

Ex-HUD GC Launches DC White Collar Boutique

By Rachel Rippetoe

Law360 (July 29, 2025, 3:48 PM EDT) -- The former general counsel for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced Tuesday that he is launching his own white-collar litigation boutique in Washington, D.C.

Benjamin Klubes, who left his role as the top lawyer for the federal housing agency in January, has founded Klubes Law Group, aimed at representing "individuals and companies adverse to the government," according to the firm's new website.

The firm's tagline is: "Uncompromising legal excellence without the compromises of BigLaw."

Klubes, who also spent over 20 years as a partner in BigLaw and Mid-Law, told Law360 Pulse on Tuesday that he chose to open his own firm rather than returning to a larger firm because it offers him the flexibility to take on the cases that are important for lawyers to be tackling in the current moment.

"I felt like it was time to decide what I wanted in what's probably going to be one of the later chapters, if not the last, in my career," he said. "And I wanted to be free to represent people and entities that I thought were being unfairly and illegally targeted, to do the kind of work that I had traditionally done, but layered over by the aggressive use of government enforcement tools to advance the Trump administration agenda and the need for lawyers to run to the fight rather than run away from the fight. Lawyers have a real obligation not to shy away from controversial cases, and particularly when some of the actions are so outrageous and illegal."

The litigation veteran served most recently as of counsel for Jacobson Lawyers Group, launched in February by another former government attorney willing to litigate against the government, the former general counsel of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Daniel Jacobson.

Klubes told Law360 Pulse that Jacobson, who has taken on cases fighting to restore funding for foreign aid work and other government grants and funding, provided a landing pad for him to work on building his own practice.

"Working with him was a nice bridge as I thought through what I wanted to do in terms of this model," Klubes said. "He's an example of a trend we're seeing of folks who were in the government who normally would come back to big law firms. I'm sure he had offers at a number of D.C. firms, and he just



Benjamin Klubes

decided that he wanted to do his own thing. That's certainly influenced my thinking."

Before Klubes was tapped initially as principal deputy general counsel for HUD in 2022, he was co-managing partner of national litigation firm Buckley LLP, where he had started as a partner in 2009. Before that, Klubes was a partner at Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP, according to his LinkedIn profile.

For years, Klubes has been representing financial services companies in federal and state enforcement agency investigations, examinations and litigation, as well as in private civil and class action litigation. He represented former U.S. Senate Select Intelligence Committee aide James A. Wolfe, who was arrested in 2018 and charged with lying to the FBI about his contacts with reporters.

Wolfe, who had been the committee's security director since 1987, pled guilty to one count of making a false statement and served two months in prison. As Wolfe's lawyer, Klubes told Law360 a few months before the plea that he was concerned his client's Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial could be prejudiced by further comments by President Donald Trump, who called Wolfe a "leaker" to reporters.

Klubes has also represented a former secretary of defense, banks, small companies and multinational corporations in a slew of white collar criminal investigations, according to the firm's website.

Before he became the top lawyer at HUD, Klubes successfully settled HUD False Claims Act claims against three different banks for \$330 million in the wake of the financial crisis, according to the firm's website.

The new D.C. firm's mission is to provide "zealous advocacy for clients in every forum at every moment." The statement on the firm's website said that, as both a managing partner at a larger firm and the legal head of a major federal agency, Klubes has "marshalled legal talent" and "knows what it takes to lead a legal team to get results for clients."

"He has seen first-hand how large firm structure can limit effective and efficient client representation, and we draw upon that experience and today's latest technology to unabashedly represent clients' interests," the mission statement said. "We work collaboratively, using the latest litigation technologies to deliver the highest quality representation in a cost-effective manner."

Klubes is the latest in a slew of ex-government lawyers to open up their own legal practice, many with similar goals to unabashedly represent adversaries of the government. In addition to Jacobson's new practice, attorneys coming out of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the U.S. Department of Energy have all opened law firms this year.

--Editing by Dave Trumbore.