



July 26, 2010 – Page 1787
On the Move: Law Firms
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Dennis Cuneo



(CQ/ RYAN KELLY)

After three decades in law, lobbying and even corporate management, Dennis C. Cuneo has become a partner in the newly opened Washington office of Fisher & Phillips, a national firm headquartered in Atlanta that specializes in labor and employment law and is now branching out into lobbying.

The first task for Cuneo, 60, who was most recently with Arent Fox in Washington, is to canvass in-house talent for his new team. Edwin G. Foulke Jr., who was an assistant secretary of Labor and ran the Occupational Safety and Health Administration at the end of the George W. Bush administration, will be splitting his time between Washington and Atlanta as the office's other start-up partner.

Cuneo says Fisher & Phillips' focus on representing companies in labor matters will stand out in Washington. "We'd like to have some experts so we're not just lobbyists but folks that really understand the issues and have been involved with the issues for many years," he says. "Most of our clients either have their own firms or in-house lobbying deals up here, so we have to show a special value or a value-added. I think we can do that as it relates to labor and employment."

A Pennsylvania native, Cuneo is also advising three Silicon Valley start-up energy companies through his DC Strategic Advisors consulting firm.

As a young associate with Arent Fox in the 1980s, Cuneo worked on an ill-fated joint venture of Toyota Corp. and Ford Motor Co. Later, in a joint venture of Toyota and General Motors, he was a member of the management team for Toyota's first manufacturing plant in North America. He got a 15-month crash course on government relations as he shepherded the deal through the Federal Trade Commission and Congress — and past opposition from Chrysler and Ford. He left Toyota as a senior vice president in 2006.

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