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Saul Ewing Brings Aboard Bankruptcy Partner in NYC, Government Contracts Partner in DC

Former Barclay Damon attorney Scott Fleischer will help bring about some new creditor-side bankruptcy work for the firm in New York City while Sandeep Kathuria, from Ice Miller, will offer his expertise on government contracting in the nation's capital.

July 01, 2026 at 03:35 PM By **Jon Campisi**

Scott Fleischer (L) and Sandeep Kathuria (R) of Saul Ewing. Courtesy photos

What You Need to Know

- New Saul Ewing partner Sandeep Kathuria expects to be busy in the coming months due to changes with regard to the government procurement system.
- Scott Fleischer, who also joined Saul Ewing as a partner this month, was drawn to the 'full-service atmosphere' at the firm. He will be based in New York City while Kathuria is in Washington, D.C.
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Saul Ewing this week announced that it has expanded its government contracts group in the nation's capitol with the addition of partner Sandeep Kathuria, and the firm also brought on Scott Fleischer in New York City to be a partner in the firm's bankruptcy and restructuring group.

In Washington, D.C., Kathuria brings more than two decades of experience as a senior in-house lawyer for major defense contractors, IT and telecom companies, and a defense tech startup, according to the firm. He primarily advises clients on complex government contracts issues, cybersecurity and technology law, and his practice includes advising on a number of cybersecurity matters. He joined the firm from Ice Miller.

Jason McElroy, the D.C. office managing partner, said Saul Ewing was excited to bring on someone of Kathuria's caliber.

"Clients who operate in markets that are highly regulated by the government and get their work from federal agencies will appreciate the insight he brings from a career built in and around government contracting," McElroy said in a statement.

Kathuria most recently served as senior counsel at Ice Miller for just under two years, according to his LinkedIn bio, and most of his experience has been in-house roles.

Reached for comment on Kathuria's departure, an Ice Miller spokesperson issued the following statement: "We wish Sandeep the best in his new position."

In addition to his government-related work, Kathuria also runs a corporate practice that includes negotiation of transactions, support in mergers and acquisitions and advice on corporate compliance, artificial intelligence and intellectual property, according to Saul Ewing.

In an interview, Kathuria said he was excited to be joining Saul Ewing and was primarily attracted to the firm due to its platform.

"I think it's an excellent fit for my practice," he said.

Kathuria said the D.C. office is growing to the point where the firm plans to move into a larger space a few blocks away from the current location likely sometime later this month.

"It's a great opportunity to grow my practice as well as grow with the firm and the D.C. office at Saul Ewing," he said.

Meanwhile, the firm said its addition of new partner Fleischer in New York from Barclay Damon will help beef up its bankruptcy and restructuring capabilities.

While the firm has done a lot of work on the debtor side, Fleischer said his addition will help round out the bankruptcy practice with more creditor-focused matters.

Fleischer runs a national practice representing owners and developers of shopping centers and malls in cases where tenants file Chapter 11 cases or default on their leases.

He has experience representing multi-landlord groups in retail and restaurant matters, including lease obligations, cure disputes, sales processes and claims and Subchapter V issues. He also advises landlords on pre-bankruptcy strategy and enforcement, including lease amendments and termination agreements.

"It creates a much more full-service atmosphere," Fleischer said in an interview. "And it's something where I'm going to try to leverage the relationships I've made, not just with the legal people, and my clients, but the business teams as well that maybe don't have as much access in what I do on a daily basis but are in the weeds."

Jeffrey Hampton, who chairs Saul Ewing's bankruptcy and restructuring practices, said Fleischer has developed a strong niche practice, and his addition to the firm should serve as a "true value-add for our clients, especially in the retail industry, and is an excellent complement to the firm's work for the real estate industry."

Fleischer most recently served as a partner in the bankruptcy and commercial litigation practice at Barclay Damon in New York, and before that was a bankruptcy and restructuring associate at Kelley Drye & Warren, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Reached for comment on the departure, Barclay Damon's managing director of major markets offered the following statement: "We wish Scott well and look forward to seeing him in years to come across the table in bankruptcy proceedings throughout the country."

Hampton, in his statement, said that, "Scott has developed a strong niche bankruptcy practice, and his concurrent representation of landlord clients allows him to bring economies of scale and efficiencies to his work."

Fleischer said after seven years at his prior firm, he was looking for more support from a bankruptcy practice perspective and saw a very good opportunity in a move to Saul Ewing.

"I also wanted to have much more of a complementary practice presence throughout the platform and have a bigger geographic platform for that," Fleischer said. "So, when I was evaluating things, I didn't leave for one firm in particular, it was more so the components of a firm I was looking for."

During his research, Fleischer said Saul Ewing stood out from the crowd in terms of having a decent sized bankruptcy group across offices, a large real estate bench across jurisdictions and the "marketing, entrepreneurial sort of mindset."

"Once I had those components in mind I sort of landed on Saul pretty clearly and then went through the interview process and found nothing but more of the same and have found the same since I've gotten here," Fleischer said.

As for Kathuria, he expects to be quite busy in the ensuing months as it is currently an "exciting time in government contracting because we're seeing policy changes from the administration that are designed to bring in new entrants."

"I'm working with a lot of those smaller startups that are breaking into defense contracting, as well as with larger companies that are trying to adapt to the new environment," Kathuria said. "That's going to force the larger companies to become leaner, more agile, more efficient, and the regulations are changing to align with that."

Kathuria predicts that "we're going to fewer rules in some areas and more rules in others and it's just very important to stay on top of everything that's changing."

"This administration has put out a series of executive orders designed to change the government procurement system, and that will bring in newer capabilities to fight wars, the wars of the future," he said. "Venture capital-backed companies are going to have a much better opportunity to get and sustain their businesses and … the large companies are also staying quite busy trying to ramp up production, so just a lot of transformation going on at once in a number of different areas."