

Joseph G. Poluka | Partner
White Collar Defense &
Investigations

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Joe Poluka is a defense attorney with extensive experience in representing clients in the investigation and defense of a wide variety of criminal, civil, and regulatory matters, including complex fraud related to securities, financial institutions, healthcare practitioners, employee conduct, political corruption, taxation, and the environment. He conducts internal investigations and advises executives and corporate clients on the financial, reputational, and criminal impact of violations, while helping them mitigate or eliminate such losses.

As a former Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Joe brings a rich prosecutorial experience to his clients. He has received numerous awards for his investigation and prosecution of complex white collar fraud and corruption matters, including bribery, embezzlement, environmental crimes, export (Trading with the Enemy Act), insider trading, and terrorism crimes.

While at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Joe also served as the deputy chief of the Violent Crimes, Terrorism & Immigration Fraud Section, as well as the coordinator of the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council ("ATAC"), consisting of over 85 local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies that coordinate information sharing and cooperation on terrorism matters. He also was the USA PATRIOT Act spokesperson for the Eastern District.

Joe is a sought-out speaker on anti-terrorism matters and other white collar topics for, among others, the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Association of Audit Committee Members, Inc., Temple University, and the American Conference Institute's FDA Boot Camp. He also has appeared on American Law Journal TV, most recently in 2015 on "White-Collared": Is the Department of Justice Targeting Corporate Executives?"

Recently, Joe was retained, on a bipartisan basis, by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to serve as independent counsel to the Judiciary Committee in connection with House Resolution 659 of 2016, which authorized the Committee to investigate the conduct of Attorney General Kathleen Kane to determine whether she was liable to impeachment for misbehavior in office, which investigation was concluded following her conviction on state criminal charges.

Select Engagements

- A high-level executive, in a hazardous waste investigation.
- A nonprofit corporation, in a political corruption grand jury investigation.
- A corporate executive charged with federal securities violations.
- An automobile dealership, in an investigation of state ethics law violations.
- Accountants, in tax fraud grand jury investigations and trials.
- Secured a probationary sentence for an individual charged with a federal bribery violation.
- Conducted an internal investigation and represented a financing company victim in a \$500 million scheme to defraud.
- An individual and corporate victims of an employee fraud.
- A publicly traded corporation, in an options backdating investigation.
- A major medical device manufacturer, in criminal and related proceedings involving an off-label promotion.
- An individual who was granted immunity in a federal bank fraud grand jury investigation.
- Member of the appeals team that successfully overturned a death penalty sentence for an individual on death row in Pennsylvania.
- A wholesale distributor of cigarettes, in federal forfeiture, state tax, and state grand jury proceedings.
- Secured a corporate plea for a materials distributor in a public entity billing fraud.
- A public entity, in a federal environmental grand jury investigation.
- A law firm, in a state grand jury investigation alleging billing fraud.
- A corporation, in forfeiture proceedings stemming from an alleged structuring.
- A victim bank, in a federal grand jury investigation and parallel civil litigation.
- Individuals, in a federal grand jury investigation of a failed bank.
- An individual, in an alleged bribery fraud involving drug co-pays by a charitable organization.
- A bank and individuals, in Operation Choke Point investigations.
- Individuals, in “payday lending” investigations.

Admissions

- Pennsylvania
- United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- District of Columbia

Memberships

- Federal Criminal Law Committee for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
- Phi Beta Kappa Society
- The National Trial Lawyers

Education

- Cornell University, BA, cum laude
- Harvard Law School, JD, cum laude

Recognitions

- AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell
- 2018–2024, Criminal Defense: White-Collar, Philadelphia, listed in *Best Lawyers in America*®
- 2021, “Criminal Defense - Top 100” for Pennsylvania, listed by National Trial Lawyers
- 2020, “Best of the Bar: White-Collar Criminal Defense Litigation,” listed by the *Philadelphia Business Journal*
- 2018, 2020, listed in Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll
- 2007–2016, First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Pro Bono Roll of Honor
- 2015, “Top Rated Lawyer in White-Collar Criminal Defense,” by American Lawyer Media
- 2015, “Top Rated Lawyer in Labor & Employment,” by American Lawyer Media
- 2014, “Top Rated Lawyer in Philadelphia,” by American Lawyer Media
- 2014 Blank Rome Pro Bono “Hero” Award
- “Top Investigations Lawyer,” by *The International Who’s Who of Investigations Lawyers & Forensic Experts*
- Commendations from:
 - United States Customs Service (2002)
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation (2001)
 - United States Postal Inspection Service (1998)
 - Pennsylvania State Police (1997)
 - Drug Enforcement Administration (1994)

Professional Activities

Joe is a Master at the University of Pennsylvania Law School American Inn of Court. He is active in The Phi Beta Kappa Society, where he served as a senator from 2008–2009 and as president of the Mid-Atlantic District from 2006–2015. He is a member of the Federal Criminal Law Committee for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Joe also is on the Steering Committee for FAUSA-EDPA, which reunites former AUSAs from the Philadelphia office. He also sat on Lower Merion School District’s School Safety Task Force (2013), focusing on school security.

In addition, Joe has provided pro bono and other services for The Pennsylvania Innocence Project, Clemency Project 2014, and various Senior Law Centers. He also has been involved in a decade-long pro bono representation of a death row inmate whose death penalty conviction was vacated (2008), and whose underlying conviction remains on appeal.

Joe has been a Mentor for the Legal Council on Legal Diversity's Success in Law School Mentoring Program since 2016.