



Arnstein & Lehr Snags Ill. Lawmaker For Gov't Group

April 28, 2011

By Dan Rivoli

Arnstein & Lehr LLP announced Wednesday that it had hired Illinois state Rep. Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs, as a partner to boost the Chicago-based firm's governmental and municipal affairs practice.

Durkin started April 18 in Arnstein & Lehr's Chicago office, after serving as senior counsel at Ice Miller LLP, according to the firm.

The state lawmaker, who will remain in the Illinois General Assembly, said that the firm's desire to expand its municipal practice was one of the reasons he decided to join Arnstein & Lehr.

"They were looking to develop their local government practice, so I think it's a good opportunity and it's an area where I think I can help the firm," Durkin told Law360 on Thursday. "I also have the understanding of rules and regulation as it applies to every branch of government."

Durkin, who received his law degree from John Marshall Law School, became an Illinois legislator in 1995, giving up his seat in 2002 when he made an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate against Dick Durbin. In 2006, Durkin won his assembly seat back.

In the Illinois House of Representatives, Durkin is an assistant minority leader and the Republican spokesman for the elections and campaign reform committee. He said that, as a member of the Republican minority, he spends most of his time on the House floor questioning legislation or regulation.

"It's a good way to keep my cross-examination skills in check," Durkin said. "That's the same type of skill set I bring to a law firm, by assisting clients who do have regulatory issues that they have to deal with."

He also assists clients in need of public assistance, comply with local laws, handle real estate and land use issues and clearing regulatory hurdles.

"I spent 13 years analyzing bills, writing bills, questioning members of committees on the floor of the House of Representatives," Durkin said. "I use that same analysis interpreting some local government ordinances."

Durkin has also assisted clients' conduct internal investigations if they were wronged by a vendor or employee.

In the House, Durkin put his investigatory skills to use in 2008, as the ranking Republican on the committee on former Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich's impeachment. Before entering the House, Durkin was a prosecutor as an assistant state attorney general and an assistant state's attorney in Cook County, Ill.

Arnstein & Lehr's managing partner Raymond Werner said Durkin has a "deep understanding of the legislative and regulatory environments facing our clients."

"His reputation, client relationships and wide-ranging experience in public policy make him an invaluable addition to the firm," Werner added. "We welcome him to the team."

--Editing by Andrew Park.

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin.

Durkin, a lawyer-lawmaker, heads over to Arnstein & Lehr



James B. Durkin

April 28, 2011

By Bethany Krajelis

As if he wasn't busy enough with the state's budget, the redistricting process and a prepaid tuition program, Rep. James B. Durkin has added another item to his plate: a new law firm.

Durkin, a Republican lawmaker from Western Springs, joined Arnstein & Lehr LLP's Chicago office last week as a partner in its governmental and municipal affairs practice group.

He comes to the firm after spending about eight years at Ice, Miller LLP in Lisle, where he served as senior counsel in the firm's public affairs group and handled various legislative and regulatory issues.

"It was too good to turn down," said Durkin, who has served in the Illinois House of Representatives since 1995, with the exception of a four-year break that followed his unsuccessful 2002 bid for the U.S. Senate.

In addition to getting the title of partner, Durkin said his move to Arnstein & Lehr gives him the chance to work in Chicago. As a lawyer looking to grow his practice, Durkin said he couldn't pass up that pair of opportunities.

Raymond J. Werner, managing partner of Arnstein & Lehr, said he couldn't be happier that he can now call Durkin a colleague.

He said Durkin approached Arnstein & Lehr because he was looking to move his practice to a more Illinois-centric firm.

"With our long and deep roots in Illinois and our kind of business platform that he can thrive with, we just felt it was a perfect marriage," Werner said, adding that it doesn't hurt that Durkin "is a great young leader in the state."

Werner said Durkin's experience in the General Assembly, which includes his current role as the assistant Republican leader in the House, gives him a deep understanding of the various "legislative and regulatory environments facing our clients."

"His reputation, client relationships and wide-ranging experience in public policy make him an invaluable addition to the firm," said Werner, who referred to Durkin as "a first-rate guy."

Not only is he continuing to practice the same area of the law he handled at Ice, Miller at his new firm, but Durkin said he is also keeping up the juggling act that comes along with the dual career of being a lawyer and a lawmaker.

Durkin said he likes to look at his schedule as "controlled chaos."

Werner said his firm understands Durkin's commitment to the legislature and his constituents. As such, Werner said it does not have the same expectations for Durkin as it does for its more full-time lawyers.

While Durkin is the only actively serving lawmaker working at the firm, Werner said one of the firm's partners, Michael A. Abramson, is a former lawmaker who represented the North Side of Chicago in the House from 1976 to 1983.

In addition to his leadership role with the House GOP, Durkin is considered one of his caucus' go-to lawyers.

Even though he doesn't serve on either of the House Judiciary committees, Durkin is often sought out for legal advice on the House floor.

Prior to joining the General Assembly, Durkin worked for the Illinois attorney general's office, the Cook County state's attorney's office and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP in Chicago.

This legislative session, Durkin has used his prior experience as a prosecutor to voice his opposition to the death penalty ban.

He's also been heavily involved in trying to get the state to investigate College Illinois, a prepaid tuition program that lost a considerable money after some risky investments.

Rep. Louis I. Lang, D-Skokie, has been working with Durkin on that issue. He's also familiar with the balancing act required to be a lawyer-lawmaker.

Lang started working as of counsel at Querry & Harrow Ltd. last year after a decadelong stint with Goldberg, Weisman & Cairo Ltd. To balance his duties as a lawyer and a lawmaker, Lang served as of counsel at that firm, too.

He said he expects Durkin to transition into his new firm just fine. He said it's much more difficult for lawyer-lawmakers who are in private practice because they don't have anyone at a firm to cover for them when needed.

"It can be tough," Lang said, quickly adding that he believed Arnstein & Lehr "made an excellent choice in Jim."

State Rep. Jim Durkin Joins Arnstein & Lehr's Chicago Office

April 27, 2011

Chicago - The Chicago law firm of Arnstein & Lehr LLP is pleased to announce that State Rep. Jim Durkin (R-Western Springs) has joined its Chicago office as a partner in the Governmental & Municipal Affairs practice group. Prior to joining Arnstein & Lehr, Mr. Durkin was senior counsel at Ice Miller LLP.

Since 2006, Mr. Durkin has served the 82nd District as a state representative in the Illinois House of Representatives, where he currently serves as the Assistant Minority Leader. He also served the 44th District in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1995-2003 until he became the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate

"Serving in the Illinois House of Representatives, Jim has a deep understanding of the legislative and regulatory environments facing our clients," said Raymond Werner, Managing Partner of Arnstein & Lehr. "His reputation, client relationships and wide-ranging experience in public policy make him an invaluable addition to the firm. We welcome him to the team."

"It's a pleasure to join a law firm with such a storied Chicago heritage and presence," said Durkin. "I am excited for the opportunity to help grow and diversify Arnstein & Lehr's already strong governmental and municipal affairs practice."

Mr. Durkin has extensive experience assisting public and private entities by conducting and coordinating internal investigations and problem solving through regulatory and legislative remedies. In addition, he counsels private and governmental entities on public finance issues.

He previously served as an assistant Illinois attorney general and as an assistant Cook County states attorney. Mr. Durkin was also the Illinois co-chair for Senator John McCain's presidential campaign in 2000 and 2008.

Mr. Durkin received a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Illinois State University in 1984 and a J.D. from John Marshall Law School in 1989. He currently serves on the board of trustees of The John Marshall Law School. He is also an executive committee member of the Illinois Republican Party(2009-present).

About Arnstein & Lehr

Arnstein & Lehr LLP with offices in Illinois, Florida and Wisconsin, is one of the country's oldest and most respected law firms. Since its founding in 1893, the firm has served clients of all sizes throughout the United States and abroad. It is a full-service firm with attorneys practicing in five main practice areas - Business, Litigation, Local Government, Tax and Estate Planning Services, and Real Estate. Arnstein & Lehr has a diverse client base including large corporations listed on the public stock exchanges, middle market companies, nonprofit organizations and emerging businesses. Clients include governmental bodies, health care entities, financial institutions, trade associations, and a broad range of businesses in the retail, industrial, manufacturing, distribution, technology, and services sectors. The firm also counsels individuals as to their personal needs, including estate planning, probate matters and the transfer of wealth and business interests from one generation to another. For additional information visit www.arnstein.com