

RWL Government Relations and Lobbying Services

“RWL’s government relations group consistently ranks among Maryland’s top lobbyists for good reason. Their team approach, in-depth understanding of their clients’ interests, relationships at all levels of government and superb strategies are second to none.”

JOSEPH DE FRANCISS
Former President and CEO,
Maryland Jockey Club

Firm Overview and RWL Practice Groups

With offices located in the state capital of Annapolis, Baltimore, and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, RWL provides an important link to principal business, commercial and governmental centers.

Since its founding in 1989, RWL and its many attorneys have created an impressive record of service to the state and in the practice of law. As one of Maryland's first law firms to recognize that a client's legal issues can often be addressed through a comprehensive approach that may include all of the various branches of government, RWL has established itself in the areas of business and commercial transactions, administrative law, health care law, government relations, sports franchise law, procurement law, and complex litigation.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS

CANNABIS POLICY, ADMINISTRATIVE LAW AND LITIGATION

COMPLEX COMMERCIAL AND CIVIL LITIGATION

ELECTRONICALLY STORED INFORMATION (ESI)

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND LOBBYING

MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

NATIONAL PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

SPORTS LAW, GAMING AND FACILITIES

STATE CONTRACTING, PROCUREMENT AND BID PROTESTS

WHITE COLLAR CRIMINAL DEFENSE AND INVESTIGATIONS

Government Relations and Lobbying Services

Established in 1989, RWL has represented numerous local, national, and international businesses and non-profits before Maryland's state, county and local/municipal governments. On behalf of our clients, members of our government relations team regularly appear before the Governor's Office, executive branch agencies, the Maryland General Assembly, and various city government and county governments.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PRACTICE

RWL's Government Relations Practice integrates experienced legal analysis with a sophisticated understanding of administrative, legislative and procurement processes, providing clients with meaningful opportunities for success. We are recognized for our substantive approach, ability to develop creative solutions, and deep expertise with Maryland state, county, and local governments. RWL is well positioned to assist clients with government relations and lobbying efforts in Annapolis and throughout Maryland.

RWL pioneered the team approach to working with clients in Annapolis. Depending on client needs, additional team members will be brought on whenever the client will benefit from the team members' expertise, experience and relationships. .

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- New and Emerging Industries
- Business Development
- Technology and E-Commerce
- Communications
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Health Care and Human Services
- Natural Resources
- Board of Public Works
- Higher Education
- Energy Industry
- Real Estate
- Tax Policy
- Procurement
- Alcohol
- Government Contracts
- Transportation
- Gaming
- Election Law

Government Relations and Lobbying Services

PAST EXPERIENCE WITH HEALTH OCCUPATION ORGANIZATIONS

Over many years, RWL has represented several health occupation associations and provider groups in legislative and regulatory matters. These include: Maryland Optometric Association; Maryland Speech Language Hearing Association; Maryland Podiatric Society; Maryland Hospital Association; National Association of Chain Drug Stores; and organizations representing anesthesiologists, physical therapists, and other health professionals.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

When our clients' needs extend beyond the scope set forth in their proposal, they are able to engage our business, litigation, and contracts attorneys. RWL attorneys provide the firm's clients with creative solutions to their legal needs and objectives with sound legal and practical business advice. Our attorneys regularly appear before arbitration and mediation panels, state and federal trial courts, legislative hearings, the Board of Public Works, the Board of Contract Appeals, and the state and federal appellate courts.

REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since its inception, RWL has built an impressive track record working on complicated and nuanced client issues. As a result, the firm is consistently ranked as a one of the top firms in Annapolis.

- **Preakness Stakes** – The RWL government relations and litigation teams spearheaded a yearlong legislative and legal effort to keep the Second Jewel of the Triple Crown in Baltimore City, redevelop Pimlico and Laurel racetracks, and help advance the long-standing interests of the Park Heights Community. (See, Baltimore Sun article.)
- **Offshore Wind Energy** – RWL successfully advocated for legislation for our client to qualify for benefits of the federal Inflation Reduction Act – including funding which is essential to the development and continued growth of their Maryland offshore wind projects.
- **Modernization of State Alcohol Laws** – On behalf of Maryland's craft beer manufacturers, RWL launched a multi-year effort culminating in the modernization of the State's alcoholic beverage laws, including statutory reform of Maryland's beer franchise laws for the first time since 1974 and created a new hybrid category of alcohol regulation for mead, a honey-based alcoholic drink.

Government Relations and Lobbying Services

REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONT.)

- **Maryland State Spirit** – RWL advanced legislation that designated Maryland Rye Whiskey as the Maryland State Spirit. While symbolic, this legislation will help to put Maryland on the map for its Rye Whiskey production, as well as rye agricultural production – thus supporting Maryland manufacturing and agriculture sectors.
- **Budget Appropriations** – During the 2023 session budget process, RWL assisted several clients (including non-profit pro bono clients) to collectively receive more than 25 itemized appropriations in the State’s operating and capital budgets to support capital projects, operating support, one-time uses, and more.
- **Real Estate Ownership** – On behalf of a corporate real estate owner of manufactured housing communities, RWL worked with non-profit advocates, legislators, and other stakeholders to successfully craft nuanced legislation that protects the interests of both tenants and landowners while dissuading bad actors from entering the Maryland real estate market.
- **Healthcare** – Pharmaceutical Drug Prices – During the shortened 2020 legislative session, RWL successfully led a legislative effort with a national association to enact a first-in-the nation regulatory framework of a critical part of the pharmaceutical drug supply and payment chain. The legislation passed in Maryland now serves as model legislation throughout the Country.
- **Leading Positions on Legislative Matters** – The RWL government relations team also served in leadership roles advancing legislation to:
 - Modify Maryland corporate tax provisions related to foreign owned REITs.
 - Expand access to electronic health records for use in improving delivery and quality of health care for seniors.
 - Establish a process for Maryland’s casinos to renew gaming licenses upon the expiration of initial 15-year terms.
 - Establish a new regulatory framework for the regulation, sale and taxation of adult use cannabis effective July 1, 2023.
 - Modify health care claims payment practices to recognize federal coordination of benefits policies for Medicaid payors and providers.
 - Create liquor license special criteria for new economic development projects in Baltimore City.

Government Relations and Lobbying Services



ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION SERVICES

RWL works with clients to help them develop, coordinate and deliver their message to the Executive Branch, Legislature and relevant local governments. Our advocacy work includes assisting with grassroots organizing, direct lobbying, monitoring legislative activities, advising clients on the status of pending and anticipated measures, and analyzing the impact of legislative proposals on client interests. We also support our clients in their efforts to influence and win large procurements at the state and local level.



STRATEGIC CONSULTING

RWL provides strategic consulting services to identify relevant issues involving state and local governments. This includes experience led strategy development and issue analysis, and advice given on how each client can most effectively advocate to advance their objectives and realize their goals.



LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY MONITORING SERVICES

RWL provides extensive regulatory and legislative monitoring and tracking services for our clients during the Maryland General Assembly's Legislative Session (which commences annually in early January and runs through the early part of April), during the interim between sessions, and during any Special Sessions. This includes published legislative proposals, regulations, Executive Orders, agency bulletins and transmittals as well as numerous workgroups, budget hearings, committee meetings, Board of Public Works meetings, and government officials' press conferences and other events.



LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION AND COMMITTEE EVENTS

In addition to participating in national, regional, and statewide legislative conferences throughout the year, RWL has a long tradition of hosting legislators and other public officials at Committee and Delegation events during the Legislative Session in Annapolis. These events provide a relaxed and professional atmosphere in which our clients have an opportunity to interact with officials and members of the Maryland General Assembly and each other. Annually, RWL hosts approximately a dozen events. We encourage our clients to take advantage of these opportunities to gain insights and educate legislators.

Our Clients

Acentra Health (formerly CNSI)
Alterwood Health, Inc.
Altumint, Inc. (Optotrafic)
America Works of Maryland, Inc.
Ashley Addiction Treatment
Babe Ruth Birthplace and Museum
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO)
Berkshire Hathaway Energy GT&S, LLC (Cove Point)
Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann LLP
Brewers Association of Maryland
Brown Advisory
BSC America
Cable Telecommunications Association of MD, DE & DC
Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation
Canton Group, The
Catalis/Intuition
CBAC Gaming (Caesars Horseshoe Casino Baltimore)
Celebree School
CGI Technologies and Solutions Inc.
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company
Children's National Health System
Colonial Pipeline Company
Coppin State University Development Foundation
Curio Wellness
DentaQuest
Education Affiliates/Fortis College
Enterprise/Alamo/National Rental Cars
Envirotest Systems
Fair Hill Condominium Association
Fair Hill Foundation, Inc.
FedEx Corporation
Food & Friends, Inc.
Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park
Gaudenzia, Inc.
Google LLC and its Affiliates
GT Independence
H&R Block Management, LLC
HEVI (formerly Greenland Technologies)
Horizon Land Company
Humanim, Inc.
Incapsulate, LLC
JMI Equity
Land Preservation Trust (Shawan Downs)
Maryland Association of Realtors
Maryland Automobile Dealers Association
Maryland Care, Inc. (Maryland Physicians Care MCO)
Maryland Distillers Guild
Maryland Jockey Club (Pimlico, Laurel Park, Rosecroft)
Maryland Partnership for Prevention, Inc.
Maryland Tech Council
Maryland Wineries Association
Maximus
Medallia, Inc.
Meta Platforms, Inc. (Facebook)
Modern Living Solutions
Mount Vernon Place Conservancy
Nareit
Orsted North America Inc.
Pepco Holdings, Inc.
PGA of America
Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA)
Preakness Stakes®
Premium Cigar Retailers Association of Maryland
Real Time Medical Systems
Reed Group
Ripken Baseball
Roland Park Community Foundation
Scientific Games, LLC
Sheppard Pratt Health System
Skyline Technology Solutions
Spotless Brands
Story of Maryland, LLC
ThinkBig Networks LLC
Tufton Professional Baseball, LLC
TVI, Inc. (Savers)
UPMC Western Maryland
VALIC
Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association
Waste Management of Maryland

Meet the Team



OBIE CHINEMERE

Senior Government Relations Adviser
and Co-Chair of Government Relations
Division

- Received his bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.
- Currently working on his Masters of Public Administration at Villanova University.
- Regional Director, Office of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (2018-2020).
- Deputy Field Director, Ben Jealous for Governor (2018).
- Campaign Manager, Cory McCray for Senate (2017-2018).
- Community Liaison, Baltimore City Councilman Eric Costello (2015-2017).

Meet the Team



MATTHEW M. BOHLE

Senior Government Relations Adviser
and Co-Chair of Government
Relations Division

- Served as Regional Director for the Maryland House Democratic Caucus, in this capacity successfully oversaw and advised numerous House campaigns.
- Former Special Assistant to the Senate Majority Leader.
- Campaign Director for the Maryland Democratic Majority Slate.
- Managed several legislative races during the 2010 cycle that led to gains for the majority caucus against the backdrop of a national wave election year.
- Lobbied successfully on technology, telecommunications, tobacco, alcohol, business and nonprofit matters.
- Part of successful effort to resist new higher taxes on small businesses, specifically Maryland's premium Cigar stores.
- Successfully assisted Greenland Technologies Corporation in instituting a first in the nation grant fund for the purchase of zero-emission heavy equipment property (forklifts, loaders, diggers and the like) .
- Lead advocate for the Maryland Wineries Association in their successful effort to institute a capital development grant program for wineries and vineyards.

Meet the Team



MICHAEL V. JOHANSEN ESQ.

Administrative Partner

- Former staff counsel to Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee handling matters related to state and local taxes, retirement, and agency budgets.
- Experienced lobbyist on health care delivery systems, health insurance, and health occupations, including managed care, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, dental plans and pharmaceuticals.
- Team leader on multi-firm effort to preserve the Preakness Stakes in Maryland and to enact a statutory framework for a nearly \$400 million capital redevelopment effort for Maryland's racetracks.
- Counsel for automotive industries including new automobile dealers and rental car agencies.
- Lead lobbyist on legislation to authorize transportation network companies.
- Experienced gaming lobbyist representing lottery, casino, racetrack and sports wagering interests.
- Procurement counsel assisting entities on RFPs, bids and other offers of goods, services and construction to state and local governments.
- Counsel clients on state and local ethics laws, gift laws, campaign contribution compliance, election laws, and lobbying rules.

Meet the Team



JOEL D. ROZNER, ESQ.

Partner and Former Chair of
Government Relations Division

- Chair of Government Relations Division 2003-2018.
- 2019 Recipient of Maryland Government Relations Association's Outstanding Colleague Award.
- Former Chief of Staff for Prince George's County Executive Parris Glendening.
- Appointed by Anne Arundel County Executive Pittman to and currently serving on the Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors.
- Lead lobbyist in gaining approval for Orsted's offshore wind project.
- Lead lobbyist in gaining necessary approvals for Dominion's LNG export facility in Calvert County.
- Represented as co-lead lobbyist for Washington Redskins in their successful move to Prince George's County.
- Co-lead lobbyist on successful effort for first Maryland P3 project, (Baltimore Seagirt Marine Terminal facility).
- Campaign manager for various federal, state and local elections.

Meet the Team



CAMILLE G. FESCHE, ESQ.

Partner and Co-Chair of National
Practice Development Group

- Worked on Michael Bloomberg's first campaign for mayor of New York City. Analyst for team that created New York City's innovative 3-1-1 non-emergency phone number transforming New Yorkers' ability to communicate with their government and delivery of City services.
- Selected in 2017 to receive the Daily Record's VIP (Very Important Professional) List award.
- Lead lobbyist on successful passage of first-in-the-nation regulatory framework of critical part of the pharmaceutical drug supply and payment chain. Passage of the regulatory framework involving significant negotiations with legislators, regulators and opponents.
- Passed legislation is now serving as model legislation for other states.
- Lead lobbyist on creating new hybrid category of alcohol regulation for mead, a honey based alcoholic drink and oldest known form of consumable alcohol.
- Lead lobbyist on successful legislation modernizing trust law ensuring patients can access the full benefits of a Health Savings Account. The change in law allowed a company employing 150+ knowledge workers to remain headquartered in Maryland.
- Successfully represent clients on topics related to education, wind energy, utilities, healthcare, deathcare, information technology, the civil justice system, bond bills for non-profit organizations, and procurement matters.

Meet the Team



BRAD I. RIFKIN, ESQ.

Partner, Co-Chair of National Practice Development Group, and Co-Chair of Cannabis Policy, Administrative Law and Litigation Group

- Selected in 2021 to receive the Daily Record's VIP (Very Important Professional) List award. Ranked by Chambers & Partners in 2023 for State and Local Government Relations (USA – Nationwide).
- Represents clients with a wide array of statutory, regulatory, funding and procurement interests in industries ranging from alcohol manufacturing, automobile dealer, cannabis, casino-gaming, credit service businesses, energy, franchise laws, healthcare, innovative technology, insurance, investment services and platforms, non-profit organizations, rental cars, ride-sharing, ride-hailing, sports franchises and facilities.
- Successfully assisted clients navigating Maryland's budget process to obtain critical funding (both capital and operating).
- Lead lobbyist on successful passage of complex and high-profile medical cannabis legislation, expanding ownership rights and advancing in-state research capabilities for licensees in partnership with academic institutions. In addition, worked with industry colleagues, legislators and staff on the development of Maryland's Adult Use program – including efforts to grandfather in of the existing medical industry.
- Lead lobbyist securing the successful passage of legislation modernizing alcoholic beverage laws on behalf of Maryland's craft beer manufacturers – including the statutory reform of Maryland's beer franchise laws for the first time since 1974. In addition, led the effort for the successful passage of legislation during COVID, granting Maryland distilleries and breweries the temporary right to direct ship their products using common carriers, to deliver their products using employees and to sell their products to-go without restrictive limits (law still in effect).
- Co-lead lobbyist on the successful passage of transformative legislation creating the first statutory and regulatory framework for peer-to-peer ridesharing in the nation.
- Lead lobbyist on successful passage of legislation creating a statutory framework for Maryland's private sector industrial hemp industry.
- Lead lobbyist on successful passage of legislation authorizing new class of street-legal vehicle in Maryland ("autocycle").
- Worked on successful passage of legislation that will keep the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore City, redeveloped Pimlico and Laurel racetracks, and helped advance the long-standing interests of the Park Heights community.
- Worked on the successful passage of legislation to enable sports wagering in Maryland.

Meet the Team



JOHN C. REITH
Chief Operating Officer

- Former Co-Chair of Government Relations.
- Responsible for Marketing and Business Development for RWL, LLC.
- Co-Chairman & Campaign Advisor for former Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
- Member of Maryland Governor Larry Hogan's 2015 Inaugural Committee.
- Co-Chair of Inaugural Committee for former Baltimore Mayor.
- RWL's lead lobbyist representing clients before the Governor's Office and State's agencies.
- Lobbyist on team representing Scientific Games in successful bid for Maryland Lottery contract.
- Lobbyist on multi-firm team effort (led by RWL) to preserve the Preakness Stakes in Maryland and to enact a statutory framework for a nearly \$400 million capital redevelopment effort for Maryland's racetracks.
- Represented various industries in Maryland, including schools, bank transaction companies, gaming, information technology, hospitals systems, health care companies, energy, real estate, alcohol manufacturing, engineering, infrastructure, transportation, bond bills for non-profit organizations and procurement.

Meet the Team



WILLIAM A. CASTELLI, ESQ.
Partner

- Twenty-five years of experience in government relations.
- Previous Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for the Maryland REALTORS®, one of the largest professional trade associations in Maryland.
- Successfully lobbied bills and regulations impacting real property, professional licensing, land-use, environmental law, landlord-tenant law, state taxes, and common ownership communities.
- Lead lobbyist on legislation reforming Maryland's property tax law which triggered the return of hundreds of millions of dollars back to Maryland residential mortgage holders.
- Lead lobbyist in establishing tax free Homebuyer Savings Accounts.
- Lead lobbyist for permanently extending Mortgage debt tax forgiveness for property owners facing foreclosure.
- Lead lobbyist in making the Real Estate Commission a special fund supported Commission.
- Lead lobbyist in passing a comprehensive reform of the Real Estate Brokerage Act.
- Lead lobbyist in establishing a notice process in the land records for older easements on property. Key lobbyist in passing legislation permitting remote notarization in Maryland.
- Lobbied to establish a priority lien for common ownership communities.
- Lobbied numerous short term rental laws.
- Lead lobbyist in passing legislation requiring a Maryland Department of Environment grant for septic upgrades imposed on Maryland homeowners.
- Lobbied numerous amendments to landlord tenant bills.
- Lobbied amendments on environment, zoning and land use legislation.
- Past president of the Maryland Government Relations Association.

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