

THE ALM LAW LITIGATION DAILY

Big Law Firms Staff Up National Security Practices as Work Picks Up

By Abigail Adcox

August 13, 2026

What You Need to Know

- Practice leaders say client matters within their national security practices range from sanctions, CFIUS, export control to anti-money laundering issues.
- Clients can run the gamut from technology to financial services to energy companies.

More Big Law firms are investing in their national security practices, as group leaders say client demand has been picking up in recent years.

Latham & Watkins, Sullivan & Cromwell, Nixon Peabody and Morrison & Foerster are among the law firms that have made hires in their national security practices in the past two months.

Practice leaders say the realm of what falls under their national security practices has expanded, involving anti-money laundering, sanctions, export control and Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) issues, among other matters, as these issues become increasingly important to clients. Firms are advising clients in technology, financial services and energy industries.

"We advised over 1,000 clients of the firm last year on CFIUS issues," said **Les Carnegie**,



Les Carnegie



Paul Rosen

co-leader of Latham's CFIUS & U.S. national security practice, adding that it may have just been a "10-minute conversation as to why CFIUS does or doesn't apply to them."

"But it's a topic that interests a large number of clients," Carnegie added.

Latham has made a series of hires within its CFIUS & U.S. national security practice over the past year and a half. The firm added **Paul Rosen** as a partner in March 2025 and more recently hired Cate Behles as counsel in June.

"We see the market moving in a particular direction, and so I don't think that there's any plan to sort of let up on being thoughtful but aggressive in how we approach staffing," said Rosen. "This is where we see the market currently is, and the demands are only going to grow."

Rosen noted that CFIUS enforcement activity has been one of the drivers of client demand.

“There were a number of enforcement actions taken over the last four years in a way that were not taken before, both in numbers and in type of matters. But we’re also seeing in [the Trump] administration new types of enforcement,” he said, noting, for example, a couple months ago, that the administration took to court parties to enforce a divestment order. Rosen called it “the first such type of enforcement action ever taken.”

Outside of CFIUS, Sullivan & Cromwell said they’ve been seeing clients come to them in their national security practice for anti-money laundering, financial crime and sanctions matters.

“We have been handling a lot of anti-money laundering, financial crime, and sanctions matters. We’ve been working on these cases for clients in financial services, technology, and other sectors; clients based in the United States and in other countries; and advising companies on regulatory compliance as well as on enforcement matters,” Sharon Cohen Levin and Anthony Lewis, co-heads of Sullivan & Cromwell’s national security practice, said via email.

Levin and Lewis noted that a new area of client demand they’ve seen under the Trump administration is related to cartels being designated as terrorist organizations.

Sullivan & Cromwell has also made hires in this area recently, adding Charles Capito as a partner in its national security practice last month from Morrison & Foerster.

For its part, Nixon Peabody brought on former acting Assistant Secretary of War Peter Belk as a partner this month in its national security and resilience team in Washington, D.C.

Robert Fisher, leader of Nixon Peabody’s government investigations & white-collar defense practice group, which includes the national security and resilience team, said that the firm has seen “emerging client demand” within several areas falling under national security.

Speaking on Belk’s arrival, Fisher said, “early on, we recognized a fundamental shift in the business environment driven by changes in the domestic and international transitions in the aerospace and defense sectors.”

“These changes require senior leaders with deep knowledge in these sectors and the broader national security landscape, as well as lawyers who can be transactionally focused,” he added.

Morrison Foerster hired Annie Reisinger as a partner in its national security group in D.C. last month. Reisinger joined the firm from the Treasury Department, where she was senior counsel of the Office of General Counsel International Affairs.

Meanwhile, Covington & Burling said last month that it has formalized a national security practice, an area of expertise it has been providing client advice for years. A firm spokesperson wasn’t immediately available to comment further.

Levin and Lewis, at Sullivan & Cromwell, said Big Law firms’ increasing investment in their national security practices comes amid a recognition that “national security issues cut across a number of different practice areas.”

“Coordinating these practice areas to explain the government’s overall view of various issues—be it a type of technology, or a cartel or foreign adversary—helps us give the best advice to our clients when we can see it from different angles,” Levin and Lewis added.