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## **Former FPPC enforcement division chief joins Kaufman Legal Group**

*Kaufman Legal Group adds Gary Winuk to head Sacramento office*

By: Amanda Schallert

The Kaufman Legal Group, a political law firm, added the former enforcement division chief of the California Fair Political Practices Commission to head its Sacramento office.

The Los Angeles-based firm hopes Gary S. Winuk's years of experience prosecuting political ethics and campaign law violations under the Political Reform Act will be useful to clients trying to mount effective campaigns in this election year and beyond.

Winuk said he joined the Fair Political Practices Commission in 2009 and left in 2015 for Sacramento-based Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld LLP.

Before that, Winuk was general counsel of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, a deputy district attorney in San Joaquin County and a legislative aide in the state Assembly. Though he is changing his focus from enforcing regulations to advising clients, Winuk said the purpose of the law on both sides is ensuring compliance, and he wanted to combine forces with firm founder Stephen J. Kaufman.

The two met when Winuk was prosecuting a client of Kaufman's, Winuk said. Winuk's time at the commission provides him not only with an understanding of election law, but of California's political landscape.

He said this is important because some campaign rules have substantially changed over the last few years and because the legal decisions his clients make are often highly publicized.

"A lot of these issues play out in the media because they involve elected officials, and you have to understand all of the implications," he said Wednesday.

While the firm employs other attorneys who previously worked at regulatory agencies, such as the Federal Election Commission, catching someone with Winuk's depth of experience is difficult, Kaufman said.

"It's a very complicated, arcane area of the law that is ever-changing, and unless you have a fundamental understanding of how the law evolved, you don't necessarily appreciate its nuances," Kaufman said.

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"In addition to just knowing the law, one of the keys to operating in this area is understanding the politics," he said.

"When you're advising a client, you need to be as aware of the political dynamics as you are of the legal requirements, and I think Gary brings that type of knowledge and experience at the firm."

Winuk said he will be the only full-time attorney in Sacramento. In Los Angeles, there are five attorneys along with a political compliance staff that helps file campaign disclosure reports and handle campaign contributions along with other legal services.

The Kaufman Legal Group serves clients such as Attorney General Kamala Harris and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.

While they run a year-round practice, work is needed on an even greater basis during an election year, and Winuk will help the firm manage the increasing load, Kaufman said.