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# Wagner Law Scoops Up Benefits Expert From Paul Hastings

By **Grace Elletson**

Law360 (February 5, 2025, 3:16 PM EST) -- The Wagner Law Group has added a benefits and executive compensation attorney from Paul Hastings LLP to its ranks in Washington, D.C., picking up a lawyer who can draw on almost three decades of experience to assist the boutique firm's clients.

Eric Keller

This week, Eric Keller joined The Wagner Law Group, a firm specializing in Employee Retirement Income Security Act law and other employment legal issues. He said he wanted to make the jump from a firm like Paul Hastings, which covers various areas of law, in part to escape the hustle a global law firm demands and to tap into the specialized talent Wagner's attorneys carry in the employment law space.

"I just decided that it was time for me to pursue something that would enable me to continue to practice benefits law, but do so in a way that was more manageable for me," Keller said.

The attorney said he spent most of his career practicing at Paul Hastings — out of the 28 years he's practiced law, he spent 25 at the firm. He said he has experience building executive compensation plans for clients, advising clients on employee benefits plans and helping companies wade through employment matters when mergers, acquisitions and divestitures arise.

Keller said he particularly enjoys helping clients build executive compensation plans that will allow them to attract and retain top talent. He said this starts by developing a thorough understanding of his client to identify what kind of program will be best for them and their talent. For example, he said a startup is going to have different offerings than a more mature business that may have value through its equity structure.

"A huge part of being a good lawyer is understanding who the potential client or the actual client is," Keller said. "How does their business work? How do they make money? Do they have U.S. operations and foreign operations? Or is it just domestic?"

The attorney — who received his undergraduate degree from Ohio University, his Master of Laws in taxation from New York University and his law degree from Capital University Law School — told Law360 that it's important for him to advise clients through issues with their employee benefits programs before they become disputes.

When claims are denied in employee health plans, or a 401(k) recordkeeper makes an incorrect distribution calculation, Keller said he views the law as an avenue to address what ultimately boils down to a customer service issue.

"People want to get good customer service," Keller said. "And if they're not getting customer service, then we need to figure out why they're not getting good customer service, and then try and find a way of addressing it that resolves the concern."

Keller said he's currently keeping an eye on how regulations in the benefits space may change under President Donald Trump's new administration. Given that regulations often flip-flop depending on who runs the White House, the attorney said he's expecting additional shifts, such as a rollback of a Biden administration rule that allowed retirement advisers to consider environmental, social and governance issues when making decisions for clients.

In a news release announcing Keller's arrival at the firm, Wagner Law Group Managing Director Marcia S. Wagner said she thinks the attorney was a strong catch.

"His wealth of experience in his areas of practice will undoubtedly be an enormous asset to our firm and serve our clients well," Wagner said.

--Editing by Daniel King.

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