

Steve Topetzes

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Steve Topetzes is a partner and his practice centers on the defense of financial services clients and other companies or individuals with respect to government investigations, regulatory or private litigation, and corporate internal investigations. He represents public companies, boards of directors, banks, broker-dealers, investment advisers, investment companies, underwriters, and individuals in investigations or examinations by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), federal banking regulators, and state securities regulators or attorneys general. He also has extensive experience handling complex litigation, regulatory enforcement proceedings, class action lawsuits, mutual fund excessive fee litigation, and arbitrations.

Steve advises clients with respect to investigations or litigation involving:

- Corporate disclosure issues
- Securities sales practice, investment banking or asset securitization issues
- Accounting irregularities and financial reporting issues
- Conflicts of interest or asserted corporate governance failures
- Compliance or supervisory issues
- Whistleblowers
- Municipal Securities
- Broker-Dealer regulation
- Investment management and registered or private funds
- Alleged insider trading or market manipulation
- Claims against corporate officers or directors
- Mortgage origination and servicing
- The False Claims Act and FIRREA
- Anti-Money Laundering Procedures

His practice includes frequent representation of accountants and lawyers with respect to regulatory investigations or proceedings and related shareholder claims.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Steve was selected as one of the finest law firm writers of 2016 as announced by The Burton Awards, in association with the Library of Congress, and co-sponsored by the American Bar Association. He has also been named by *The Best Lawyers in America*® "Lawyer of the Year" in 2015 for Securities Regulation in Washington, D.C. Listed since 2010, Steve has consistently received recognition from *Best Lawyers*® in the categories of Securities Regulation and Litigation - Securities. Steve also has received the Martindale-Hubbell® AV® Preeminent™ 5.0 out of 5 rating (the highest possible peer review rating in legal ability and ethical standards for all lawyers) for many years. In addition, he is consistently selected to Super Lawyers in the category of Securities Litigation.

- Recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*® as "Lawyer of the Year" for Litigation - Securities in Washington, DC, 2027
- Recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*® in Washington, DC, 2027
  - Criminal Defense: White-Collar
  - Litigation - Securities
  - Securities Regulation
- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* as a Recommended Lawyer for Corporate Investigations and White-Collar Criminal Defense, 2025-2026
- Recognized by *Securities Docket's Enforcement Elite* as part of the 2025 "Enforcement Elite" list

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, Recent SEC and FINRA Enforcement Developments and Takeaways, Life Insurance Products 2023: Featuring Current SEC, FINRA, Insurance, Tax, and ERISA Regulatory and Compliance Issues, Washington, D.C., 3 November 2023
- Speaker, Fund Industry Civil Litigation: Year in Review, Investment Company Institute–Investment Management Conference 2023, Palm Desert, CA, 21 March 2023
- Speaker, Life Insurance Company Products Conference - Recent SEC and FINRA Enforcement Developments, ALI-CLE, 5 November 2021
- Speaker, 2018 Consumer Financial Services Symposium, 3 December 2018.
- Government Enforcement and Litigation Trends, 2017 Consumer Financial Services Symposium, 4 December 2017

EDUCATION

- J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1988

- B.A., University of Minnesota, 1985 *(summa cum laude; Phi Beta Kappa)*

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of District of Columbia
- Bar of Wisconsin
- United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- United States District Court for the District of Columbia
- United States District Court for the District of Maryland

LANGUAGES

- Greek

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- 11 June 2026, United States: Supreme Court Holds SEC Does Not Need to Prove Pecuniary Loss in Disgorgement
- 11 June 2026, United States: Supreme Court Scissors up Saba's Rescission Argument Under Section 47(b) of the 1940 Act
- 18 May 2026, United States: Keeping Up Tradition: Director Woodcock's Signals a Continuation of Recent Enforcement Priorities
- 13 February 2026, United States: The Judge Speaks: The SEC's New Enforcement Director Provides First Glimpse into Her Priorities
- November 2025, November 2025 Accolades
- November 2025, 2025 Asset Management and Investment Funds Fall Conference—Boston
- October 2025, 2025 Asset Management and Investment Funds Fall Conference—Washington, DC
- November 2024, Asset Management and Investment Funds Fall Conference—Washington, D.C.

- 11 July 2024, Federal Agencies Have Placed a Heightened Priority on Whistleblowers and Speedy Cooperation
- 2 November 2023, Asset Management and Investment Funds Fall Conferences - Washington, D.C.
- 6 April 2023, Fifth Circuit Affirms Dismissal of Derivative Suit Against Mutual Fund Adviser and Trustees
- 22 October 2020, SEC Speaks 2020: Enforcement and Examination Highlights
- 3 July 2019, Court Grants Summary Judgment to Defendant Investment Adviser in Section 36(b) Excessive Fee Lawsuit
- 18 January 2019, An Update on False Claims Act Litigation: Circuit Splits and Other Developments in 2018
- 8 December 2017, SEC Reverses Course on ALJ Appointments Issue, but Uncertainty Remains
- 30 May 2017, D.C. Circuit Considers Reversal of Earlier Decision and May Declare SEC Administrative Law Judges Inferior Officers Subject to Appointment
- 10 January 2017, Tenth Circuit Decision Finds Against the SEC and Creates a Circuit Split on the Constitutionality of the Commission's ALJs
- 16 September 2016, 12 AML Obligations Every Broker/Dealer Needs to Know
- 22 April 2016, FINRA Targets AML Programs and "Culture of Compliance" as 2016 Enforcement Priority, Particularly for High-Risk Broker/Dealers
- 29 March 2016, Heard at the 2016 SIFMA Conference
- 1 March 2016, Highlights from the SEC Speaks — 2016 Enforcement Priorities
- 4 November 2015, DOJ Sharpens Focus on Corporate Compliance in Deciding Whether to Prosecute Companies
- 12 May 2015, Department of Justice Issues Guidance on Organizations' Responses to Cyber Incidents

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Steve is a regular speaker and author regarding topics related to government enforcement, corporate governance, and internal investigations.

- "Government's New Focus on Individual Liability in Corporate Probes Will Change the Way Companies Undertake Internal Investigations," *Bloomberg BNA*, 27 November 2015

NEWS & EVENTS

- 8 September 2026, K&L Gates Secures Second Circuit Victory Affirming Dismissal of Securities Class Action Against Anavex Life Sciences

- 20 August 2026, Nearly 300 K&L Gates Lawyers Recognized Among 2027 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 15 June 2026, K&L Gates Successfully Represents Closed-End Funds in US Supreme Court Case on Investment Company Act
- 2 November 2022, 2022 K&L Gates Asset Management and Investment Funds Conference — Washington, D.C.
- 18 August 2022, More Than 350 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2023 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch
- 19 August 2021, Nearly 300 K&L Gates Lawyers Named Among 2022 Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch

MEDIA MENTIONS

- 16 June 2026, *Bloomberg Law* | Supreme Court Ruling Leaves Closed-End Funds in Calmer Waters
- 11 June 2026, *Seeking Alpha* | The Supreme Court shields closed-end funds from some activist investor lawsuits

AREAS OF FOCUS

- White Collar Defense and Investigations
- Internal Investigations
- Securities Enforcement / Financial Regulatory Enforcement