

President Trump Begins Reshaping the FEC

September 2017

President Donald Trump has made two important personnel announcements in recent days that will potentially impact the future composition of the six-member Federal Election Commission (FEC or Commission).

On September 7, the President announced the nomination of current Republican FEC Commissioner – and Wiley Rein alumnus – Matthew S. Petersen to serve as a federal district judge in Washington, D.C. Commissioner Petersen was unanimously nominated and confirmed to the FEC in June of 2008 and has spent nearly a decade helping to oversee the federal agency that administers our nation’s campaign finance laws. Prior to coming to the FEC, Commissioner Petersen had served as Republican chief counsel to the U.S. Senate in helping craft the Help America Vote Act of 2002. Commissioner Petersen is a 1999 graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law.

A few days later, the President announced his intent to nominate Texas lawyer James E. (Trey) Trainor III to fill Commissioner Petersen’s seat on the FEC. According to his biography, since graduating from Texas A&M Law School in 2002, Mr. Trainor has held several positions in state government, advised clients on election and ethics in private practice, and aided a pair of presidential campaigns. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Mr. Trainor’s term at the Commission would expire on April 20, 2023.

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