

Increasing Equality of Opportunity in the Law



As part of the Chamber’s Equality of Opportunity Initiative, the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform (ILR) held a discussion on building diversity in corporate law. Experts discussed strategies for law firms and in-house corporate counsel offices.

Key takeaways:

- **More work must be done:** “Diversity in the legal profession is really stagnant,” explained Danielle Holley-Walker, Professor of Law and Dean of Howard Law School. “African Americans are only 5% of the legal profession.”
- **Demand diversity:** “It has to start with our in-house lawyers,” said Markus Green, Vice President and Assistant General Counsel at Pfizer. “One of the great markers of a good, diverse in-house program is to see what is the diversity of the lawyers doing the work, because that’s what matters.”
- **Culture matters:** “We have to do some soul-searching as far as the cultures that we have at law firms and in the practice of law,” noted Susie Lees, Executive Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer at Allstate. “We really have to look at how the practice of law occurs today.”
- **Nurturing careers:** “I’ve had sponsors in my career at all levels”, said Kim Phillips, General Counsel, Global Litigation at Shell. “None of those sponsors have looked like me. It is quite possible for anyone interested in making a difference to develop a sponsorship relationship with someone.”
- **Beyond law:** “Most of the students I talk to are looking to do more than just practice law,” said Former Attorney General of Georgia Thurbert Baker and partner at Dentons. “They are becoming more entrepreneurial, but they still see value in having a law degree.”

Learn more:

- The Chamber's [Equality of Opportunity Initiative](#)

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