



James A. Kahl

Profile

Jim Kahl represents clients regarding the regulation of political activity, including counseling on federal and state campaign finance laws, government ethics laws, and lobbying laws. With an extensive background working in and practicing before federal agencies, Jim helps clients navigate the complex regulatory maze that impacts political activity.

From 2002 to 2007, Jim served as Deputy General Counsel of the Federal Election Commission. He and former General Counsel Larry Norton, who also practices in Womble Carlyle's Washington office, led the 130-person Office of General Counsel in conducting investigations of potential violations of campaign finance laws and regulations, advising the FEC in connection with rulemakings and Advisory Opinions, overseeing all of the FEC's litigation in federal courts, and counseling on issues concerning audits and federal funding of presidential primary and general elections. During their tenure, Larry and Jim oversaw the drafting of regulations implementing all provisions of the landmark Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 ("BCRA"), overhauled the FEC's enforcement program, and led the FEC's legal team in the successful defense of BCRA in the Supreme Court case of *McConnell v. FEC*.

The entirety of Jim's legal career has involved representing clients before or serving in senior legal positions in U.S. government agencies. He practiced in the government contracts and regulatory fields for the first eleven years of his career, and was a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of Hopkins & Sutter. His work focused on representing large defense and civilian contractors in disputes with the federal government. He also served as the principal deputy to the General Counsel at the Small Business Administration, the federal agency responsible for fostering the growth and development of small businesses. Finally, Jim was the number two-ranking official at the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, the agency tasked with enforcing whistleblower protection and personnel laws, and the laws regulating political activity by federal employees. Jim was responsible for transforming the agency's case processing procedures and achieving the highest level of favorable negotiated settlements in the history of the agency.

Jim has been a speaker in the areas of federal election law, federal personnel law, and the regulation of political activities by federal employees. He has addressed government and private sector audiences, including the Practicing Law Institute and the Federal Dispute Resolution Conference; he has lectured at the George Washington University, the Army JAG School and the Air Force JAG School; and he has appeared on radio call-in programs for the federal community.

Areas of Practice

Political Law /
Government Affairs

Contact Information

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Based upon his insider's perspective, Jim is in a unique position to provide representation to all participants in the election process, including corporations and their PACS, candidates and their authorized committees, independent political committees, trade associations, broadcast and media entities, tax-exempt organizations, and individuals.

Professional Activities

Admitted to the bar, 1981, Florida; 1982, District of Columbia.

Member of the American Bar Association.

Civic Activities

Member, Executive Committee, Fathers Association, Potomac School, 2000-2006;
Member, Executive Committee, Vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2003-2006.

Education

B.A., with high honors, 1978, University of Notre Dame; J.D., 1981, The George Washington University.

Prior Legal Experience

Partner, Hopkins & Sutter, 1988-1991; Associate, Lewis, Kominers & James, 1986-1988; Associate, 1982-1986, Law Clerk, 1979-1981, Ragan & Mason.

Prior Government Experience

Deputy General Counsel, Federal Election Commission, 2002-2007; Deputy Special Counsel, U.S. Office of Special Counsel, 1993-1997; Associate Deputy General Counsel, U.S. Small Business Administration, 1991-1993.

Prior Business Experience

Vice President, Executive & Technology Law, StaffWise Legal, Inc., 2000-2002; Managing Director, Co-Counsel, Inc., 1997-1999.