

Daily Journal

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TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2017

POLITICAL LAW

LANCE H. OLSON

OLSON HAGEL & FISHBURN LLP | SACRAMENTO

SPECIALTY: COMPLEX ELECTION MATTERS, CAMPAIGN COMPLIANCE

Olson had a couple of big items on his agenda this summer: backpacking trips in Europe and Yosemite.

“I finally got some time off,” said the founding partner with Olson Hagel & Fishburn in Sacramento.

Olson was joined by his adult daughter and her boyfriend on a trip to London and Heidelberg, Germany. It was his first time back in the picturesque medieval city since he studied there in 1976 as part of McGeorge Law School’s International Law Program. An avid hiker, he also joined a group of friends on a trip through the rugged northern end of Yosemite National Park, which few tourists ever see.

Time off was in short supply in 2016, when the firm wrote and represented three successful statewide ballot initiatives. These included Propositions 56, raising the cigarette tax, and 64, legalizing recreational marijuana. The latter ended up in a significant court fight over the ballot arguments.

But there is no longer an offseason for political attorneys in California. Olson and his team have been in court trying to delay a recall effort directed at Sen.

Josh Newman, D-San Dimas. *Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association v. Padilla*, C085176 (Cal. App. 3rd Dist., filed July 27, 2017).

The firm is involved in efforts to put a water bond on the 2018 ballot. Olson Hagel & Fishburn is also representing the California Democratic Party’s compliance commission as it looks into a disputed election for a party chair.

On top of all that, Olson and his firm have to keep an eye on a changing landscape when it comes to election law. Olson and Charles H. Bell Jr. founded the California Political Attorneys Association in 1988 to track these sorts of changes. Bell is a founding partner at Bell, McAndrews and Hiltachk LLP, the same firm Olson faced off against in the Newman recall and the Proposition 64 ballot arguments.

The Legislature is currently on the verge of passing AB 249, a bill that could be one of the more significant changes in years to the 1974 Political Reform Act. The bill would require advertisements from initiative committees to list their top three donors above \$50,000.

“These regulations can have a lot of unintended consequences,” Olson said.



“Disclosure and transparency are important, but you have to make sure you don’t make it more difficult for people to communicate.”

— Malcolm Maclachlan

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CONGRATULATIONS

We are proud to congratulate our founding partner

LANCE H. OLSON

on being selected as one of the Daily Journal's
Top 100 Lawyers in California for 2017.

Lance has been the firm's leader for 40 years and is admired and
respected by clients, peers and elected officials statewide.



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