

BRENNA BIRD
ATTORNEY GENERAL

STEVEN BLANKINSHIP
CHIEF DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

1305 E. WALNUT ST.
DES MOINES, IA 50319
Main: 515-281-5164 O Direct: 515-954-9564
Email: steven.blankinship@ag.iowa.gov
www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov

June 30, 2026

Kristi Onstot
Executive Secretary
Executive Council
State Capitol
LOCAL

Re: Retention of Special Counsel

Dear Ms. Onstot:

Our office requests authorization under Iowa Code section 13.7 to retain Cooper & Kirk, PLLC, as special counsel. Special counsel will provide legal services and representation to Iowa with respect to BlackRock Inc.'s and State Street Corporation's (collectively, "Defendants") conduct that (i) allegedly violates antitrust and consumer protection laws, and (ii) is the subject of litigation in the case *State of Texas et al. v. Blackrock, Inc., State Street Corporation, and The Vanguard Group, Inc.*, Case No. 6:24-cv-00437-JDK (E.D. Tex.). We also recommend under Iowa Code section 23B that the firm be retained on a contingent-fee basis for its legal services.

The Attorney General has determined that it is necessary and appropriate to retain private special counsel to assist her office in the litigation against Defendants for these reasons:

- The litigation involves complex claims that have not been litigated to judgment in any state court.
- Extensive resources are required, as the litigation is time- and labor-intensive.
- The litigation may include but is not limited to (i) extensive motion practice, including potential complex issues of first impression; (ii) extensive, time-consuming discovery, including numerous depositions, and potentially extensive motion practice to ensure compliance with the state's discovery requests; and (iii) reviewing complex expert reports, responses, and discovery.

- The complexity of this case requires counsel with a full range of trial- and appellate-level experience litigating complex matters involving both state and federal law.

We recommend Cooper & Kirk, PLLC because of its experience litigating complex cases across a range of subject areas in both state and federal courts. Moreover, Cooper & Kirk, PLLC is uniquely qualified as it represents other states in the ongoing litigation against Defendants. We know of no other private counsel currently possessing that same experience that currently can help in this litigation.

Our office has determined that this proposed contingent representation is both cost effective and in the public interest. And we have determined that a procurement process is not feasible under these unique circumstances. We therefore recommend approval of Cooper & Kirk, PLLC as special counsel. The contingency engagement will be governed by a separate contingent fee agreement under Iowa Code section 23B.3.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Blankinship", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven Blankinship
Chief Deputy Attorney General