

Ex-NLRB Chair Returns To Morgan Lewis Employment Team

By Alison Knezevich

Law360 (January 30, 2023, 4:42 PM EST) -- The former chairman of the National Labor Relations Board has returned to his longtime firm, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP, after leaving his government post in December.

John F. Ring rejoined Morgan Lewis as a partner in Washington to advise employers on a range of issues, the firm announced Monday. Ring worked for the firm for nearly 30 years before he was appointed to the board by President Donald Trump in 2018.



John Ring

He served on the NLRB from 2018 to 2022, chairing the board from April 2018 until January 2021.

Ring told Law360 in an email Monday that his decision to return to the firm "was not a difficult one," and that he was excited to be back.

"The firm's labor and employment practice has long been the best in the country and after almost 30 years at the firm prior to the NLRB, I have many colleagues that have become good friends," he said. "There are not many places where you can find both excellent lawyers and excellent people."

Ring, a Republican, led a board whose rulings labor advocates said eroded workers' rights, but business advocates saw as restoring stability to private-sector labor relations.

He also led efforts to clear out the agency's backlog, an initiative that brought the number of pending cases to its lowest level in decades.

"The NLRB is charged with maintaining an important balance in our labor law — protecting employees' rights on the one hand and upholding employer interests, including those of managing their businesses, on the other," Ring said. "I'm proud of the work the board did while I was chairman to restore the historic balance on a number of important issues."

Another former NLRB chairman, Philip Miscimarra, is also a partner at Morgan Lewis. Miscimarra served on the board from 2013 to 2017.

Additionally, partner Harry I. Johnson III was a member of the NLRB from 2013 to 2015.

Firm chair Jami McKeon touted the attorneys' experience in a statement, saying it gives clients "unparalleled insight and guidance in this most important area."

Ring told Law360 Pulse that he expects high-profile unionizations to continue and the NLRB "to have a heavy docket and a lot of activity."

Among the areas where employers should pay attention, he said, are the joint employer standard, the independent contractor standard, and efforts to make union organizing easier. The NLRB is proposing to update the two standards.

"Obviously for issues like joint employment and independent contracts, whole segments of the economy have structured their business arrangement under one set of rules, and a change could be very disruptive," Ring said. "This is a critical time for employers, and they need to be paying close attention to what the NLRB is doing."

Ring earned both his bachelor's and law degrees from the Catholic University of America.

--Additional reporting by Braden Campbell. Editing by Karin Roberts.