

BigLaw Lobbying Picks Up In Q2 After Slow Start To Year

By Sam Reisman

Law360 (July 23, 2019, 5:30 PM EDT) -- After a first quarter hobbled somewhat by a government shutdown, BigLaw lobbying firms have reported strong returns for the three-month period that ended June 30.

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP took the lead in BigLaw lobbying revenue for the second quarter of 2019, with a \$10.07 million haul that barely edged out perennial leader Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, according to disclosures made this week.

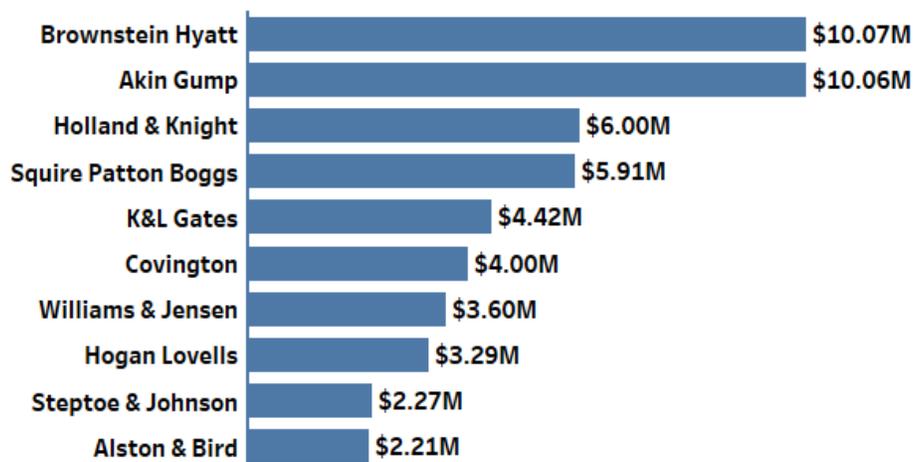
Akin Gump came in a close second, with \$10.06 million, and reported that the period was “among our strongest quarters ever,” according to Hunter Bates, co-head of the firm’s public law and policy practice.

Marc Lampkin, chair of Brownstein Hyatt’s government relations group, said much of the lobbying activity was driven by the Democratic-controlled House taking a hard look at a host of issues, such as drug prices, pension reform, health care and environmental regulation.

“That suggests that industry needs to understand what’s going on,” he said. “I think that is why there’s been an uptick in business for a number of firms. Corporations and trade associations are trying to hire people that can help them navigate a complex and bicameral legislative and regulatory agenda.”

Top BigLaw Firms For Q2 Lobbying Revenues

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



The financial data, released Monday and Tuesday, came from the law firms' self-disclosures as well as from the Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database.

Among BigLaw firms, Holland & Knight LLP came in a distant third for the quarter, with \$6 million, while Squire Patton Boggs LLP, along with its subsidiary Breaux-Lott Leadership Group, took in \$5.91 million.

"The normal course of business would be, after the Congress turns Democratic, [to] see a big uptick in folks hedging and needing to play defense," said Rich Gold, leader of Holland & Knight's public policy and regulation group. "But I think the shutdown at the beginning of the year and the Q1 focus on the Mueller report ... meant that we got off to a slow start in the Congress. I think things are picking up now."

K&L Gates LLP earned \$4.42 million in revenue reported under the Lobbying Disclosure Act, a decrease of approximately 7% from the second quarter last year. But according to Darrell Conner, co-leader of the firm's public policy practice, the firm was seeing growth in its non-LDA work, "such as sanctions, trade, and tax where we are helping clients with regulatory filings and compliance advice ... [which] has more than offset our LDA revenues."

Muftiah McCartin, co-chair of the public policy practice group at Covington & Burling LLP, which brought in an even \$4 million, predicted a busy autumn as Washington braced itself for a potential slowdown during a presidential election year.

"If a budget deal is not reached this week, it will have to be reached in September to allow the completion of the annual appropriations measures," she said. "We also anticipate Congress addressing drug pricing and trade issues — two issues that potentially cut through the current polarization."

Lobbying revenues for the remaining large law firms in the top 10 were consistent with last quarter's results, with Williams & Jensen PLLC taking in \$3.6 million, Hogan Lovells earning \$3.29 million, and Steptoe & Johnson LLP and Alston & Bird LLP reporting \$2.27 million and \$2.21 million, respectively.

--Editing by Peter Rozovsky.