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New Jersey Pursues Court Battles Over Trump's Executive Orders

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In the early months of President Donald Trump's second term, New Jersey has positioned itself as a frequent opponent of several of his administration's policy directives, filing multiple lawsuits to challenge executive actions on issues ranging from citizenship to education funding.

Governor Phil Murphy, a Democrat, promised early on to counter measures he viewed as overreach, pledging to use litigation as a primary strategy. Attorney General Matthew Platkin followed through by joining other states in contesting key initiatives. Among the most high-profile challenges is the lawsuit opposing the president's order to end birthright citizenship in the United States. That directive, signed in January, seeks to revoke automatic citizenship for children born in the U.S. to undocumented immigrant parents, but not to all noncitizen parents. New Jersey, along with eighteen other states, the District of Columbia, and San Francisco, contends the move violates constitutional guarantees granted by the Fourteenth Amendment. As of July 10, enforcement of the order remains blocked pending appeals, following multiple federal district court rulings. The Supreme Court has not ruled on the substance of the case but has limited the use of nationwide injunctions in unrelated decisions.

Beyond the citizenship dispute, New Jersey joined California, Massachusetts, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Wisconsin, and Washington state to sue the federal government after the United States Education Department suspended grants that support teacher training programs. That lawsuit is still awaiting resolution in the courts.

In another legal action, Attorney General Platkin collaborated with twenty-two other state attorneys general to challenge a funding freeze imposed by the Office of Management and Budget, commonly referred to as OMB. A federal judge issued a preliminary injunction in favor of the states, temporarily restoring access to those funds.

These legal confrontations highlight a broader pattern of blue-leaning states using the courts to blunt or delay conservative policy changes they disagree with. While some critics have argued that such lawsuits amount to political posturing, proponents insist they are a necessary check on federal authority. As appeals continue, New Jersey remains at the center of these battles, determined to assert its policy preferences through the judicial system.