A New Mexico Photographer Who Refused Service To A Lesbian Couple.** “The Supreme Court declined [...] to consider whether a New Mexico photographer had a right to refuse service to a same-sex couple who wanted her to record their commitment ceremony. [...] The case at the court came from Elaine and Jonathan Huguenin, whose company, Elane Photography, refused service for the 2007 commitment ceremony of a lesbian couple, Vanessa Willock and Misti Collinsworth. [...] In their petition, the Huguenins and lawyer Jordan W. Lorence of the Alliance Defending Freedom mentioned religion frequently. But their plea did not cite constitutional protection of their right to freely exercise their religion. Instead, they relied on another part of the First Amendment: their right to free speech.” [Robert Barnes, “[Supreme Court declines case of photographer who denied service to gay couple](#),” *The Washington Post*, 04/07/14]

- **Paul Watkins Was Senior Legal Counsel For Alliance Defending Freedom From 2012 To 2015.** [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

### **While Paul Watkins Worked There, Alliance Defending Freedom Defended The State Of Arizona’s Same-Sex Marriage Ban.**

**While Paul Watkins Worked For Alliance Defending Freedom, The Group’s Lawyers Were Drafted By The Arizona Attorney General To Defend Its Prohibition Against Gay Marriage In A 2014 Lawsuit.** “Attorneys for the state are telling a federal judge there’s a good reason Arizona won’t let gays marry: They can’t reproduce, at least not without the help of a third person. [...] While the lawsuit is against the state, the case is being defended by the Alliance Defending Freedom, a self-described ‘legal ministry’ formed by Christian leaders to advocate for religious liberty and marriage. Attorney General Tom Horne agreed to let that organization take

the lead, naming their lawyers as special assistant attorneys general.” [Howard Fischer, “[Gays can’t have kids, shouldn’t be allowed to marry, Arizona attorneys argue](#),” *Arizona Capitol Times*, 07/23/14]

- “‘Only Man-Woman Couples Are Capable Of Furthering The State’s Interest In Linking Children To Both Of Their Biological Parents,’ Argued Attorneys From The Alliance Defending Freedom. And They Said The Vast Majority Of Such Couples Produce Their Own Biological Children.” [Howard Fischer, “[Gays can’t have kids, shouldn’t be allowed to marry, Arizona attorneys argue](#),” *Arizona Capitol Times*, 07/23/14]
- Paul Watkins Was Senior Legal Counsel For Alliance Defending Freedom From 2012 To 2015. [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

**Paul Watkins Helped Lead Alliance Defending Freedom’s “Secretive” Legal Fellowship Program And Appeared On The Hugh Hewitt Show To Talk About His Ideological Motivations For Training Students To “Be Forces For Religious Liberty In The United States.”**

## **Paul Watkins’ Role At Alliance Defending Freedom Focused On Career Development For Its “Secretive” Blackstone Legal Fellowship.**

In 2013, Paul Watkins Was “Legal Counsel, Career Development, Blackstone Legal Fellowship,” For Alliance Defending Freedom. Paul Watkins signed a March 1, 2013 email as Alliance Defending Freedom’s “Legal Counsel, Career Development, Blackstone Legal Fellowship.” [[Responsive Documents, “8-12-2016 BEALL 06-P Responsive Docs.pdf](#),” Page 397, State of Florida, 08/12/16]

**From:** Paul Watkins [mailto:pwatkins@alliancedefendingfreedom.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 01, 2013 5:39 PM  
**To:** Gibson, Ben  
**Subject:** Jeremy Schwarz

Ben,

Great to speak with you earlier today and thank you for considering one of our students for this upcoming summer. Jeremy provided me a number of references in case you are not able to get a hold of one of the top three. (He doesn’t want that to delay your decision making process).

Please feel free to contact him directly to schedule an interview. If you can let me know when you have reached a decision about him, that would be helpful on my end.

Thanks again.

Best regards,  
Paul Watkins



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**Alliance Defending Freedom Has Used Its “Secretive” Blackstone Legal Fellowship To Train Thousands Of Students In 21 Countries.** “The organization also offers the secretive Blackstone Legal Fellowship, through which Christian law students study under prominent scholars, participate in internships, and prepare for life and leadership in the legal profession. Since 2000 (the year of Blackstone’s inception), the ADF claims it has trained over 1,600 law students from 225 law schools in 21 different countries.” [[“Alliance Defending Freedom,”](#) Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed 05/30/19]

## **Alliance Defending Freedom’s Blackstone Legal Fellowship Trains Students To Develop “A Distinctly Christian Worldview In Every Area Of Law.”**

**Alliance Defending Freedom Stated In A Tax Filing That The Blackstone Fellowship “Inspires A Distinctly Christian Worldview In Every Area Of Law” And Is Meant To “Train A New Generation Of Lawyers Who Will Rise To Positions Of Influence.”** “[T]he Blackstone Fellowship inspires a distinctly Christian worldview in every area of law, and particularly in the areas of public policy and religious liberty,” states the Alliance’s public tax filing. ‘With this ongoing program, it’s [the Alliance’s] goal to train a new generation of lawyers who will rise to positions of influence and leadership as legal scholars, litigators, judges—perhaps even Supreme Court Justices—who will work to ensure that justice is carried out in America’s courtrooms.’” [Sofia Resnick and Sharona Coutts, [“Not the ‘Illuminati’: How Fundamentalist Christians Are Infiltrating State and Federal Government,”](#) *Rewire.News*, 05/13/14]

## **Paul Watkins Had Previously Participated In Alliance Defending Freedom’s Blackstone Legal Fellowship Program When He Was A Law Student.**

**Paul Watkins Said He Was A Blackstone Fellow In 2004.** [[“Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,”](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12 (01:14)]

- **Watkins Attended Harvard Law School From 2003 To 2006.** [[LinkedIn Profile for Paul Watkins](#), accessed 05/30/19]

## **When Paul Watkins Appeared On The Hugh Hewitt Show In 2012, Hewitt Said That Watkins Helped Law Students “Be Forces For Religious Liberty In The United States.”**

**Paul Watkins Appeared On The Hugh Hewitt Show In June 2012.** [[“Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,”](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12]

**Hugh Hewitt Described Paul Watkins' Role As Teaching Law Students How To "Be Forces For Religious Liberty In The United States."** Hugh Hewitt described Paul Watkins as "one of the young ADF lawyers who are helping all the Blackstone Fellows figure out their lives. The Blackstone Fellows are law students from across the United States who gather in Phoenix and spend the summer learning how to be forces for religious liberty in the United States." [["Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,"](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12 (11:02)]

### **Paul Watkins Said He Was Drawn To Alliance Defending Freedom "Because I Think It's Crucial For Us As Attorneys To Start Bringing Up The Next Generation."**

**Paul Watkins Said He Began Working For ADF's Blackstone Fund "Because I Think It's Crucial For Us As Attorneys To Start Bringing Up The Next Generation."** "I took this job because I think it's crucial for us as attorneys to start bringing up the next generation." [["Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,"](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12 (1:46)]

**In 2012, Paul Watkins Said He Had Been At ADF For Three Months Working For The Blackstone Fellowship, Helping Students Find "Mentors In The Fields That God Has Called Them To Succeed In."** Paul Watkins: "I've been at the Alliance Defense Fund for three months. I work in career development for the Blackstone Fellowship and I'm focusing on helping our law students assess what they want to do and work on their personal presentation and interviewing skills and then find them mentors in the fields that God has called them to succeed in." [["Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,"](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12 (00:43)]

**Paul Watkins Alluded To The Fact That He Felt He Was On An "Island" And "Isolated" In San Francisco.** "And all of us who have been on an island, have been isolated, I was at a large law firm in San Francisco. We know how desperate the need is for reinforcement." [["Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,"](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12 (1:52)]

### **Paul Watkins Said That One Of His Mentors Was Stanford Professor Michael McConnell, Who Argued That Anti-LGBT Arguments Were Silenced With A "Level Of Sheer Desire To Crush Dissent Is Pretty Unprecedented."**

**Paul Watkins Said That One Of His Two Mentors Was Stanford Professor Michael McConnell.** [["Jordan Lorence and Paul Watkins on the Hugh Hewitt Show: The Blackstone Legal Fellowship and ADF Cases,"](#) Alliance Defending Freedom via Archive.org, 06/08/12 (12:25)]

**Michael McConnell Said That Opponents Of Gay Marriage Have Been Silenced And "The Level Of Sheer Desire To Crush Dissent Is Pretty Unprecedented."** "But some conservatives say lawyers and scholars who support religious liberty and oppose a

constitutional right to same-sex marriage have been bullied into silence. ‘The level of sheer desire to crush dissent is pretty unprecedented,’ said Michael W. McConnell, a former federal appeals court judge who teaches law at Stanford.” [Adam Liptak, “[The Case Against Gay Marriage: Top Law Firms Won’t Touch It](#),” *The New York Times*, 04/11/15]

**As Arizona’s Top Civil Rights Attorney, Paul Watkins Neglected His Duty To Defend The Rights Of All Arizonans And Stood By While His Boss Threatened The Rights Of LGBT Arizonans— Sometimes In Partnership With Watkins’ Former Colleagues At Alliance Defending Freedom.**

**While Paul Watkins Was Responsible For Upholding The Civil Rights Of All Arizonans In The Attorney General’s Office, AG Mark Brnovich Repeatedly Undermined LGBT Rights.**

Paul Watkins Led The Arizona Attorney General’s Civil Litigation Division From January 2015 To July 2018. [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

- **The Division of Civil Rights Directly Fell Under Watkins’ Authority.** “The Civil Litigation Division consists of the Consumer Protection and Advocacy Section, Environmental Enforcement Section, Division of Civil Rights Section, and Bankruptcy Collection and Enforcement Section.” [“[Annual Report 2015](#),” Office of the Arizona Attorney General, 2015]
- **Watkins’ First Priority Should Have Been Civil Rights.** The “Mission” of The Civil Litigation Division is: “To enforce state law against those who violate the civil rights, or threaten the economic and environmental well-being of Arizonans.” [“[Annual Report 2015](#),” Office of the Arizona Attorney General, 2015]

**Paul Watkins Did Not Stand Up For The LGBTQ Community As His Boss Repeatedly Undermined Its Rights.** “[Attorney General Mark Brnovich] joined the suit against the Obama administration’s life-saving guidance protecting transgender students, as well as a brief to the Supreme Court of the United States in support of granting businesses a potentially sweeping license to discriminate against LGBTQ people. Brnovich also advised the Arizona Department of Child Safety to deny licenses to married same-sex couples seeking to jointly adopt or foster children.” [Ilanthe Metzger, “[Human Rights Campaign Endorses January Contreras for Arizona Attorney General](#),” Human Rights Campaign, 02/23/18]

**While Paul Watkins Worked For Him, Attorney General Mark Brnovich Signed An Amicus Brief In Support Of Masterpiece Cakeshop, The Business That Wanted To Discriminate Against Same-Sex Couples In The Landmark Supreme Court Case—And Was Represented By Watkins’ Former Colleagues At Alliance Defending Freedom.**

**In September 2017, Paul Watkins' Boss, Attorney General Mark Brnovich, Signed An Amicus Brief To The Supreme Court Arguing That Masterpiece Cakeshop Can Discriminate Against LGBT Individuals.** “The ‘friend of the court’ brief signed by House and Senate members expresses solidarity with Phillips, who said in his appeal to the Supreme Court that the Colorado’s public accommodation law violates his ‘sincerely held religious beliefs about marriage.’ Among those signing the brief were Arizona Republican Reps. Trent Franks of Glendale, Paul Gosar of Prescott and Andy Biggs of Gilbert. Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich also joined a brief filed by 20 states in support of Phillips. [Adrienne St. Clair, “[Arizona lawmakers weigh in on case pitting gay rights, religious rights,](#)” *Cronkite News*, 09/08/17]

- **Alliance Defending Freedom Attorneys Represented Masterpiece Cakeshop In The Landmark Case.** Alliance Defending Freedom Attorneys David A. Cortman, Rory T. Gray, Jeremy D. Tedesco, Kristen K. Waggoner, Jordan W. Lorence, J. Caleb Dalton were listed as “Counsel for Petitioners” Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. And Jack C. Phillips in a Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States. [[Petition For A Writ of Certiorari Masterpiece Cakeshop, et. al](#), Supreme Court of The United States, 07/22/16]
- **The ACLU Argued That The Case Was Really About Unconstitutionally Denying Rights “Solely To One Category Of People.”** “But a spokesman for the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona disagreed, saying that while Phillips is free to his religious beliefs and free to oppose same-sex couples, ‘what he’s not free to do is deny a business service that he provides to everyone else solely to one category of people.’” [Adrienne St. Clair, “[Arizona lawmakers weigh in on case pitting gay rights, religious rights,](#)” *Cronkite News*, 09/08/17]

### **While Paul Watkins Was At The Attorney General’s Office, It Joined With Alliance Defending Freedom To Fight Planned Parenthood In Court To Defend A Burdensome Abortion Restriction.**

**In 2015, The Arizona Attorney General’s Office Claimed That It Was Aided By Alliance Defending Freedom In A Case Against Planned Parenthood.** In its 2015 Annual Report, The Arizona Attorney General’s office described its work on Planned Parenthood of Arizona et. al. v. William Humble, and claimed its Education and Health Section (EHS) “worked with the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) in the defense of this lawsuit.” [“[Annual Report 2015](#),” Office of the Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, 2015]

**Planned Parenthood Was Challenging An Arizona Law That Erected Barriers Against Medication Abortions.** “Arizona passed a law in 2012, and implementing regulations in 2014, whose confusing language appears to require physicians to offer medication abortion only according to an obsolete method no longer used by the great majority of doctors. Contrary to years of evidence-based medical best practices, the law seems to require any woman obtaining a medication abortion to take three times more medication than recommended by the American Medical Association and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and bans medication abortion altogether after seven weeks of pregnancy.” [“[Planned Parenthood Arizona v. Humble](#),” Center for Reproductive Rights, 05/24/18]

Paul Watkins Led The Arizona Attorney General's Civil Litigation Division From January 2015 To July 2018. [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

## **Paul Watkins' Work With Anti-LGBT Groups Is Rooted In His Past As A Fellow At A Christian Law Institute And A Valedictorian At A Conservative College Known For Its Hostility To Diversity**

**Paul Watkins Was A Research Fellow At Pepperdine University Law School's Nootbaar Institute, Which Teaches Students A "Christian Perspective On The Practice Of Law"—Another Position Watkins Has Left Off His LinkedIn Profile.**

### **Paul Watkins Was A Research Fellow At Pepperdine University's Nootbaar Institute On Law, Religion And Ethics From 2011 To 2012...**

Paul Watkins Was A "Nootbaar Research Fellow" At Pepperdine University School Of Law From 2011 To 2012. [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

- **The Nootbaar Institute on Law, Religion, and Ethics Serves As An "Umbrella Organization For Many Law And Religion-Related Activities At The Pepperdine School Of Law."** "[The Herbert and Elinor Nootbaar Institute on Law, Religion, and Ethics] serves as an umbrella organization for many law and religion-related activities at the Pepperdine School of Law. It seeks to encourage and develop these activities. At present, Pepperdine law and religion initiatives include courses, lectures, seminars, clinics and student activities." [[About the Institute](#), Pepperdine School of Law, accessed 05/30/19]

### **...Even Though He Left It Off His LinkedIn Profile.**

**Paul Watkins Does Not List His Work For The Nootbaar Institute On His LinkedIn Profile.** [[LinkedIn Profile for Paul Watkins](#), accessed 05/30/19]

## Experience



### Director, Office of Innovation

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Jul 2018 – Present · 11 mos  
Washington D.C. Metro Area

Head up the Office of Innovation at the Bureau tasked with promoting competition, innovation and consumer access within financial services.



### Chief Counsel, Civil Litigation Division

Arizona Attorney General's Office

Jan 2015 – Jul 2018 · 3 yrs 7 mos  
Phoenix, Arizona Area

Lead 150-person Civil Litigation Division enforcing state law related to consumer fraud, antitrust, tobacco, collections, environmental, bankruptcy, and civil rights. Civil Litigation Division also represents state agencies including Department of Financial Institutions, Insurance, Real Estate and Game & Fish.



### Associate

Covington & Burling LLP

2008 – 2012 · 4 yrs  
San Francisco Bay Area

Securities litigation, general commercial litigation.



### Clerk

US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

2007 – 2008 · 1 yr  
Columbia, South Carolina Area



### Associate

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

2006 – 2007 · 1 yr  
Palo Alto

Mergers and acquisitions, capital markets.

## **The Nootbaar Institute Trains Students To Develop A “Christian Perspective On The Practice Of Law.”**

**The Nootbaar Institute States, “We Aspire To Train Our Students To Be Servants Because We Believe A Christian Perspective On The Practice Of Law Requires Such A Vocation.”** “In practical terms, religion often provides the motivation and law provides the tools for religious lawyers to fulfill their vocational mission in life. The mission of Pepperdine Law School is to train lawyers to become servants of others. This mission is striking in an environment where most of the public believes that the primary goal of lawyers is pecuniary and temporal success. But what is even more distinctive about Pepperdine Law School is the motivation behind this mission - we aspire to train our students to be servants because we believe a Christian perspective on the practice of law requires such a vocation.” [[About the Institute](#),” Pepperdine School of Law, accessed 05/30/19]

- **The Nootbaar Institute Sponsors Conferences On Topics Such As “Morality And The Practice Of Law,” “Constitutional Religious Issues,” “Religious Lobbying,” “Tax Exempt Organizations,” And “Politics And The Pulpit.”** “The Institute sponsors

conferences addressing the broad range of issues at the intersection of law, religion, and ethics. These issues include morality and the practice of law, bio-ethical legal issues, constitutional religious issues, clergy sexual abuse, religious lobbying, litigation within religious organizations before ecclesiastical courts, international human rights, tax exempt organizations, politics and the pulpit, government funding for faith-based services, law and poverty, and family law.” [[About the Institute](#),” Pepperdine School of Law, accessed 05/30/19]

## **In 2014, The Director Of The Nootbaar Institute Filed An Amicus Brief In Support Of Hobby Lobby’s Religion-Based Supreme Court Case To Block The Obama Administrations’ Contraception Mandate.**

**In 2014, The Director Of The Nootbaar Institute Was Among Those Who Filed Amicus Briefs In Support Of Hobby Lobby In Its Case To Challenge The Obama Administration’s Contraceptive Mandate.** “Last week, over 80 amicus briefs were filed with the Supreme Court on both sides of Hobby Lobby’s challenge to the HHS contraceptive-abortion mandate.” [Joe Carter, “[Explainer: The Hobby Lobby Amicus Briefs](#),” Acton Institute, 01/31/14]

- “Luis D. Brandeis Professor of Law and Director of The Herbert and Elinor Nootbaar Institute on Law” Was Among Those Who Filed Amicus Briefs In The Hobby Lobby Case. [Joe Carter, “[Explainer: The Hobby Lobby Amicus Briefs](#),” Acton Institute, 01/31/14]

**The Hobby Lobby Decision “Opened The Door To Many Challenges From Corporations Over Laws That They Claim Violate Their Religious Liberty.”** “The Supreme Court ruled [...] that requiring family-owned corporations to pay for insurance coverage for contraception under the Affordable Care Act violated a federal law protecting religious freedom. It was, a dissent said, ‘a decision of startling breadth.’ The 5-to-4 ruling, which applied to two companies owned by Christian families, opened the door to many challenges from corporations over laws that they claim violate their religious liberty.” [Adam Liptak, “[Supreme Court Rejects Contraceptives Mandate for Some Corporations](#),” *The New York Times*, 06/30/14]

**Paul Watkins Attended Hillsdale College, A Christian School That Is Consistently Ranked Among The Least LGBT-Friendly Campuses In The Country And Rejects All Federal Funds To Avoid Complying With Diversity And Anti-Discrimination Laws.**

**Paul Watkins Was A Valedictorian At Hillsdale College, A Christian School Which The Princeton Review “Consistently Ranks” Among The Least LGBT-Friendly Schools.**

**Paul Watkins Was A Valedictorian At Hillsdale College In 2003, When He Graduated With A B.A. In Political Philosophy.** [[Paul Watkins Resume](#), Obtained Through FOIA (CFPB-2019-0276-F)]

- **Hillsdale College Describes Itself As A “Nonsectarian Christian” School.**  
 “Hillsdale, a private college of 1,400 students in southern Michigan that describes itself as ‘nonsectarian Christian’ and dedicated to ‘civil and religious liberty,’ is scarcely known in many circles. But among erudite conservatives — think progeny of William F. Buckley Jr. — it is considered a hidden gem.” [Erik Eckholm, “[In Hillsdale College, a ‘Shining City on a Hill’ for Conservatives](#),” *The New York Times*, 02/01/17]

**The Princeton Review “Consistently Ranks Hillsdale Among The 20 Least L.G.B.T.Q.-Friendly Campuses,” Where “Openly Gay Or Lesbian Students Are A Rarity” And Are Not Represented By An L.G.B.T.Q. Organization.** “In this isolated location, students like to form clubs, on everything from politics to cigar smoking to highland dancing. One that does not exist at Hillsdale College is an L.G.B.T.Q. organization. Openly gay or lesbian students are a rarity, and The Princeton Review consistently ranks Hillsdale among the 20 least L.G.B.T.Q.-friendly campuses.” [Erik Eckholm, “[In Hillsdale College, a ‘Shining City on a Hill’ for Conservatives](#),” *The New York Times*, 02/01/17]

### **Hillsdale College Does Not Allow Its Students To Accept Federal Funds So It Can Remain “Unfettered” From Requirements On Sex Discrimination And Diversity.**

**Hillsdale College Does Not Accept “Any Federal Or State Funds So As To Be ‘Unfettered’ By Government Mandates,” Including “Title IX Guidelines On Sex Discrimination And The Handling Of Sexual Assault Case” And “Reporting On Student Race And Ethnicity.”**  
 “Conservatives are also entranced by Hillsdale’s decision to forgo any federal or state funds so as to be ‘unfettered’ by government mandates. In 1984, in *Grove City College v. Bell*, the Supreme Court ruled that even Pell grants for needy students or G.I. Bill money for veterans subjects a college to federal regulations, and so Hillsdale students are not allowed to accept such funds (most receive institutional grants). As a result, the college does not follow Title IX guidelines on sex discrimination and the handling of sexual assault cases and it has refused to engage in the otherwise required reporting on student race and ethnicity, let alone develop an affirmative action plan. Not surprisingly, the school’s ‘race blind’ admissions policy results in an overwhelmingly white student body.” [Erik Eckholm, “[In Hillsdale College, a ‘Shining City on a Hill’ for Conservatives](#),” *The New York Times*, 02/01/17]

### **Hillsdale College’s Official Catalog Describes “‘Social Justice’ And ‘Multicultural Diversity’” As A “Dehumanizing, Discriminatory Trend.”**

**Hillsdale’s Official Catalog Condemns The “Dehumanizing, Discriminatory Trend Of So-Called ‘Social Justice’ And ‘Multicultural Diversity.’”** “From the official catalog: ‘The college values the merit of each unique individual, rather than succumbing to the dehumanizing, discriminatory trend of so-called ‘social justice’ and ‘multicultural diversity.’” [Erik Eckholm, “[In Hillsdale College, a ‘Shining City on a Hill’ for Conservatives](#),” *The New York Times*, 02/01/17]