

## Two US DOJ Antitrust Division enforcers placed on administrative leave

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By [Khushita Vasant](#)

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Alford, the principal deputy assistant attorney general and Rinner, the deputy assistant attorney general in charge of mergers, were placed on leave as of late Wednesday by Chad Mizelle, chief of staff and acting associate attorney general at the DOJ, MLex understands.

Alford and Rinner's administrative leave is understood to run through the end of August, and their access to the DOJ building and their work email accounts have been revoked. Rinner could not be reached for comment. Alford declined to comment.

A spokesperson for the DOJ could not be reached immediately for comment.

Tensions have reportedly been brewing between the DOJ leadership and that of the Antitrust Division over the review of Hewlett Packard Enterprise's acquisition of Juniper Networks. CBS News reported on July 16 that DOJ antitrust chief Gail Slater and some on her team have faced criticism from DOJ officials for the "substantial amount of internal push-and-pull to land on decisions to reach deals that resolve merger issues."

On July 17, DOJ Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche responded to the CBS story in a post on X, saying, "Anonymous efforts to divide this DOJ will not succeed. @AGPamBondi, @ChadMizelle47, and I fully support @AAGSlater. Our Department is stronger because of her leadership."

Slater responded to Blanche in an X post, saying "Honored to serve with you."

The DOJ's Antitrust Division challenged the \$14 billion deal between HPE and Juniper, and trial in the lawsuit was scheduled to begin on July 9 in a California federal court. On June 28, the DOJ agreed to drop its challenge in exchange for requiring HPE to make a business divestment as well as requiring the merged company to license "critical" Juniper software to independent competitors (see [here](#)).

Critics of the merger said the settlement requirements were inadequate, and noted that the settlement is subject to review under the Tunney Act, which allows a judge to determine whether a merger is in the public interest (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Such settlements have rarely been rejected by courts.

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