

People



Richard L. Spees

Partner, Government Strategies

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vCard

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Rick Spees represents local governments and public entities, as well as companies and non-profit organizations in their interactions with the federal government.

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).

Rick is the Executive Director of the Akerman LLP Political Action Committee (Akerman LLP PAC) as well as the firm’s state and local political contribution activities. He writes a periodic report on the developments of the federal budget and when requested, he provides legislative strategy advice and tracks bills through the Congressional process. Additionally, with the revival of the community project funding, he helps his clients receive direct appropriations from Congress.

Building on his decades of experience, in 2022, Rick published a humorous Washington novel, *Capitol Gains*, about a young lobbyist that goes rogue and creates a fictitious client. His second novel, *Capitol Losses*, will be released in the late summer of 2025.

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.

Areas of Experience

- Cannabis
- Energy and Infrastructure
- Federal Appropriations and Government Funding
- Financial Services
- Government Strategies
- 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

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.

Western Lands: Represents Nye County, Nevada, on a complex land bill which transfers federal lands for both environmental and economic development uses.

Federal Appropriations: Over the past two years, obtained more than \$50 million in federal appropriations.

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

- *Capitol Gains*, Author, Novel Published in August 2022
- *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