



PATEL SUES MAGAZINE

FBI DIRECTOR KASH PATEL HAS SUED THE ATLANTIC MAGAZINE FOR \$250 MILLION, CLAIMING AN ARTICLE ABOUT HIS ALLEGED EXCESSIVE DRINKING IS A "MALICIOUS HIT PIECE." C2

HIGHER EDUCATION

Rutgers didn't want a DEI war with Trump, so it hired his former lawyer



President Donald Trump's battle against diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives led Rutgers President William Tate IV, right, to close the university's DEI office last year. Associated Press file and Patti Sapone and Ed Murray, for NJ.com

The move comes as colleges and universities across the country have altered or eliminated DEI offices, jobs and policies under federal pressure.

Ted Sherman NJ.com

Caught in the crosshairs of a full-on attack by the Trump administration's targeting of diversity, equity and inclusion programs, Rutgers hired one of the president's former lawyers to navigate what has increasingly become a crisis for higher education institutions across the country.

The university, which closed its DEI office last year, confirmed it retained Kendra Wharton — a member of the legal team that defended Donald Trump against two federal indictments involving his possession of classified documents and efforts to

overturn the results of the 2020 election — to conduct a compliance review of its diversity initiatives.

According to engagement letters provided to NJ.com in response to public records filings, Rutgers brought in Wharton last August.

In addition to evaluating the university's DEI programs, the letters show her law firm, Wharton Law of West Palm Beach, was also asked to conduct a separate antisemitism review and assist Rutgers with an Office of Civil Rights issue of which Rutgers declined to provide details, citing attorney-client privilege.

Invoices made available through the records request show that through early March, Wharton has so far billed Rutgers a total of \$577,370. According to the firm's engagement letters, her hourly rate as a partner is \$1,200.

Rutgers spokeswoman Dory Devlin said the university has been working to ensure it is complying with all federal and state anti-discrimination laws since the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision on schools'

use of race in admissions.

"This includes evaluating university policies and practices to identify and address any that may create actual or perceived unlawful exclusion of individuals based on sex, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics," she said. "Our approach has been to comply with federal and state law on our own terms and in a manner consistent with university values."

Meanwhile, Rutgers and its unions — which have long had DEI articles in their contract with the university and have raised concerns the programs were not being supported — reached a tentative agreement late Friday in ongoing contract talks regarding support for diversity issues. They said they believe the language of that accord will avoid legal exposure.

"It's never been about the words. It's about what they mean," explained one union leader.

Devlin said the agreement will ensure "that opportunity for all is a reality at Rutgers, not just rhetoric — while complying **SEE HIGHER EDUCATION, A4**

PAULSBORO

Wind turbine company files for Chapter 11

It was once part of the plan to transform a terminal into one of the nation's largest hubs for clean energy infrastructure.

Eric Conklin NJ.com

Already facing eviction, the builder behind huge foundations for offshore wind turbines in New Jersey filed for bankruptcy protection this month, adding to the woes of a once-touted industry that has failed to materialize.

An American subsidiary of Germany's EEW Group filed for Chapter 11 protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Jersey, records show.

The company owes about \$4.8 million in unsecured claims, of which about \$2.85 million is a blend of owed federal, state and local taxes. The company also noted it owes about \$1.69 million in rent to Paulsboro Waterfront Development LLC, which manages the Paulsboro Marine Terminal housing the windfarm maker.

Paulsboro Waterfront Development LLC is a subsidiary of Holt Logistics, which is most known for managing other shipping ports along the Delaware River in New Jersey, including in Gloucester City. The company behind offshore wind construction on the property, EEW-AOS, has leased about 70 acres of the riverfront terminal to build "monopiles," the massive foundations on which turbines spin to generate electricity.

Offshore wind was an energy initiative for New Jersey under former Gov. Phil Murphy. However, those ambitions fizzled during Murphy's tenure due to financial and political challenges.

Two companies planning offshore wind farms, Ørsted and Atlantic Shores, have canceled their projects. Attempts to revitalize the industry have also been thwarted through executive actions by President Donald Trump.

An attorney for the EEW Group did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

According to its bankruptcy notice filed in early April, the company said it has between \$10 million and \$50 million in assets.

Meanwhile, the company is being sued in Superior Court in Gloucester County by Holt Logistics over its occupancy, with the port operator asking that a judge order **SEE PAULSBORO, A2**

COMMENTARY

My town is fighting to save H.S. sports. Yours could be next.



Steve Politi NJ.com

We gathered in the same cafeteria where our kids were fed chicken nuggets and tater tots just a few hours earlier. We wore a variety of expressions that spoke to the gravity of the situation — resolve, confusion, even disgust.

We were here for a meeting of the Blue and White Club, a newly formed booster club at Montclair High that was supposed to rally parents like us to fund new travel warm-ups and gymnasium banners.

Instead, from its inception, the club has had one mission and one mission only:

To save our kids' teams. Within minutes, the amount needed to keep Montclair High athletics — a proud Essex County juggernaut for more than a century — from crumbling was put on the screen: \$176,000. So was the deadline to raise all that money: June 1.

It seemed both possible and impossible. Possible because a town like Montclair can raise that much in a few weeks. Impossible because, *holy \$#%!*, how did a town like Montclair end up in this situation in the first place?

"There are a myriad of ways to make a donation," Kevin Price, the parent spearheading the fundraising drive, told us.

"We'll even take a bag of pennies."

I was wearing two hats in that cafeteria on Thursday night. I was there as a sports-writer, of course, because this is a story that should resonate with every parent in every town across New Jersey. If Montclair can move to the precipice of cutting teams and firing coaches, then it can happen anywhere.

And it is happening in other towns.

But I was mostly there as a concerned parent myself. I live in Montclair, and my daughter is an eighth-grade soccer player. If we don't raise that six-figure sum, it is possible that her high school sports **SEE POLITI, A2**



Equipment for offshore wind construction sits at the port in Paulsboro in 2024. File

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