

BigLaw Lobbying Dollars Wobble Amid Heated Election Cycle

By **Andrew Strickler**

Law360, New York (July 21, 2016, 6:46 PM ET) -- BigLaw lobbying firms saw wobbly returns at the midyear point, according to the latest revenue disclosures, with some of the bigger players suffering modest dips in the runup to the November elections.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, the industry leader in terms of firm lobbying returns, reported revenue of \$9.53 million between April and June. That was a near-perfect match of its first-quarter returns but a drop of nearly 7 percent from the second quarter of 2015.

"The level of activity we saw during the first half of the year is consistent with past presidential election years, and I remain pleased with our strong performance across the board," said Donald Pongrace, who leads Akin Gump's public law and policy practice.

Meanwhile, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP continued a winning streak. The Denver-based firm, which has significantly raised its Beltway stature in recent years, pulled in \$6.74 million, a 7.8 percent jump over the second quarter of 2015.

"We continued to expand our practice with six new registrations in healthcare, technology and communications," said Marc Lampkin, managing partner of Brownstein's D.C. office. "As we look to the November elections, we will be working with these and all of our clients to prepare for the transitions in Congress and the executive branch."

Last year, Brownstein jumped ahead of onetime lobbying leader powerhouse Squire Patton Boggs into second place overall behind Akin Gump, ending the year with \$25.75 million in reported lobbying income.

The lobbying practice of Holland & Knight LLP took in \$4.95 million, compared to \$4.86 million in the first three months of 2016 and \$4.95 million in Q2 2015.

Squire Patton Boggs on Thursday reported Q2 returns of \$4.65 million. That was a small improvement over the first three months of the year but a big decline — 31 percent — from the same period last year, when the firm took in \$6.76 million.

"As always, [Lobbying Disclosure Act] filings capture only a minor portion of the overall policy work being done by our firm globally," said Dave Schnittger, a spokesman for the firm's lobbying practice. "But we experienced a steady rate of LDA activity and modestly increased LDA revenues during the

second quarter, despite it being an election year and a time of some uncertainty about who may be in charge of Congress and the White House next year.”

K&L Gates LLP saw second-quarter returns of \$4.35 million, down slightly from last year’s second quarter of \$4.65 million. At Covington & Burling LLP, the lobbying arm pulled in \$3.31 million, beating out last year’s \$3.07 million.

Covington’s LDA filings “exceed our levels from a year ago, which is especially good in light of reports that overall federal lobbying expenditures are down this year,” said John Veroneau, head of the public policy and government affairs practice. “We are also very pleased with some very good results we were able to achieve for our clients this quarter, including passage and enactment of legislation on behalf of the Trade Secrets Coalition.”

--Editing by Brian Baresch.

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