



Latham Snags National Security and International Trade Hire

May 4, 2021, 6:01 AM; Updated: May 4, 2021, 11:31 AM
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- Former Navy nuclear officer Damara Chambers hired
- Latham expands its CFIUS expertise with Vinson & Elkins hire

Latham & Watkins is bringing aboard Damara Chambers, who focuses on cross-border investment, as a partner in its litigation and white collar practices in Washington.

Chambers is a former U.S. Navy officer who worked in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. She also worked at the U.S. Senate and for the Secretary of the Department of Energy. Her work has included national security reviews of foreign transactions.

Big Law firms have been bolstering their national security practices in anticipation of reviews by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S., or CFIUS, of transactions involving investments in U.S. companies by foreign businesses or governments.

“Latham’s CFIUS practice has grown rapidly to become one of today’s market leaders,” Chambers said in a statement. “I look forward to contributing to the team’s continued growth and success.”

Latham is coming off a highly successful 2020 in which it posted gross revenues of about \$4.3 billion, the second highest number of any U.S. firm, according to the latest Am Law rankings. Partners per equity partner at the Los Angeles-founded firm surpassed \$4.5 million last year, a nearly 20% leap over 2019.

Government interest has heightened in recent years in foreign investment, especially from non-ally countries like Russia or China, in technology, infrastructure and personal data.

Among Latham's CFIUS clients have been energy, financial services, healthcare and life sciences, technology, telecommunications and transportation companies. In the energy sector, Latham won CFIUS clearance for German multinational Siemens AG in its \$7.8 billion acquisition of Dresser-Rand Group, a supplier of rotating equipment solutions.

Chambers, who clerked for a federal appeals court judge, was of counsel at Covington & Burling for more than a dozen years before moving in 2019 to become a partner and head of the national security and international trade practice at Vinson & Elkins.

Les Carnegie, who leads the firm's Export Controls, Economic Sanctions & Customs practice as well as the CFIUS & U.S. National Security practice, said Latham has been on the lookout for talent in these areas, where he's seen demand on the rise.

"Damara is the first lateral we've brought on in this space in a few years, following the addition of former General Counsel for the Department of Energy Steve Croley, whose varied practice includes advising clients on CFIUS," he said.

Chambers has represented clients on compliance and enforcement of export controls such as International Traffic in Arms Regulations and nuclear export control regulations. She has also advised clients on economic sanctions administered by the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Previously, she advised WS Atkins, a multinational design, engineering, and project management consultancy in securing CFIUS and related national security approvals for its \$2.75 billion acquisition by SNC-Lavalin Group. She also advised industrial software company Schneider Electric in securing CFIUS approval for its \$4.1 billion combination with UK-based AVEVA Group.

Her experience will be a "tremendous asset to our clients who are navigating increasingly complex, overlapping, and stringently enforced international trade regulations," said Doug Greenburg, global chair of the firm's White Collar Defense & Investigations practice, in a statement.

CFIUS clearances often involve antitrust, an area where Latham has been adding to its roster. Earlier this year, [the firm hired Ian Conner](#), former director of the Federal Trade Commission's competition bureau, to navigate an anticipated uptick in federal antitrust enforcement. The March hire followed several other lateral additions from enforcement agencies both in the U.S. and overseas.