



Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

Education

Richmond, Va. – July 11, 2018 – Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies is pleased to announce that Julia Ciarlo Hammond and Ryan F. O'Toole — who have successfully secured the passage of numerous public policy measures before Virginia's General Assembly and multiple governors — have joined its fast-growing government relations team, expanding the firm's Public Strategies presence to Cozen O'Connor's Richmond, Va., office. Both come to the firm from Eckert Seamans' Government Affairs practice, where Hammond served as senior manager of government affairs and O'Toole served as government relations manager.

Hammond, who joins the firm as a government relations principal, brings a strong background of successful legislative advocacy before the Virginia General Assembly, Governor's Office, and state agencies on behalf of major business clients. Previously, as the director of legislative affairs and policy for Virginia Governor Robert F. McDonnell from 2011–2014, Hammond was pivotal to the success of the governor's legislative agenda, directing the administration's outreach to both the General Assembly and key stakeholder groups on issues including economic development, education, health care, transportation, and government reform. She has a wealth of experience in the political and legislative arena.

O'Toole's background includes providing clients with insight on Virginia's political processes and representing their interests before the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Governor's Office, and numerous state agencies. He is skilled at developing advocacy strategies to activate grassroots coalitions and engage both the business community and the public sector. He previously served as a policy adviser to Virginia Governor Terence R. McAuliffe, advancing the governor's agenda on policy issues relating to energy, economic development, and technology and innovation. O'Toole joins the firm as a government relations professional.

"The most important attribute for any government relations professional is credibility, and that's what Julia and Ryan bring to our group and our clients," says Howard Schweitzer, managing partner of Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies. "Their credentials are top shelf and truly bipartisan because they were developed and established through hard work in a variety of legislative, administrative, and government agency roles. I'm really looking forward to working with them and I'm confident they will be an invaluable asset to the team."

"I've known Julia since she was a member of my staff during my tenure as Virginia's Attorney General (2002 to 2005) and Ryan brings to us an equally impressive track record as a policy adviser to Governor McAuliffe," adds Jerry Kilgore — who also served as Virginia's Secretary of Public Safety and is now a member of Cozen O'Connor's State Attorneys General Practice and office managing partner of the Richmond, Va., office. They not only strengthen our organization but will help us build a successful lobbying practice to grow our Richmond presence."

As part of the McDonnell administration, Hammond developed a strong background in the legislative development process, coordinating advocacy for the governor's legislative package of 200+ bills each session, as well as the biennial state budget. Prior to joining the administration, she was the Virginia state director for the National Federation of Independent Business and director of government relations for the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association. She also served in the Office of the Attorney General under Kilgore, as a legislative aide to former Delegate David Albo, and a campaign manager for Senate and House races. She earned her B.A. in political science from the University of Mary Washington.

Prior to serving as Governor McAuliffe's policy adviser, O'Toole served as deputy director of scheduling.

He also managed the Governor's Council on Youth Entrepreneurship, leading the administration's work to foster entrepreneurship across Virginia by working alongside higher education, K-12, and the business and startup communities. O'Toole previously served on President Obama's reelection campaign in Virginia, Governor McAuliffe's 2013 campaign, and led Virginia market development for 1776, a global innovation network connecting startups, governments, and corporations. He earned his M.P.A. at Virginia Tech and his B.A. at Fordham University.

About Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies, an affiliate of the international law firm Cozen O'Connor, is a bipartisan government relations practice representing clients before the federal government and in cities and states throughout the country. With offices in Washington D.C., Richmond, Albany, New York City, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Chicago, and Santa Monica, the firm's public strategies professionals offer a full complement of government affairs services, including legislative and executive branch advocacy, policy analysis, assistance with government procurement and funding programs, and crisis management. Its client base spans across several industries, including healthcare, transportation, hospitality, education, construction, energy, real estate, entertainment, financial services, and insurance.

About Cozen O'Connor

Established in 1970, Cozen O'Connor has more than 750 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and middle market companies, Cozen O'Connor services its clients' needs through 30 offices across two continents.

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