

# Corporate and Social Governance and Investigations

## Overview

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Companies and their stakeholders are becoming increasingly attuned to the importance of social and equity issues to their operations and communities. As companies recognize and embrace the business imperative of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), they are incorporating these values into their operations. Katten's Corporate and Social Governance and Investigations team helps companies evaluate and audit their operations, providing in-depth, independent assessments of their impact on, among other things, diversity, racial equity and human rights. Through these assessments, Katten partners with companies to identify areas for growth, implement enhancements to their practices, and counsel on any needed remedial steps.

### A history of advising on DEI matters

Katten's Corporate and Social Governance and Investigations team has advised clients on a number of DEI-related matters, including board composition, creating DEI programs, bolstering those programs and remediating DEI-related shortcomings. Racial equity audits, civil rights audits, human rights audits and DEI reviews are powerful tools that enable companies to meet (and exceed) their social responsibility goals. Our attorneys are experienced at conducting complex audits involving sensitive matters and counseling companies on the myriad of issues that may stem from those audits.

We understand that every audit in this area must be tailored to the company undergoing the audit, and thus, we look closely at a wide range of areas with respect to racial equity, human rights and civil rights. At the conclusion of our audits, clients get a snapshot of how their DEI processes fit within the market with the advantage of benchmarking to inform actionable next steps. Additionally, our team can conduct compliance reviews needed for investments and other transactions.

The Corporate and Social Governance and Investigations team is highly experienced in assessing these issues and providing sound counsel that is informative and actionable for the company. Having resources and information at the ready is critical, whether a public company is facing shareholder activism or a private company is looking to advance its strategic DEI goals or wants assistance with environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG)-related diligence for, among other things, acquisitions, social impact litigation or regulatory risks. Katten operates at the forefront in this space and we understand the positive business implications for companies committed to making social responsibility a core element of their operations.

## A strong team backed by diverse experience

The Corporate and Social Governance and Investigations team at its core draws on a robust background in compliance and criminal and internal investigations. This investigatory prowess and policy experience enables us to provide efficient and effective counsel. Our multidisciplinary team includes ESG-certified attorneys, a former federal prosecutor and senior Department of Justice (DOJ) official, former senior counsel in the SEC Enforcement Division, in addition to several partners with vast DEI experience. With a deep bench that includes White Collar and Internal Investigations, Employment Litigation and Counseling, and ESG attorneys, Katten is well-positioned to help clients address policy concerns and mitigate risks that may be surfaced in an audit.

Additionally, our attorneys have deep experience in working with and responding to government regulators. While government regulators have generally focused on the environmental component of ESG, it is clear that regulators in the United States and abroad have the social and governance components of ESG on their radars. Katten is closely monitoring regulatory and enforcement trends and can support companies by ensuring the proper protocols and disclosures are in place for compliance, as well as helping respond to government inquiries or related litigation.

## Key Contacts

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## Recognitions

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*Recognized or listed in the following:*

- *Chambers USA*
  - Litigation: White-Collar Crime and Government Investigations
    - Illinois, 2007–2022
  - Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations: Highly Regarded
    - New York, 2021-2022
  - Litigation: White-Collar Crime and Government Investigations
    - Texas, 2022
- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Corporate Investigations and White-Collar Criminal Defense, 2016–2022
- *U.S. News Best Lawyers – "Best Law Firms"*
  - Criminal Defense: White-Collar
    - National, 2016–2023
    - Chicago, 2013–2023
    - Los Angeles, 2016–2018
    - Washington, DC, 2013–2018