

POLITICO Quotes Matthew Sanderson on LIV and Gitcho Goodwin FARA Registration

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POLITICO Influence

FARA FRIDAY: The first FARA registration explicitly on behalf of the Saudi-funded golf league LIV will soon be terminated, but experts on the statute say it almost certainly won't be the last, and they also predict that the backlash Gitcho Goodwin faced following its retroactive registration likely won't scare off others who might now be feeling more hesitant to do so.

"I would be highly surprised" if Gitcho Goodwin was "the last LIV vendor to register" under FARA, said Matthew Sanderson, an attorney at Caplin & Drysdale who advises clients on the law. At the very least, he said, Gitcho Goodwin's registration, which the firm said was filed "out of an abundance of caution," is sure to trigger a review within the Justice Department of other entities working for the upstart league.

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At the very least, the throng of other well-connected Washington firms working for LIV can likely expect letters of inquiry from DOJ to determine whether they have any obligation to register, said Sanderson. "The natural question is, if one vendor who is doing highly similar work chose to register, why have the others not?" Before Gitcho Goodwin, HHQ Ventures' registration under the more opaque Lobbying Disclosure Act made it the only registered firm in town.

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Either way, Gitcho Goodwin "was essentially put in a box" by LIV's litigation with the rival PGA Tour, which is cited in Gitcho Goodwin's FARA filing, Sanderson told PI, and Rosenstein noted that less formal suggestions of an entity's qualification as a "foreign principal" in the eyes of FARA have resulted in registrations.

The firm's conclusion that it would rather be safe than sorry and register "doesn't provide one a lot of wiggle room — if any — to be able to say that a FARA exemption applies," said Sanderson. Paired with DOJ's crackdown on FARA enforcement, he added, their move to register "was understandable."

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Compared to the not-so-distant past, the stakes of choosing not to register are "a lot higher," said Sanderson, who added that on a positive note, Gitcho Goodwin has "likely taken any legal liability off the table and the reputational risk is likely to pass rather quickly."

For the full article, please visit *POLITICO's* website.

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