

BigLaw Lobbyists Build On The Year's Gains In Q2

By Emma Cueto

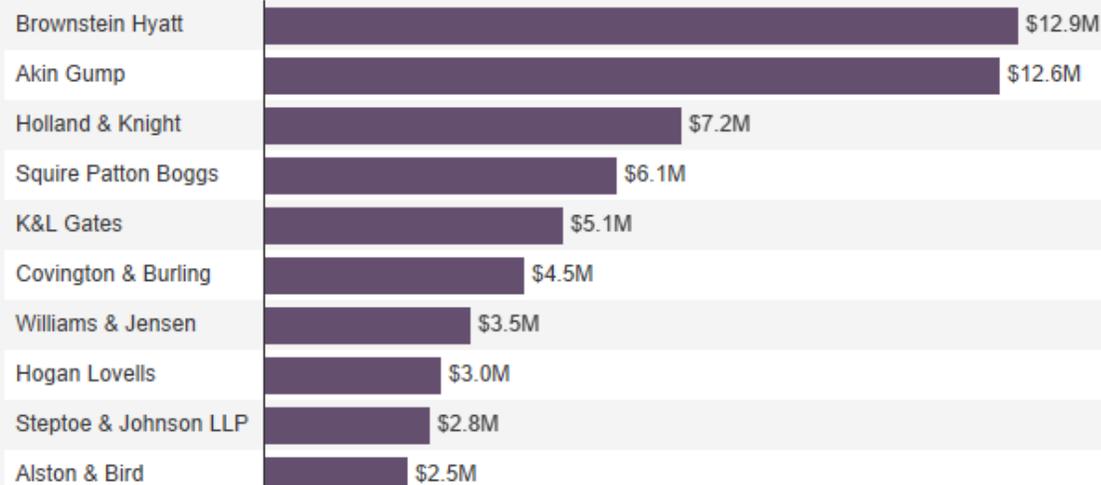
Law360 (July 21, 2020, 10:31 PM EDT) -- BigLaw lobbyists continued to enjoy an increase in work during the second quarter of 2020, in most cases sustaining or even building on the sharp increase seen in the first three months of the year as the COVID-19 pandemic began developing.

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP led the pack with a posting of about \$12.9 million in federal lobbying revenues, according to mandated disclosure data, a 12% increase over the firm's first-quarter lobbying performance and 28% above its second-quarter performance in 2019.

"We remain at the forefront of the key policy battles in Washington," Marc Lampkin, Brownstein's government relations department chair, told Law360 in a statement Tuesday. "Over the past three months, our team has continued to advise clients through this difficult time and help them identify opportunities to seek the assistance they need to weather the COVID-19 storm."

The firm said it signed 26 new clients during the quarter.

Brownstein Tops Q2 Lobbying Revenue Among Firms



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

The financial data, released Monday, comes from the law firms' self-disclosures as well as from the U.S. Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database.

In the second slot, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP was one of the only firms in the top 10 whose revenues did not increase, with the firm reporting \$12.6 million in revenue for the second quarter in a row, according to the federal disclosures. The figure is roughly 25% higher than the firm's second-quarter reported revenue in 2019.

Hunter Bates, co-leader of Akin Gump's public law and policy practice, told Law360 in a statement that the pandemic has been a major driver of the firm's work.

"This is where the strengths of our bipartisan team and our firm's substantial regulatory experience come into play," he said Tuesday. "We've been really fortunate to be able to work with a very broad array of clients on mitigating the impacts of the pandemic and helping to position them for post-pandemic success."

He added, "And while I don't know that anyone considers the current work-from-home arrangements to be ideal, I am really proud of the way everyone on our team pivoted so quickly and adjusted to this 'new normal' without skipping a beat."

Looking ahead, Bates said, he expects the pandemic to continue to drive lobbying efforts, along with the upcoming 2020 election.

Of the other firms in the top 10, three also saw double-digit growth between the first and second quarters: third- and fourth-place finishers Holland & Knight LLP and Squire Patton Boggs LLP and Alston & Bird LLP, which edged into the top 10 for this quarter's list thanks to a sizable 12.7% increase over first-quarter disclosures.

All three firms also showed substantial increases over second-quarter revenue in 2019.

"The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally altered our work this spring," Muftiah McCartin, co-chair of Covington's public policy practice group, said in a statement. "Now in the throes of summer, we see a constant drumbeat of clients seeking assistance as they deal with unprecedented economic and health care pressures."

In addition to pandemic-related issues, clients have also sought out the firm to deal with matters related to racial justice and the election, she added.

Other firms echoed that COVID-19 has been a major factor in 2020 lobbying.

"The typically slower election year activity changed as the coronavirus rapidly spread around the world and Washington became the center of the U.S. health and economic response to deal with COVID-19," Darrell Conner, government affairs counselor and co-leader of K&L Gates' policy practice, said in a statement. "The situation triggered an unprecedented level of congressional and executive branch activity not seen in modern history. The result was a significant increase in work for our policy practice on legal, regulatory and policy matters."

However, not every firm outperformed its 2019 numbers. Hogan Lovells and Williams & Jensen both saw

modest declines from second-quarter numbers last year, though the firms also improved on their performance from the first three months of 2020 by 4.6% and 7.2%, respectively.

The only firm not to match or outperform its own first-quarter numbers this year was Squire Patton Boggs, which saw a 10% drop, from \$6.7 million to \$6.05 million in the second quarter, according to public disclosures.

--Editing by Janice Carter Brown.