

Trump signs order pausing enforcement of foreign bribery ban

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Eamon Javers@EAMONJAVERS



KEY POINTS

- Dan Mangan@_DANMANGAN President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the Department of Justice to pause enforcing a nearly half-century-old law that prohibits American companies and foreign firms from bribing officials of foreign governments to obtain or retain business.
- The pause is being implemented to avoid putting U.S. businesses at an economic disadvantage to foreign competitors.
- Trump is directing Attorney General Pam Bondi to prepare new guidelines for Foreign Corrupt Practices Act enforcement.



President [Donald Trump](#) on Monday signed an executive order directing the [Department of Justice](#) to pause enforcing a nearly half-century-old law that prohibits American companies and foreign firms from bribing officials of foreign governments to obtain or retain business.

"It sounds good, but it hurts the country," Trump said of the [Foreign Corrupt Practices Act](#), as he signed the order at the White House.

"Many, many deals are unable to be made because nobody wants to do business, because they don't want to feel like every time they pick up the phone, they're going to jail," Trump said, referring to U.S. anti-

corruption efforts.

A White House official told CNBC, "A pause in enforcement to better understand how to streamline the FCPA to make sure it's in line with economic interests and national security."

The pause in [criminal prosecutions](#) under the [FCPA](#) is being implemented to avoid putting U.S. businesses at an economic disadvantage to foreign competitors.

The FCPA's intent is in part to prevent American firms from fueling rampant public corruption that undermines the rule of law in many parts of the world. Over time, the FCPA's rules have grown into bedrock principles of how American businesses operate overseas.

The FCPA became law in 1977, barring all Americans and certain foreign issuers of securities from paying bribes to foreign officials. The law was amended in 1998 to apply to foreign firms and people who caused such bribes to take place within the United States.

The broadly written law applies not only to direct bribes that are paid, but also to bribes that are offered or planned or authorized by a company's management.

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The FCPA's definition of the types of actions by foreign officials that would trigger the law is also expansive.

Individuals and corporations can be prosecuted under the FCPA.

Violators of the FCPA face a maximum possible criminal sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000, or three times the monetary equivalent of the thing of value demanded by a foreign official.

The DOJ in 2024 announced enforcement actions in 24 cases related to alleged violations of the FCPA.

There were 17 such enforcement actions announced in 2023.





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