

Robert M. McDowell

Partner



Washington, DC
1299 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004

t: +1 202 842 7862
f: +1 202 842 7899
rmcdowell@cooley.com

Communications Regulatory
Communications
Digital Media & Entertainment
Mergers & Acquisitions
Telecommunications & Wireless
Technology

Rob McDowell advises telecommunications, media and technology clients on their most significant regulatory, legal and business matters. As a former commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and a highly regarded industry leader, Rob has been at the forefront of the most complex and groundbreaking issues facing telecommunications.

Rob was first appointed to the FCC by President George W. Bush in 2006 and again by President Obama in 2009. He was unanimously confirmed both times by the US Senate. During his tenure, Rob led efforts to expand consumer access to spectrum through his work on the two largest wireless auctions in US history at the time, played a key role in the 2009 digital television transition and led efforts to establish the first federal civil rights rule in a generation by creating a ban on racially discriminatory practices in broadcast advertising. He also worked extensively on several large and complex mergers, including Sirius/XM and Comcast/NBC-Universal.

He is an advocate for internet freedom, serving on the US delegation to the 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications and exposing an international bid to regulate vital aspects of the Internet through multilateral treaty-based organizations. Rob authored an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal opposing multilateral internet regulation that led to a resolution passed unanimously in the House and Senate, as well as the ultimate defeat of the international bid at a treaty negotiation in Dubai later that year.

Prior to the FCC, Rob was senior vice president for CompTel, the Competitive Telecommunications Association, where he led advocacy efforts before several government agencies, the White House and Congress.

Rob is often called upon for speaking engagements and frequently appears on TV and radio. He has written opinion pieces for many high-profile publications, including the Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.

Education

- William & Mary Law School
JD, 1990, Order of the Barristers

- Duke University
BA, 1985, cum laude

Bar Admissions

- Virginia
- District of Columbia

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- Supreme Court of Virginia
- U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia
- U.S. Court of Appeals, First Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia

Memberships

- Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, Board of Visitors
- McLean Project for the Arts, Former Chairman and Board Member
- The Hudson Institute, Senior Fellow
- The Media Institute, Chair, Global Free Speech and the Internet Advisory Council
- The Potomac School, Board of Directors