



Karl J. Sleight | Partner

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Karl provides strategic counsel to clients who operate in highly regulated environments that include active government oversight and scrutiny. Karl is recognized for his successful accomplishments and is regularly named to the *City and State Law Power 100* that lists the 100 most powerful people in New York State politics working in law.

Karl's experience spans across a broad spectrum of industry sectors including gaming, health care, energy and emerging industries such as cannabis. In addition to advising clients on governmental ethics and lobbying compliance matters, Karl represents individuals, businesses and institutions in complex civil litigation and government administrative investigations against the State Attorney General. He regularly represents clients in high profile matters containing public and political sensitivities, including numerous Fortune 100 companies as well as private citizens and political figures involved in government inquiries. Karl is also an accomplished trial attorney.

Karl has served as counsel to casinos with mobile sports wagering interests on a variety of matters. In the first New York State casino site selection competition (2014), he successfully navigated the process for his clients, which led to his client securing a commercial casino license. Notably, Karl is a licensed horse owner, a member of the New York Thoroughbred Breeders and the managing partner of a racing stable that annually finishes in the top 10 percent by earnings of all licensed owners in North America, which uniquely positions him in his representation of entities in the thoroughbred racing arena. He is a frequent speaker at symposiums on cutting edge topics in the field of gaming and racing, including the annual August industry conference in Saratoga Springs. Karl has experience serving as special counsel for professional sports leagues, including Major League Baseball.

Karl regularly serves as counsel in high-profile government inquiries. He was engaged as counsel in both of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Moreland

CAPABILITIES

Government & Corporate
Investigations

- Corporate Ethics & Compliance
- State Attorneys General Investigations

Litigation

- Gaming and Racing

Cannabis

Sports, Entertainment &
Hospitality

Commission investigations. An experienced trial lawyer, Karl also represents selected individuals and businesses in white collar criminal defense matters. Since returning to private practice in 2007, he was lead counsel in the jury trial of a corporate executive who was acquitted of all larceny and tax charges, and he forged a negotiated plea disposition in a multimillion-dollar larceny case whereby the president of the company was able to avoid incarceration.

Since leaving government service, Karl has testified before the New York State Legislature on the topic of ethics reform, and at the request of the New York State Bar Association president, chaired the Due Process and Investigations subcommittee for the association's 2011 Task Force on Government Ethics. The subcommittee's recommendations have been credited with influencing important aspects of the groundbreaking Public Integrity Reform Act of 2011. Karl has also served as Special Counsel to the New York State Legislative Ethics Commission and is a frequent commentator on issues involving ethics and government in the media.

Karl served as the Executive Director of the New York State Ethics Commission from March 2001 through March 2007. During his tenure, he was responsible for conducting investigations of high-ranking government officials and private sector entities that interact with government officials. He also provided advice and interpretation of the state's ethics and integrity laws to statewide elected officials, including the governor and attorney general, as well as private sector business leaders that interacted with the government. His term at the Commission was marked by fair and effective enforcement of the ethical principles that apply to state employees and strong, effective support for legislation to improve the ethics laws.

Karl previously served in the Office of the Attorney General and was primarily responsible for prosecuting complex narcotics organizations, government corruption and homicide cases. He was the only attorney in the office assigned to both the Organized Crime Task Force and the Capital Assistance to Prosecutors unit.

Karl also served as Deputy Inspector General with the Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG), where he was responsible for overseeing investigations into corruption, fraud and criminal activity. In 1997, Karl received the Attorney General's Louis J. Lefkowitz award in recognition of exceptional effort for his prosecution of a narcotics cartel operating throughout the eastern United States and Latin America. In 1999, he received an award from the New York State Police in recognition of exceptional public service in a high-profile homicide prosecution. From

1992 to 1995, he was the Chief Assistant District Attorney in Cayuga County. From 1991 to 1992, Karl was an Assistant District Attorney in Fulton County.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Successfully navigated highly competitive NY State government process leading client to obtain one of only four commercial casino licenses under new constitutional amendment and revised statutory framework; regularly represents clients before the New York State Gaming Commission on various issues.
- Successfully guided client to obtain one of five first time medical marijuana/cannabis licenses issued by NY State in highly competitive process with client achieving top score by government regulators; regularly represents clients before regulatory agencies on legal matters related to cannabis.
- Serves as compliance counsel to numerous publicly traded and privately held business enterprises on issues related to state and local lobbying and ethics laws and regulations, including periodic reporting and filings; regularly appears before the State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) on matters related to interpretation of state lobbying and ethics laws and represents companies and individuals alleged to have violated these laws; represents public officials in connection with alleged violations of ethics laws and regulations.
- Represented the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) and a consortium of law firms in connection with both of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Moreland Commission investigations; representation of law firms led to government's decision to withdraw subpoenas to law firms and terminate Commission investigation.
- Defends companies and individuals in federal, state and local criminal investigations; served as lead trial counsel of individual charged in connection with State grant program obtaining dismissal of 16 counts before and during trial; served as lead trial counsel of corporate executive charged in connection with financial issues at start-up company obtaining acquittal and dismissal of seven counts at trial and on appeal; defended two Fortune 20 social media platforms against District Attorney seeking private subscriber information; served as special counsel to Major League Baseball to interface with law enforcement agencies; obtained dismissal of all charges against large sand and gravel business owner prior to trial; obtained pre-arrest non-prosecution result on behalf of the company in the area of MWBE compliance; obtained pre-arrest non-prosecution result on behalf of Division I college basketball assistant coach.
- Defends business enterprises and individuals in connection with

investigations by the New York State Attorney General, including consumer fraud complaints, criminal investigations, and civil litigation; representative matters include automobile dealerships, retailer advertising, energy (ESCOs), and wind renewable companies, and education service providers.

- Represents business and individuals in connection with investigations conducted by the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General; representative matters have included defending large transportation providers, professional health care practices, and health care clinical providers; serves as compliance counsel to metro-NYC hospital.
- Serves as internal investigation counsel to companies on a variety of issues, including ranging from the handling of financial matters, employee situations, and the use and management of technology platforms.
- Serves as counsel on Title IX and code of conduct investigations conducted by colleges and universities, including sexual misconduct inquiries.

EDUCATION

- Syracuse University College of Law, J.D., 1989
- Siena College, B.A., 1986

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- American Bar Association
- New York State Bar Association
- Albany Law School Government Law Center
 - Advisory Board
- Saratoga County Bar Association
 - Past president
- Saratoga-Capital District State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission, former Commissioner, gubernatorial appointment

HONORS & AWARDS

- *City & State* New York, Law Power 100
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Corporate Compliance Law, since 2018
- *50 Over 50: The Age Disrupters*, City and State
- *Upstate New York SuperLawyers*®

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "Transparency in North American Horse Racing: The Role of Stewards," and "Bettor (Better) Protection and Confidence?" Moderator, The Racing and Gaming Conference at Saratoga, August 12-14, 2024

- “Building Relationships for Better Outcomes: Interactions with the Regulated Community,” Speaker, Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Conference, December 3, 2023
- "Break Glass Only in an Emergency!" Co-presenter, AI Webinar, November 6, 2023
- “Rise of Political Investigations in the Last Decade," Speaker, Business Council of New York State, Annual Meeting, September 20-22, 2023
- "Historical Horse Racing Machines: The Tail Wagging the Horse?" Panel Moderator, Racing and Gaming Conference at Saratoga, August 14-16, 2023
- “Horse Racing, NFTs, and the Metaverse,” Panel Moderator, Racing and Gaming Conference at Saratoga, August 15-17, 2022
- “Gaming Regulation in the Digital Age: Are “Analog” Regulations and Regulators Sufficient to Police the Digital Gaming Market?” Panel Moderator, Racing and Gaming Conference at Saratoga, August 15-17, 2022
- "Emerging Issues in New York’s Cannabis Regulatory Scheme," Guest Speaker, CONNECT Podcast, New York State Business Council, May 5, 2022

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

- New York
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. District Court, District of Columbia
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Western District of New York
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit