

New York Law Journal

VOLUME 267—NO. 85 \$4.00

WWW.NYLJ.COM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2022

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IN BRIEF

Chief Justice Roberts Orders Investigation of Leaked Draft Abortion Opinion

Chief Justice John Roberts Jr., reacting to news reports of an unprecedented leaked draft opinion overruling two key abortion rights decisions, said he has directed the U.S. Supreme Court's marshal to investigate the source of the leak.

Roberts, in an extraordinary statement on Tuesday, called the leak, first reported by Politico, "a singular and egregious breach" of trust "that is an affront to the court and the community of public servants who work here."

Although the report of the draft opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* is "authentic, it does not represent a decision by the court or the final position of any member on the issues in the case," according to a statement released by the court.

Roberts, in his own statement, said: "To the extent this betrayal of the confidences of the court was intended to undermine the integrity of our operations, it will not succeed. The work of the court will not be affected in any way. We at the court are blessed to have a workforce—permanent employees and law clerks alike—intensely loyal to the institution and dedicated to the rule of law. Court employees have an exemplary and important tradition of respecting the confidentiality of the judicial process and upholding the trust of the court."

The 98-page draft opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito, was marked as a "1st Draft" and was circulated among the justices on Feb. 10. Arguments in *Dobbs* were held in December. The draft opinion would overrule the landmark abortion rights precedents, *Roe v. Wade*, a 7-2 decision in 1973, and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, a 5-4 decision in 1992.

"The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision, including the one on which the defenders of *Roe* and *Casey* now chiefly rely—the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment," Alito wrote.

Politico reported that after the *Dobbs* arguments, the justices, in their private conferences voted on the outcome. Besides Alito, Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett

Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett also voted to overrule the abortion precedents, the news organization said.

—Marica Coyle

Clifford Chance Lands Covington's Funds Leader in New York City

Clifford Chance announced Monday that it had hired two Covington & Burling attorneys, including the former leader of the latter firm's funds practice, as partners in New York to bolster its own U.S. funds and investment management group.

William Sturman, who previously chaired the private funds and investments practice at Covington, spent the last decade at the firm and has 25 years of experience advising sponsors of private investment funds. He's joined by former Covington special counsel Kelly Labritz. Clifford Chance



Kelly Labritz



William Sturman

lost New York funds partner Victor Levy to Kirkland & Ellis in July 2021.

"The fundraising market continues to move at pace, and the volume of primary and secondary transactions we are seeing is ever-increasing, as is the technical complexity involved. We are delighted to welcome Bill and Kelly, whose arrival reflects our focus on continuing to scale our first-class US capabilities to support clients both within and outside the U.S.," Clifford Chance global head of funds and investment management Alexandra Davidson said in a statement.

Sturman specializes in advising sponsors working on asset classes, including buyouts, growth capital, real estate, infrastructure, secondaries, hedge, debt and

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Hearing on Judicial Ethics Delves Into Leaked SCOTUS Abortion Opinion

BY AVALON ZOPPO

A SENATE Judiciary Committee hearing on judicial ethics quickly delved into a back-and-forth over the leaked U.S. Supreme Court draft opinion indicating the justices are prepared to overturn two key abortion precedents.

Democratic senators on Tuesday suggested the potential reversals would damage the public's perception of the justices' impartiality and whether they are insulated from outside groups, while Republicans railed against the leak itself.

The draft opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito and circu-

lated in February, was published by Politico on Monday night and showed the court may overturn *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, landmark decisions that held there is a constitutional right to abortion in the U.S. According to CNN, five conservative justices—Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh, Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch and Alito—would be voting to overturn the precedents if the draft were final.

"Today is a hell of a day to be considering ethics questions around the Supreme Court," Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse opened the hearing saying. "We do not know yet whether Justice Alito

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From left, Elliott Kwok, Levine & Jaroslaw name partners Matthew Levine, Ilene Jaroslaw, Mark Elliott and Dennis Kwok

Ousted Hong Kong Pol Teams Up With Departing Phillips Nizer Partners To Form New Boutique

BY ANDREW DENNEY

UP UNTIL 2020, Dennis Kwok was a popular Hong Kong politician, representing the region's legal community on its Legislative Council, serving a second term in the body that he won with an overwhelming 69% of the vote as a member of legislature's pro-democracy Civic Party.

But that year, the powers that be in Beijing passed a resolution to boot lawmakers who have expressed support for Hong Kong's independence. Kwok was one of a dozen pro-democracy figures who were disqualified from elec-

tions that year as a result, the Hong Kong Free Press reported.

"I'd been standing strong on human rights," Kwok told the Law Journal. "They said that is not bearing allegiance to my oath of office."

Kwok and his family left Hong Kong and moved to Canada, eventually settling in the United States. Cut back to a few years prior to his ouster from elected office: Kwok met American attorney Mark Elliott, the chair of Phillips Nizer's litigation department, while Elliott was on vacation in Hong Kong. The two stayed in touch.

Recently, Elliott engaged in talks with Ilene Jaroslaw and Matthew Levine, two fellow Phil-

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Akin Gump Chair Calls Governor's Pick for IG 'Quintessential Leader'

BY BRIAN LEE

NEW YORK Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday said she will appoint U.S. Rep. Antonio Delgado, a former litigator and Harvard Law School graduate, as lieutenant governor to serve the remainder of Brian Benjamin's term.

The congressman will replace Benjamin on the primary ballot for lieutenant governor, a development that was able to materialize after a split legislature passed a measure allowing for Benjamin's removal from the primary ballot Monday.

Benjamin was indicted last month on federal bribery and corruption charges.

Prior to winning his upstate seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018, Delgado worked at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld for nearly seven years.

"I have known Antonio since he joined the firm as an associate; he was a fantastic star associate and was someone who really made an



Antonio Delgado

impact at the firm," the firm's chairperson, Kim Koopersmith, told the New York Law Journal.

When Delgado indicated he was giving serious consideration to running for Congress, Koopersmith

said her "immediate reaction was that it will be a loss to the firm, but a gain to our coun-

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Bond Schoeneck & King To Acquire Long Island Firm

BY JUSTIN HENRY

IN AN ONGOING effort to bolster its statewide presence in New York, Syracuse-based Bond Schoeneck & King is finalizing the acquisition of Long Island-based business law boutique Lazer Aptheker Rosella & Yedid.

The combination comes after six years of on-again, off-again merger talks between the firms, which have collaborated on client matters whenever the scope of a Lazer Aptheker client's business deal required expertise from Bond Schoeneck's labor and employment and environmental lawyers.

The move allows Bond Schoeneck to solidify the downstate portion of its practices with the addition of 27 attorneys practicing business litigation and transactions and a second Long Island office in Melville to complement its existing Garden City office.

"We will have offices from Suffolk



From left, Ralph Rosella of Lazer Aptheker Rosella & Yedid, Kevin M. Barnstein, and Craig L. Olivo of Bond, Schoeneck & King

County ... to all the way north and west with our Albany, Rochester and Syracuse offices," said Craig Olivo, managing member of Bond Schoeneck's office in Garden City.

"We will have as wide a footprint as practically any firm in New York." Bond is also acquiring Lazer Aptheker's office in West Palm Beach, Florida. In total, Bond Schoeneck is slated to have a total of 275 lawyers working in 15 offices across five states.

"Although we have resources for the firm all across the state, we really wanted on-site complementarity practice areas to be

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