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Cooley Nabs Ex-FCC Privacy, Telecom Pro From Boies Schiller

By Allison Grande

Law360 (January 8, 2019, 8:44 PM EST) -- Cooley LLP has picked up a Boies Schiller Flexner LLP partner with significant cybersecurity, privacy and telecom litigation and policy experience garnered through his work spearheading enforcement activities at the Federal Communications Commission and the California attorney general's office.

Travis LeBlanc began work on Monday at Cooley, where he will split his time between Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. He brings with him more than a decade of experience working on cutting-edge cybersecurity, data privacy, telecom and tech issues, both in private practice and at various state and federal government agencies.



Travis LeBlanc

"As our global litigation bench grows in stature, we are excited to bring on a talented and proven next-generation litigator like Travis," Mike Attanasio, chair of Cooley's global litigation department, told Law360 on Tuesday. "His practice perfectly complements our best-in-class cyber/data/privacy group while continuing the extraordinary growth of our East Coast litigation practice."

LeBlanc joins Cooley from Boies Schiller, where **he had practiced** since departing from his role as FCC Enforcement Bureau Chief in early 2017. LeBlanc told Law360 that while he enjoyed his time at Boies Schiller, he couldn't pass up the opportunity to work at Cooley, which has deep roots in Silicon Valley as well as a growing footprint on the East Coast and globally.

"For me, this was a decision based on what platform would ultimately better assist my practice in growing," LeBlanc said. "I generally work at the intersection of privacy and telecom, and there's not another firm that has a stronger footprint working on these issues than Cooley."

LeBlanc characterized Cooley as "the law firm of the future," a nod to the firm's cutting-edge work on legal issues ranging from artificial intelligence and blockchain to robotics and unmanned vehicles — areas for which regulatory regimes have sometimes yet to be established and the laws were often crafted for entirely different business models.

"The law in this area is constantly changing and sometimes not even set yet, so to have the ability to not only be able to work on these issues of the future but also to shape the future of the law is exciting to me and something that's at the heart of what Cooley does," LeBlanc said.

LeBlanc said that he's planning to work with both new and existing clients primarily in the tech, telecom and media industries on their regulatory challenges and litigation needs. These issues include **the looming implementation** of California's landmark Consumer Privacy Act, which is set to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2020, and will require a broad range of companies to be more forthright about how they're using and selling consumers' personal information.

"The states are way more active on a lot of these cyber, privacy and data issues than they were a decade ago and in many ways are spearheading what legal and regulatory regime will govern across the country, and the California Consumer Privacy Act is a perfect example of that," LeBlanc said,

adding that he would recommend that companies take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the upcoming public hearings that the state's attorney general has scheduled as part of an effort to set regulations under the law.

LeBlanc added that he is also looking forward to working with fellow Cooley partner and former FCC Commissioner Rob McDowell and the rest of the firm's telecom team on issues ranging from net neutrality and merger reviews to the rollout of 5G and broadband privacy.

In working on these issues, LeBlanc is likely to draw heavily from his experience in the public sector, which includes stints as the FCC's Enforcement Bureau Chief from 2014 to 2017, as senior adviser to then-California Attorney General Kamala Harris from 2011 to 2013 — during which time he set up the state's first high-tech crime and privacy enforcement units — and as an attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel at the beginning of the Obama administration.

He was also tapped by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the European Commission in 2017 to be an arbitrator for the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield data transfer framework and was nominated in August to serve as one of five appointees to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, an independent agency that provides oversight of the counterterrorism programs and activities of the federal government.

"There are very few folks in private practice that have both state AG and federal regulatory experience, and that work has helped me understand the way the government operates and the actors involved," LeBlanc said, adding that his work has enabled him to interact with every state attorney general as well as a wide range of federal agencies, and that only one other former FCC enforcement chief is currently in private practice.

Before entering private practice, LeBlanc clerked for Ninth Circuit Judge Stephen Reinhardt. He earned a J.D. from Yale Law School, LL.M. from the University of Cambridge, M.P.A. from Harvard Kennedy School and A.B. from Princeton University.

Michael Rhodes, the chair of Cooley's cyber/data/privacy group, in a press release emphasized LeBlanc's "perfect fit with the firm's comprehensive and globally recognized international team, which guides both startups and multinational companies in all aspects of the use, monetization and protection of data."

LeBlanc welcomed the opportunity to work on these issues in his new role at Cooley, saying that he was gratified to be joining the firm at a time when both the law and technology in this space are constantly evolving.

"The cyberthreats that were present five years ago are not the same cyberthreats that we're seeing today, and the way that society relies on technology is changing as well," LeBlanc said. "This innovation is at the center of the practice of law at Cooley, and that's why I'm really excited to join this platform and help it grow."

--Editing by Alanna Weissman.