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Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Gibson Dunn Launches Aerospace, Defense Group

By **Tom Lotshaw**

Law360 (July 18, 2025, 9:00 PM EDT) -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP is launching a new group focused on aerospace and defense, bringing together dozens of partners with years of experience to boost collaboration and help clients navigate the complex and rapidly evolving sector.

John Pollack, a New York partner who co-chairs Gibson Dunn's private equity practice, said the firm is no stranger to aerospace and defense, with a deep history of serving major clients, but wanted to formalize a nimble, multidisciplinary group able to leverage and pull from all the firm's strengths across roughly 2,000 lawyers and 21 offices around the world.

Whether a client needs assistance with contracting disputes, antitrust matters, export control issues, international arms trafficking regulations, foreign investment and national security reviews, litigation, finance, tax or transactional matters, "it's all there," according to Pollack.

"There's a lot of great firms out there," Pollack said. "I think one of our greatest strengths is our ability to advise on all of these things, at an elite level, as a team, with depth, across jurisdictions."

Other group members include New York-based partner Madalyn Miller, an aviation finance expert, London-based partner James Cameron, a finance expert, and David Wilf, a New York-based partner with a practice focused on matters including mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures and extensive experience in technology and satellites. They are also co-chairs of Gibson Dunn's transportation and space group.

Adam Smith, a Washington, D.C.-based partner who co-chairs the firm's sanctions and export enforcement practice groups and an international trade advisory and enforcement team, and Kari Krusmark, a Los Angeles-based partner with a practice focused on strategic sourcing and commercial transactions, are also part of the group.

George Sampas, a New York-based partner who co-chairs the firm's mergers and acquisitions practice and is also a member of the new group, said the sheer number of destination practices at Gibson Dunn is one of the big things that drew him to the firm in 2024.

"In the aerospace world, all those are critical for success," said Sampas, who is also an ATP-rated pilot. "To have all those products available, at the tier one level, was just so attractive to me."

According to Pollack, change is rampant in the aerospace and defense sector.

Domestically, Department of Government Efficiency-led initiatives to review federal contracts and spending has impacted government services companies and the merger and acquisition interest in them, he said. Overseas, the war between Russia and Ukraine has added to geopolitical volatility, shown how important intelligence, unmanned aircraft and satellite imagery can be in modern conflicts and resulted in Europe focusing more on its defense spending.

"The other thing that's happened is a whole slew of executive orders," Sampas said, noting that some have made it clear that the U.S. government is interested in trying to extract investment from China and plans to look at how willing companies are to move supply chains out of that country as part of acquisition reviews.

"I think that's just the beginning, and it's a constantly evolving area right now," Sampas told Law360 Friday.

According to Pollack, aerospace and defense entities need trusted counsel with good teams backing them up more than ever to navigate the complex landscape. "We're not unique in our ability to problem-solve, but I think our ability to do so collaboratively, with our team of experts, puts us in a fantastic position to help clients in this space," he said.

--Editing by Vaqas Asghar.

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