

BigLaw Lobbying Returns Continue To Rebound In Q3

By Michele Gorman

Law360 (October 22, 2019, 5:39 PM EDT) -- After a second-quarter comeback from a weekslong government shutdown that made for a slow start to 2019, BigLaw lobbying firms are again reporting strong returns for the three-month period that ended Sept. 30.

Similar to the first two quarters of the year, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP were once again at the top of the list in reported lobbying revenue for the third quarter, raking in about \$11.31 million and \$10 million, respectively, according to recent disclosures.

Hunter Bates, co-head of Akin Gump's public law and policy practice, said the firm has been successful in maintaining a "robust bipartisan team," which this year has included former Indiana Sen. Joe Donnelly, Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida and Lamar Smith of Texas, and former White House trade adviser Clete Willems.

"Contrary to conventional wisdom about legislative activity in Washington, this year has been exceptionally busy for our firm and our clients leading to both our largest quarter and our largest back-to-back quarters in firm history," he said in a statement to Law360.

Top BigLaw Firms For Q3 Lobbying Revenues

Akin Gump and Brownstein Hyatt lead in most federally reported lobbying revenues.

Akin Gump	\$11.31M
Brownstein Hyatt	\$10.00M
Holland & Knight	\$6.40M
Squire Patton Boggs	\$6.33M
K&L Gates	\$4.35M
Covington & Burling	\$4.25M
Williams & Jensen	\$2.98M
Hogan Lovells	\$2.91M
DLA Piper	\$2.48M
Greenberg Traurig	\$2.44M

Source: Law firms' self-reported data and U.S. Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database

Brownstein Hyatt came in a close second and reported "tremendous growth" at the intersection of transportation and technology, including autonomous vehicles, according to Marc Lampkin, government relations department chair.

"I think what we're seeing is that Washington really can walk and chew gum at the same time," Lampkin said in an email. "The talking heads are focused on impeachment and oversight but my sense is that both chambers are focused on solving complex problems."

The financial data for the third quarter, which spans July 1 through Sept. 30, came from both the law firms' self-disclosures and the U.S. Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database.

Holland & Knight LLP came in a distant third for the quarter at \$6.4 million, with Squire Patton Boggs LLP, along with its subsidiary Breaux-Lott Leadership Group, on its heels. For the third quarter, Squire Patton Boggs took in \$6.33 million, up slightly from last quarter's \$6 million.

Squire Patton Boggs attributed the rise to a combination of factors, including the demand for help with trade policy, the growth of its oversight practice, and the broad recognition by businesses and other stakeholders that engagement with Washington is essential in the current environment, according to Angelo Kakolyris, global director of media and communications.

Next, K&L Gates LLP reported about \$4.35 million. The firm leverages nonlobbying legal work during periods such as the August congressional recess to help offset the traditional declines in lobbying revenues, said Darrell Conner, head of the firm's policy practice.

Covington & Burling LLP and Williams & Jensen PLLC took the sixth and seventh places, with about \$4.25 million and \$2.98 million, respectively, according to the data.

Muftiah McCartin, co-chair of Covington's public policy practice group, said that while it's easy to assume the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump might be the only focus of Congress in the short term, that's actually not the full story.

"On the contrary, we expect Congress to be in for a very hectic November and December legislatively. Both the House and Senate are working to advance several key legislative priorities," McCartin said. "Moving into an election year, time is short for must-pass funding measures and bipartisan efforts."

Meanwhile, in the eighth spot, Hogan Lovells said it took in \$2.91 million.

And rounding out the top 10 on the list of large law firms were DLA Piper, earning almost \$2.48 million, and Greenberg Traurig LLP, with \$2.44 million, according to the database.

--Additional reporting by Sam Reisman. Editing by Amy Rowe.