

McManis Faulkner Hires Former FEC Chair

The litigation-focused firm has brought on Ann Ravel, a former head of the Federal Election Commission.

Xiumei Dong

Ann Ravel, a former Democratic commissioner on the U.S. Federal Election Commission, has joined San Jose, California-based trial firm McManis Faulkner as of counsel.

Ravel was an Obama administration era appointment to the FEC back in 2013. During her five-year term with the commission, she has served as FEC vice chair in 2014 and chair in 2015. Ravel officially ended her term in March 2017, declaring in a resignation letter to President Donald Trump that “our political campaigns have been awash in unlimited, often dark, money.”

As of today, Trump has still has not yet replied, Ravel said. In addition to her job at McManis Faulkner, Ravel is also a senior fellow with the Berkeley, California-based nonprofit MapLight, where she is part of an ongoing project pushing for transparency in government and tackling disinformation in politics.



Ann Ravel

“Transparency is very important,” Ravel said. “There needs to be, particularly in campaigns, the same information provided across platforms, and that’s not happening. So at some point, there definitely should be government regulation and enforcement of those regulations.”

At McManis Faulkner, Ravel said her work will primarily relate to government law and policy issues, as well as campaign finance. She will also continue to serve as an adjunct professor and lecturer

at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

Prior to her role at the FEC, Ravel spent 11 years as the top lawyer for the County of Santa Clara, a role she left in 2009. Ravel was appointed by California Gov. Jerry Brown in February 2011 to serve as chair of the California Fair Political Practices Commission. During her term, Ravel made headlines for pursuing a complaint initially filed by nonprofit Common Cause against a mysterious Arizona group that funneled \$11 million into a cam-

 **Ann Ravel** 
@AnnMRavel 

It's been an honor to serve the @FEC. I'm committed to transparency—here's my resignation letter to @RealDonaldTrump medium.com/@AnnMRavel/dep...
10:03 AM - Feb 19, 2017

The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

It has been my honor and privilege to serve the American people as a Commissioner of the Federal Election Commission (FEC). I am writing to inform you that I hereby resign from that position effective March 1, 2017.

The mission of the FEC is essential to ensuring a fair electoral process. Yet, since the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, our political campaigns have been awash in unlimited, often dark, money. Since 2010, well over \$800 million in dark money has been spent in competitive races. At the same time, elections have become more and more expensive. Most of the funding comes from a tiny, highly unrepresentative segment of the population.

During the 2016 election cycle, several campaigns, including yours, identified serious issues in our campaign finance system. You, for example, decried the influence of money in politics, describing the political system as "broken." You condemned the influence of wealthy donors, calling your primary opponents "puppets" for attending a major donor retreat. You highlighted the setting up of super PACs by some candidates as "a scam" and a circumvention of campaign finance laws, because they were not truly independent of those candidates. And you said, due to self-financing, that you were not beholden to or influenced by wealthy donors.

Departing the Federal Election Commission – Ann Ravel – Me...
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represents both corporations and individuals through trial and appeal. With Ravel's addition, the firm's website lists a total of 20 lawyers, including nine partners.

"Ann has a stellar reputation within the legal and political communities," said a statement from McManis Faulkner partner Elizabeth Pipkin, chair of the firm's civil litigation practice. "Her insights, gained tackling regulatory matters for government agencies, complement our practice. In addition, as a true champion for justice, she's a great fit for the firm."

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paign committee, while shielding its donors' identities.

Before her appointment to the FPPC, Ravel worked as a deputy assistant attorney general at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., where she handled torts and consumer litigation matters between 2009 and 2011. Ravel noted that her decision to join McManis Faulkner, which has hosted fundraisers for controversial candidates in public office, was one she did not take lightly. But she was impressed by the firm's commitment to pro

bono work and diversity initiatives.

"For many years, when I was county counsel in Santa Clara County, I actually litigated against this firm, in particular [founding partner] Jim McManis, but others as well," Ravel said. "While we disagreed on the legal matters, I've always respected their professionalism and their good lawyering and preparation. We were able to develop a friendship over the years."

McManis Faulkner, which predominantly does litigation work,

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