

Under Skadden's 'Strategic Refresh' in DC, US Trade Representative GC Returns to Firm

Joseph Barloon's return to Skadden follows the arrival of several other former top government lawyers since last summer.

BY SARAH TINCHER

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom said it has tapped yet another former senior government official to join its ranks, part of what the firm calls a "strategic refresh" of government-experienced lawyers in its Washington, D.C., office.

Joseph Barloon, who most recently served as general counsel for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and acting deputy USTR under the Trump administration, rejoined Skadden as a partner in the firm's Washington office Monday.

Barloon's return to Skadden follows the arrival of **several other** former top government lawyers since last summer, including **Raquel Fox**, **Jeffrey Gerrish** and **Jessie Liu**, as the firm prepares for the new regulatory environment under the Biden administration.

"Joe Barloon's return is an important part of the Skadden D.C. office's strategic refresh of senior-level government experience," said Jessica Hough, head of the firm's Washington, D.C., office, in an email, adding with Barloon back, the firm is "well-positioned to continue providing clients with unique government

perspectives and helping them navigate a complex and changing regulatory, enforcement and geopolitical environment."

Following nearly two years at the USTR, Barloon returned to Skadden's litigation practice to represent and counsel financial services companies on regulatory, civil and criminal enforcement and compliance matters, as well as international trade policy.

In an interview, he said he anticipates the regulatory environment, particularly within the financial services sector, to become increasingly challenging to navigate under the Biden administration.

"On enforcement of financial services, laws and regulations, and particularly consumer financial services, the Biden administration will be much more aggressive and will push the envelope more so that it will be a very challenging enforcement environment for financial



Joseph Barloon, with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom.

Courtesy photo

services companies,” Barloon said, adding that “in the international trade space, companies increasingly need to be aware of the fact that their interests are affected by the decisions made at high levels.”

Barloon said he anticipated “a lot more” enforcement going forward.

“Rohit Chopra, who [has been nominated to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau], is somebody I actually worked with on a matter while I was at USTR and he was at the [Federal Trade Commission],” he said. “He is going to be very aggressive, but, you know, very strong and very, very creative. So I think the CFPB will really be a lot more active and will be at the forefront of this administration, much more than the last administration.”

As Barloon readjusts to his role in private practice, he said he expects his government experience to continue to shape and influence his work moving forward.

“Being in the government gives a lawyer a very important, different perspective on the issues and the criteria that drive decisions. And I think

the best lawyers are attuned to what the lawyers on the other side are trying to achieve and why,” he said.

Former President Donald Trump tapped Barloon to replace **Stephen Vaughn** as USTR general counsel in late April 2019; Vaughn rejoined King & Spalding. During his time as general counsel, Barloon led U.S. enforcement actions against China, India, France and other countries and was responsible for litigation on behalf of the United States at the World Trade Organization in cases involving the European Union, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Korea and other trading partners.

Barloon also served as acting deputy USTR from last August until his recent departure, in which he was responsible for all international trade matters involving China.

Greta Peisch was appointed to succeed Barloon as USTR general counsel by the Biden administration last month. Trump nominated Barloon to the U.S. Court of International Trade last November, but President Joe Biden withdrew the nomination Feb. 4.

Before joining USTR, Barloon had been a partner at Skadden for over two decades.

Barloon reported receiving more than \$6.3 million in compensation from Skadden before joining the trade agency, according to public financial disclosure records.

“What drew me back to Skadden are the qualities that kept me at Skadden for so long, which is that the lawyers are very smart, very hard-working, and very creative,” Barloon said in an interview. “I always knew when I left that I didn’t ever want to work for any other law firm.”

Anand Raman, leader of Skadden’s consumer financial services practice, said in an announcement that the firm was “thrilled that Joe is rejoining Skadden, especially at a time of heightened state and federal enforcement activity and litigation.” He added, “The breadth of his experience will be of huge value to our clients.”

Sarah Tincher is the managing editor of The National Law Journal and Corporate Counsel. Contact her at stincher@alm.com. On Twitter: @sarahntincher