

Who's Repping Chris Carr and Charlie Bailey, Georgia's AG Candidates?

Over the past 18 months or so, Republican Attorney General Chris Carr has turned to a couple of high-powered political law firms for campaign-related legal work. In contrast, Democratic opponent Charlie Bailey has eschewed outside legal help, relying instead on his campaign general consultant and counsel, the Daily Report learned by examining publicly available campaign expenditure reports.

For two lawyers, Georgia attorney general candidates Charlie Bailey and Chris Carr have pretty different backgrounds. And, as it turns out, pretty stark differences in how they've lawyered up in their respective campaigns for the AG position.

Republican Carr, the attorney general since November 2016, has turned to a couple of high-powered political law firms. But Democrat Bailey, a Fulton County senior assistant district attorney in the gang unit until he stepped down last February to run, has kept it all in-house.

The Daily Report examined campaign expenditure reports from Bailey and Carr to see which law firms their campaigns paid for legal services between Jan. 1 of last year and the present. A caveat: Publicly available reports on candidate spending do not extend past March 31 of this year, and the next report is not due out until June 30. Therefore, the list is likely not comprehensive. (The Daily Report conducted a similar analysis of Georgia gubernatorial campaigns' legal spending last month.)

The expenditure reports do not name specific lawyers or indicate the type of work performed, but, in some cases, the firms opted to fill in the blanks for us.

Chris Carr

According to the online expenditure reports, Carr's campaign paid \$11,000 in legal fees between May 2017 and January 2018 to litigation and political law firm Chalmers Burch & Adams, based locally in Alpharetta and Johns Creek.

"Candidates have political law compliance obligations, and we are advising the Carr campaign with respect to those sorts of matters," managing member Doug Chalmers said in a Tuesday interview.

In addition to his colleague, member Carolyn "Tippi" Cain Burch, Chalmers said that **Vincent Russo** of Atlanta litigation firm **Robbins Ross Alloy Belinfante Littlefield** also has worked on legal issues associated with Carr's campaign.

Carr and Chalmers, he said, go back several years, to when the pair worked together at Alston & Bird and formed a personal relationship.

In the years since, the politically connected Chalmers has represented: former state representative BJay Pak, now U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Georgia; then-Georgia Court of Appeals Judge and current state Supreme Court Justice Michael Boggs, who was turned down for a federal judgeship in 2014 after vigorous opposition from Democrats in Congress; and Mike Huckabee in his presidential campaign, according to a July 2015 profile of Chalmers' firm by the Daily Report.

In addition to candidates, Chalmers advises the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and other chambers, trade associations and nonprofit organizations on complying with the federal and state laws governing political activity such as campaign finance, lobbying and election law, the report said.

Carr also has turned to Dentons—paying the global megafirm with one of the oldest political law practices in Atlanta a little more than \$15,760 between February 2017 and this past February, according to his campaign's publicly available expenditure reports.

Benjamin Keane, a Washington, D.C.-based partner, now leads Dentons' political law team, which generally serves as legal counsel to various campaigns.

Keane could not be reached for comment about his work with the Carr campaign.

Charlie Bailey

At the other end of the spectrum, Bailey did not expend any campaign funds for legal purposes, according to his online campaign expenditure reports.

He relied instead on campaign general consultant and counsel Jeff DiSantis, who said in an interview Tuesday that there have not been a lot of legal matters for Bailey to date. DiSantis added that setting up the campaign and dealing with the usual compliance requirements has been the extent of his campaign-related legal work for the Democratic candidate.

Although DiSantis is not from a local political law powerhouse firm, he is by no means a stranger to Georgia politics. The lawyer is a former executive director of the Georgia Democratic Party and served as the manager of Vincent Fort's failed bid for mayor of Atlanta, Michelle Nunn's unsuccessful run for U.S. Senate and, most recently, Stacey Evans' failed quest to be the state Democratic gubernatorial nominee.