

State attorney general hires law firm, launches 2018 bid

By Malcolm MacLachlan, Los Angeles Daily Journal, February 10, 2017

SACRAMENTO — Attorney General Xavier Becerra has tapped a prominent Democratic political law firm to help him in his 2018 run for a full term, which he announced on Thursday.

"The stakes could not be higher," Becerra wrote in his email announcement. "Only a few days after I took the oath of office as California attorney general, the White House began issuing unconstitutional and un-American executive orders that shouldn't see the light of day."

The 12-term congressman was sworn in on Jan. 24, moments before Gov. Jerry Brown gave a fiery State of the State address that directly took on the new Trump administration.

Kaufman Legal Group filed papers with the secretary of state on Feb. 1 to create the Becerra for Attorney General 2018 campaign committee. The firm has represented numerous prominent Democrats, including former U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, State Controller John Chiang, and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Like other politically aligned firms, Kaufman handles campaign finance, disclosure and other official filings for candidates and initiative campaigns. The firm has offices in Los Angeles and Sacramento. Another prominent client is Senate Pro Tem Kevin de León, D-Los Angeles. The state Senate leader made headlines last month when he repeatedly pressed Becerra during a grueling, five-hour confirmation hearing on whether he intended to run for a full term as attorney general.

After equivocating repeatedly, Becerra said that he would run.

The announcement capped off a busy week for Becerra. His office filed two amicus briefs this week in cases challenging President Donald Trump's executive order pausing travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

On Monday, Becerra joined 15 other state attorneys general in a friend-of-the-court brief with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in *State of Washington et al. v. Donald J. Trump et al.*, 17-35105, (9th Cir., filed Feb. 4, 2017).

On Thursday, a 9th Circuit three-judge panel unanimously declined to lift a temporary restraining order on Trump's executive order.

He signed on with 16 other attorneys general on Wednesday to file an amicus brief in *Aziz v. Trump*, 17-00116 (E.D. Va., filed Jan. 30, 2017). The plaintiffs are two Yemeni men who claim they were coerced into surrendering their visas after landing at Washington Dulles International Airport.