

People



## Richard L. Spees

Partner, Government Affairs and Public Policy

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Rick Spees represents public and private entities in their interactions with the federal government helping them secure funding from Congress and address issues raised by complex federal laws and regulations.

Rick represents a wide range of clients in the education, government, healthcare, and transportation sectors, including cities, counties, transit authorities, educational institutions, science centers, hospital systems, and other corporations. Prior to private practice, Rick served in a number of positions in the U.S. Senate, including three years as the staff director and chief counsel of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary, and Related Agencies. He also served on the Senate Judiciary Committee and as a legislative assistant for Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada).

In 2020 and 2021, Rick served as one of Akerman's lead attorneys tracking the many COVID relief bills, providing our clients advice on the funding opportunities that were in the bills as well and the restrictions on those funds. As a follow up, he has tracked the latest federal infrastructure bill as well as the Fiscal Year 2022 federal budget. With the reinstatement of federal earmarks, he was able to obtain specific federal fund allocations for his clients.

### Notable Work

**Transportation:** Represents the City of Orlando in obtaining legislative authorization, regulatory approvals, and federal funding for SunRail, Central Florida's commuter rail line. Phase one of SunRail opened on May 1, 2014.

**Education:** Worked with Peralta Community College District in helping arrange for one of the trustees to testify before a key Congressional subcommittee regarding veterans' education benefits. Arranged for the colleges to receive federal agency funds and legislative earmarks.

### Areas of Experience

Cannabis  
EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program  
Energy and Infrastructure  
Federal Appropriations and Government Funding  
Financial Services  
Government Affairs and Public Policy  
Higher Education and Collegiate Athletics  
Local Government Advocacy  
State Legislative and Executive Lobbying  
Transportation Regulation and Policy

### Education

J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1979, with honors  
B.A., University of California, Berkeley, Economics, 1976, with honors

### Admissions

#### Bars

District of Columbia  
California

#### Courts

U.S. District Court, District of Columbia

### Related Content

Akerman Partner Richard Spees Featured in Q&A for the DC Bar Blog  
October 13, 2022

Akerman Hosts Exclusive Book Signing with Rick Spees, Lawyer and Author of Satirical "Capitol Gains"  
September 26, 2022

Akerman Lawyer Takes On Capitol Hill and Big Law in Satirical "Capitol Gains"  
August 24, 2022

**International Affairs:** Serves as the Executive Director of the federally funded Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). CAORC supports American scholars doing work in the subjects of social sciences, humanities, and cultural heritage throughout the world. CAORC is affiliated with 25 overseas centers doing work in 29 countries. He is also the General Counsel of the Hollings Center for International Dialogue. He recently left the Executive Committee of the Alliance of International Exchange, the trade association for the overseas exchange community.

## Related Professional Experience

- U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary, and Related Agencies, Staff Director and Chief Counsel, 1982-1986
- U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on Regulatory Reform, Majority Counsel, 1981 - 1982
- Office of Senator Paul Laxalt, U.S. Senate, Legislative Assistant

## Published Work and Lectures

- *Washington Post*, Quoted, “‘The Mother Lode’: Cities and counties across America clamor for slice of new infrastructure funds,” February 1, 2022
- *Law360*, Co-Author, “The Future of Legal Marijuana: Post-Election Outlook,” December 21, 2016
- Association of Science Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference, Speaker, “Defying Physics: A Countervailing View of Washington,” October 2014
- Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition Fall 2013 Meeting, Speaker, “Charting a Path Forward Without a Map,” November 2013
- “Paul Laxalt -- Man of Political Independence,” *The Maverick Spirit: Building the New Nevada*, Chapter 11, 1999

## Affiliations

- Brighter Tomorrow for Africa, a feeding program in Sierra Leone, Africa, Board Member
- Condor Project, a foundation to support programs to prevent human trafficking in Cambodia, Sustaining Supporter