

# Wiley Rein's Michael Toner Profiled in Cornell University Law School's "Spotlights"

*Cornell University Law School*

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Michael Toner, co-chair of Wiley Rein's Election Law & Government Ethics Practice, was interviewed by Cornell University Law School for a "Spotlights" profile that offered an insider's view of the election process.

Mr. Toner, a former chairman of the U.S. Federal Election Commission, said the U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United* ruling has "demystified the process" of independent advocacy for candidates. He said election law intrigues him because it constantly changes.

"We're now in a more deregulatory era, while 10 years ago the McCain-Feingold law expanded election regulation," he said. "In 5 or 10 years, we'll likely be in some other era. It's unpredictable because there are so many institutional actors – the legislature, the courts, the FEC."

Mr. Toner, who also worked as general counsel of the 2000 Bush-Cheney presidential campaign, described that role as "a high wire act."

"Campaigns have all the legal problems of a startup company, with the goal of spending every dime by November," he said. While he was hired to ensure that the campaign complied with election law, he also handled situations such as obtaining insurance for skydivers appearing at a campaign event.

"That's the kind of craziness you deal with," Mr. Toner said. "You work 60- to 70-hour weeks, but you make extraordinary personal and professional friends. I have a lot of friends on the Democratic side

## Related Professionals

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## Practice Areas

Election Law & Government Ethics

who will say the same – you go through that together, you've bonded forever."

Mr. Toner serves on the Board of Trustees of the American Council of Young Political Leaders, whose alumni include members of Congress and state governors. The group runs international exchange programs for young leaders.

"In their early years, young politicians are a lot more approachable," Mr. Toner said. "And they look back on those experiences as formative. I find that very appealing. As the world shrinks, that kind of knowledge is vital."