

NEWS RELEASES

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Former Kansas AG Derek Schmidt Joins Husch Blackwell

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Husch Blackwell is pleased to announce that former Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt has joined the firm as a partner in its Technology, Manufacturing & Transportation industry group. A resident of Independence, Kansas, Schmidt is located in the Link, the firm’s virtual office.

Schmidt is a key addition to Husch Blackwell’s State Attorneys General practice group. He served as the state attorney general of Kansas for three terms from 2011 to 2023. Having also served as president of the National Association of Attorneys General, he has a deep understanding of how state AG offices function across their various litigation and regulatory roles and maintains strong bipartisan relationships with state AG offices throughout the U.S.

“For better than a generation now, the role of state AGs has evolved both in its scope and sophistication,” Schmidt said. “Whether working in isolation or pairing up with other state AGs or federal agencies, state AG offices exert a powerful influence over private businesses, particularly those operating in highly regulated industries like healthcare, energy, manufacturing, and consumer finance. I look forward to working with clients to identify ways to collaborate with state AGs in order to promote their important business initiatives and protect their businesses from avoidable costs and the uncertainty of state enforcement actions.”

Drawing on his experience at the appellate level, Schmidt also assists clients in developing litigation strategy during all phases of litigation. Schmidt personally and successfully argued three Kansas causes before the U.S. Supreme Court. Under his leadership, Kansas’s Office of the Attorney General presented oral argument in eight U.S. Supreme Court causes, winning each one.

“We’ve seen a sustained increase in interest from our clients regarding Husch Blackwell’s state AG capabilities,” said Matt Diehr, the leader of the firm’s State AG practice group. “Derek deepens and extends those capabilities. He is a terrific complement to the team we have in place, and he brings to the table unique experience and breadth of knowledge. His ability to intuitively understand the enforcement and policy priorities of different state AG offices ensures our clients receive the best advice to advance their business objectives.”

“The role and scope of state AG offices is only going to grow,” Partner Lowell Pearson said. “We have entered an era of great uncertainty regarding public policy and regulatory enforcement, and that uncertainty threatens businesses engaged in high-stakes, capital intensive projects, such as building energy infrastructure or reconfiguring vast, complex supply chains. Derek is going to be a great asset for companies that need a veteran presence in thinking through how their business objectives intersect with state AG offices.”

“We are very pleased that Derek chose Husch Blackwell as the firm where he wanted to launch his career in private practice,” said Catherine Hanaway, Husch Blackwell’s chair. “Our state AG practice already has a reputation for getting things done and working with state AGs across the political spectrum on a variety of issues. Derek deepens our bench, and his perspective will be of great value to our clients.”

Prior to his tenure as Kansas attorney general, Schmidt served 10 years as a Kansas state senator, representing a rural district in Southeast Kansas. He served four of those years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and six years as Senate Majority Leader. He also has prior experience as a staff member in the United States Senate and in the Kansas governor’s office.