

# The Washington Post

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2013

## CAPITAL BUSINESS

'HOLISTIC APPROACH'

**CAPITOL&K**  
LAW, LOBBYING & ASSOCIATIONS

### WilmerHale looks to the past for strategy

Law firm's new lobbying efforts involves working in all three branches

By CATHERINE HO

Last summer, WilmerHale lured away one of Patton Boggs' star lawyer-lobbyists, Jon Yarowsky, with designs to help the law firm — best known for its litigation and regulatory prowess — build a leading lobbying practice.

Now, five months into the effort, WilmerHale is on its way to assembling a different kind of lobby shop that firm leaders say is part of a more holistic approach to companies' problems in Washington.

The strategy is somewhat unique, and offers a window into the way WilmerHale, one of the District's oldest and largest law firms, approaches business in the capital.

Yarowsky leads the firm's legislative affairs and public policy group, overseeing the firm's three other lobbyists who go to the Hill on clients' behalf. But he is also a key addition to the firm's "strategic response group," which is made up of a roster of WilmerHale's top recruits from government whose day-to-day work cuts across the firm's regulatory, government contracts, financial institutions and international trade practices. They include Randy Moss and Jamie Gorelick, high-ranking prosecutors in the Clinton White House; Ken Salazar, President Obama's former Interior secretary; Reginald Brown, an associate White House counsel under President George W. Bush; Bob Kimmitt, once a deputy Treasury secretary; and Charlene Barshefsky, a former U. S. trade representative.

But on a higher level, the group does something akin to crisis management — or, more specifically, anticipating potential crises before they unfold in Congress, at the White House and in front of the courts.



Jeffrey MacMillan/Capital Business

**TEAM:** In front, Jamie Gorelick, left, and Charlene Barshefsky, with Jon Yarowsky, back left, Neil Potts and David Ross.

# “What I’m trying to do is also make sure the congressional branch becomes part of that strategy.”

Jon Yarowsky, WilmerHale

Think “big picture” corporate matters that could overlap all three branches of government: if a product isn’t approved by the Federal Drug Administration, the company could lobby Congress to change the law or challenge the decision in court (a hypothetical scenario — the firm declined to share details about client matters).

“What I’m trying to do is also make sure the congressional branch becomes part of that strategy,” Yarowsky said.

The group was created three years ago to help institutionalize broader strategic thinking throughout the firm, and counter the tendency at large law firms to have practice groups run as separate units.

“It’s one thing to be able to see the connection between the different branches, it’s another to be capable of handling each

of those situations,” Yarowsky said. “Often a company will use one firm for [a federal agency action], then go to another firm for litigation, then another firm to do congressional outreach. It makes strategic business sense to be able to do all that within one central firm because these strategies are often complementary or interrelated.”

In a way, it is a return to the firm’s roots. Lloyd Cutler, one of the founders of Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering — the D.C. firm that merged with Boston-based Hale and Dorr in 2004 to form WilmerHale — was a legendary figure in Washington legal and political circles who went from White House counsel under Presidents Carter and Clinton to representing corporations and trade groups after leaving government. Yarowsky’s vision is to stay true to the way

Cutler did business.

“It’s back to the future,” Yarowsky said. “Lloyd Cutler was a pioneer of weaving between all three branches. He did it seamlessly and effortlessly. That is definitely something to aspire to.”

As for the public policy group, Yarowsky said he plans to “build [it] very carefully” — he is eyeing some potential hires from the Hill — but the goal is not to have the biggest lobby shop in town.

“Right now, I think we are very strong in judiciary, commerce, banking, tax, energy and national security issues,” he said. “The real question is how many areas do you cover if you want cover them in an excellent way? That’s going to be the test.”

*catherine.ho@washpost.com*