



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Inquiries: [Joe Martyak](mailto:Joe.Martyak@ncla.org), 703-403-1111

NCLA Wins Prestigious Mellor Prize for Ending *Chevron* Deference

Washington, DC (August 26, 2025) – Today, the State Policy Network (SPN) and the Institute for Justice (IJ) awarded the first-ever “Chip Mellor Prize for Excellence in Public Interest Litigation” to the New Civil Liberties Alliance. The Mellor Prize honors NCLA’s crucial role in ending the unconstitutional *Chevron* judicial deference doctrine. As SPN and IJ have announced, “The Mellor Prize, which comes with \$100,000, recognizes teams of litigators and advocates who work together to earn significant litigation victories to hold government officials accountable; advocate for civil society and the rule of law; and to help the most vulnerable among us who are least able to fight back against injustice.” The award is named for IJ cofounder, former president, and board of directors chairman William “Chip” Mellor, who passed away in October 2024 after a 50-year litigation career dedicated to bettering Americans’ lives. Mellor provided invaluable guidance to NCLA from its earliest days, and we thank SPN and IJ for honoring us with this award in his name.

In June 2024, a strategic team of top attorneys including NCLA CEO Philip Hamburger, NCLA President Mark Chenoweth, Senior Litigation Counsel John Vecchione, Litigation Counsel Kara Rollins, and Latham & Watkins partner Roman Martinez and his colleagues persuaded the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Chevron* deference in [Relentless Inc. v. Dept. of Commerce](#). This victory ended 40 years of forcing judges to adopt agencies’ ‘reasonable’ interpretations of ambiguous statutes. Briefed separately, but then argued and decided at the Supreme Court in tandem with [Loper Bright Enterprises, et al. v. Raimondo](#) (another case relying on *Chevron* to uphold the same NOAA rule), *Loper Bright/Relentless* has already curtailed many abuses of administrative power and will do so for decades to come. On remand, the *Relentless* lawsuit continues to challenge a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Marine Fisheries Service rule unlawfully requiring fishing companies to pay for at-sea government monitors on their boats.

Since that monumental victory, NCLA has created and led the “[Relentless Working Group](#),” which brings together leading attorneys and groups that filed *amicus curiae* briefs in support of *Loper Bright* and *Relentless* to monitor, analyze, and discuss how lower courts are applying this historic ruling. Led by NCLA attorney Daniel Kelly, the RWG’s objective is to ensure that the responsibility for authoritatively interpreting and applying the law remains where the Constitution put it—with federal judges, not agency bureaucrats.

NCLA released the following statements:

“It is a great honor for the NCLA to be recognized by the Institute for Justice and the State Policy Network for NCLA’s public-interest litigation work. We are deeply grateful.”

— **Philip Hamburger, Founder and CEO, NCLA**

“When I was hired at NCLA’s founding, my first call was to Chip Mellor. He unselfishly gave me ample wise advice about many aspects of running a public-interest law firm that I still use today. NCLA would not be successful without emulating the kind of character that Chip and IJ represented—filled with high standards, a joy in the battle for justice, and always focused on growing an effective team.”

— **Mark Chenoweth, President, NCLA**

Visit the *Relentless* case page [here](#), and access *Relentless Working Group* resources [here](#).

ABOUT NCLA

[NCLA](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit civil rights group founded by prominent legal scholar [Philip Hamburger](#) to protect constitutional freedoms from violations by the Administrative State. NCLA's public-interest litigation and other pro bono advocacy strive to tame the unlawful power of state and federal agencies and to foster a new civil liberties movement that will help restore Americans' fundamental rights.

###