

Mayer Brown Taps Former Counsel For McCarthy In DC

By Anna Sanders

Law360 (January 17, 2024, 7:02 AM EST) -- A former chief counsel to the chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and speaker of the House of Representatives will lead Mayer Brown LLP's congressional investigations group, the firm announced Wednesday.

Kimberly Hamm joined Mayer Brown's litigation and dispute resolution and public policy, regulatory and government affairs practices as a partner in the D.C. office Tuesday after stints in Congress and the SEC and at BlackRock and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, according to the announcement.



Kimberly Hamm

Hamm said her background will help her advise business clients facing reputational and legal risks, particularly during an uptick in investigations by Congress, state attorneys general and federal agencies.

"If you look at what's happening right now with congressional investigations, it's a really interesting time," Hamm told Law360 Pulse. "There's bipartisan interest in corporate America, a decent and bicameral interest. And when you look at what congressional investigators are interested in, you're seeing areas where Mayer Brown is really strong: antitrust, financial services, technology, private equity. Those are just some of the issues that I'll be facing for the rest of this Congress on behalf of clients here."

Hamm said the scope of her work as a government attorney will mirror her future private practice at Mayer Brown.

"I was always dealing with really hard, really complex issues," she said. "To me, the skills are really the same. It's working on really complex, interesting issues and trying to get to the right result."

She said companies facing new policies and regulatory investigations increasingly need counsel with "broad experience across multiple fronts."

"They require counsel that have worked in those different spaces so that they can have one firm that can deal with all of those things at the same time," Hamm said. "My background really lends to that."

Hamm's time in government began in 2014, when she joined the Office of General Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives. During her five years in the office, she advised congressional committees on

investigations, handled litigation involving subpoenas and represented the House, its committees and members in grand jury, trial and appellate proceedings. When she left in 2019, both former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Rep. Nancy Pelosi praised her "great integrity and effectiveness," according to Mayer Brown.

From 2019 to 2021, Hamm served as chief counsel to then-SEC Chairman Jay Clayton, advising him on commission initiatives, rulemaking, regulatory activities and oversight over organizations and market events, as well as helping shape the agency's response to the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. During her tenure, the SEC issued more than 45 final rules involving the securities offering process, public company disclosures, shareholder engagement, asset management and protections for retail investors, among other measures, according to the agency.

Hamm became a senior adviser and chief counsel for investigations at the U.S. Senate in 2021 and joined BlackRock about a year later, according to her LinkedIn profile. She worked at the asset management firm from 2022 to 2023, returning to the Office of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives last year.

"Kim is a highly respected congressional investigations lawyer with exceptional experience working at the highest levels of government," Richard Spehr, the global leader of the firm's litigation and dispute resolution practice, said in a statement. "Our clients will greatly benefit from her counsel on navigating complex investigations as well as the financial regulatory and legislative landscape in the United States."

While working as chief counsel to McCarthy, Hamm helped guide committees in congressional investigations and oversight, issuing and enforcing subpoenas to public agencies and private entities, according to Mayer Brown.

Hamm began her career as an associate at Simpson Thacher in 2003, working in the firm's litigation department for just over 11 years, according to her LinkedIn. She practiced in New York and London, advising clients on matters involving securities, insurance, compliance, antitrust, regulations and internal investigations.

Mayer Brown D.C. managing partner Liz Stern said Hamm's experience makes her a "great addition to our team."

"She will further strengthen our ability to represent clients — particularly financial services companies — in congressional investigations and other high-profile governmental actions," Stern said in a statement.

Hamm graduated from New York University School of Law and earned an undergraduate degree in economics and history from the University of Florida.

--Editing by Jay Jackson Jr.