

Meet The Special Counsel Probing Biden's Classified Docs

By **Katie Buehler**

Law360 (January 13, 2023, 4:27 PM EST) -- U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland has appointed Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP partner and U.S. Department of Justice veteran Robert K. Hur as special counsel to oversee a probe into the handling of classified documents found at two locations related to President Joe Biden.

Garland touted Hur's "long and distinguished" career as a federal prosecutor, which dates back to 2003, as one of the main reasons for tapping him to lead the high-profile investigation. Hur's peers told Law360 his work ethic, judgment and intellect will also help him complete the job.



Robert K. Hur

Garland said Hur will have the complete resources of the Justice Department at his disposal to determine if documents found at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement think tank in Washington, D.C., and Biden's Wilmington, Delaware, home were mishandled.

"I will conduct the assigned investigation with fair, impartial, and dispassionate judgment. I intend to follow the facts swiftly and thoroughly, without fear or favor, and will honor the trust placed in me to perform this service," Hur said in a statement.

Hur has extensive experience in government work, having served more than 15 years at different levels within the Justice Department. He was most recently former President Donald Trump's appointee for U.S. attorney for the District of Maryland, a position he held from 2018 to 2021.

As Maryland's top federal prosecutor, Hur formed the office's first National Security and Cybercrime Section, which prosecuted several defendants — including a former National Security Agency contractor — for crimes related to terrorism, national security and data breaches.

In March 2019, Hur's office secured a guilty plea from former NSA contractor Harold Martin, who hoarded classified information at his home, in a shed and in his car for the two decades he worked with federal intelligence agencies. During his time as a contractor, Martin stole a total of 50 terabytes of digital documents from the agencies, including the NSA. He was sentenced to nine years in prison for willful retention of national defense information.

Hur was the principal associate deputy attorney general in Maryland when the office obtained a guilty plea from former NSA employee Nghia Hoang Pho in December 2017. Pho admitted to collecting

classified national security information, some of which had top secret or sensitive compartmented information labels, at his Maryland home while he was a Tailored Access Operations developer. He was sentenced to more than five years in prison for willful retention of national defense information.

Hur also oversaw the prosecution of former Baltimore and Maryland state officials for corruption and fraud charges during his time as top federal prosecutor.

During Hur's tenure, former Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh was charged with and pled guilty to conspiracy and tax evasion charges stemming from her alleged fraudulent scheme to oversell, then under-deliver, her "Healthy Holly" children's books. Pugh was sentenced in February 2020 to three years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$400,000 in restitution.

Additionally, Hur oversaw the prosecution of former Maryland House of Delegates Baltimore-area delegate Cheryl Diane Glenn, who pled guilty in January 2020 to accepting bribes to support the expansion of the state's number of medical marijuana licenses. Glenn was sentenced to two years in prison in July 2020.

Other local officials prosecuted under Hur's watch include former Baltimore Police Commissioner Darryl DeSousa, former Maryland delegate Tawanna Gaines, former Maryland state senator Nathaniel Oaks, and several former Baltimore Police Department officers.

When he wasn't at the Justice Department, Hur worked at King & Spalding LLP from 2005 to 2007 and returned to the firm as partner in 2014, where he stayed until he rejoined the DOJ in 2017. From 2021 until his appointment as special counsel, Hur was a partner at Gibson Dunn and helped lead the firm's crisis management practice group. His profile on the firm's website has been removed.

Hur "has excelled in every professional endeavor, and we are confident that he will discharge his responsibilities as special counsel with the same impeccable judgment and tireless work ethic that he has exhibited throughout his career," Gibson Dunn partner F. Joseph Warin said. "We know that [Hur] will bring his enormous skills to this very important undertaking."

Crowell & Moring LLP partner Steve McBrady said Hur's reputation for being hard-working and fair-minded precedes him in both the legal and political spheres.

"He's a great person and a great lawyer," McBrady said. "You would trust Rob to tackle the most important cases, or to walk your elderly grandmother across the street."

Hur earned his law degree from Stanford Law School and his undergraduate degree from Harvard. He clerked for former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist as well as former Ninth Circuit Judge Alex Kozinski.

--Editing by Adam LoBelia.