



**Joseph E. Houchin**  
Member

T (984) 222.8104  
F (888) 360.9092  
jehouchin@kaufcan.com

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Joe is a Member in the firm's Raleigh office and Chair of the White-Collar Defense and Investigations Practice Group where he represents clients under investigation or charged with criminal offenses in state and federal court. He has achieved favorable results for clients facing a variety of white-collar crimes including healthcare fraud, government/military procurement fraud, tax fraud, embezzlement, computer trespass, and other types of alleged corporate malfeasance. Joe has helped clients avoid criminal charges altogether by successfully navigating government and law enforcement investigations including with the FBI, the IRS, the Department of Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, the NC Medicaid Fraud Investigations Unit, and the NC State Board of Elections. With vast experience handling criminal cases, Joe also represents professionals and executives with select sensitive matters.

Joe also maintains a business law and regulatory compliance practice representing the needs of North Carolina employers and entrepreneurs. Along with general representation of small businesses, he focuses on working with clients in the heavily regulated hemp/CBD and sweepstakes/skill-based games industries to ensure compliance and avoid agency enforcement action, civil liability, and criminal charges. Additionally, Joe has represented more than 150 businesses before the NC Industrial Commission facing civil penalties and contempt actions for workers' compensation noncompliance.

Joe has represented employers for administrative appeals before a variety of government agencies and professional licensing boards including the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, the N.C. Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission, the North Carolina Department of Revenue, and the North Carolina Code Qualifications Board. He gratefully serves by appointment on the N.C. State Bar Disciplinary Hearing Commission as well as the N.C. Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission.

**PRACTICE AREAS**

- Litigation
- White-Collar Defense and Investigations

**REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

- Tried cases in state and federal courts representing clients charged with a variety of criminal offenses. Case results have included not guilty verdicts and dismissals based on constitutional defenses, insufficiency of government evidence, or law enforcement error
- Represented military personnel under investigation for government contract and procurement fraud. Case resulted in termination of investigation without criminal charges

## REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS (CONT.)

- Represented tax professional facing criminal investigation by the IRS. Case was ultimately closed following completion of the investigation without criminal charges ever being filed
- Represented numerous home health care businesses, executives, and employees under investigation or charged with Medicare/Medicaid fraud in both state and federal court
- Representation of individuals under investigation by the NC Board of Elections for election fraud and campaign finance violations
- Defended corporate executives charged by their employer with computer trespass and computer fraud
- Discreet and sensitive representation of corporate professionals under investigation by law enforcement agencies. Past success includes representation of client falsely accused of serious sexual misconduct, resulting in termination of investigation without charges being filed
- Representation of hemp/CBD which specific counsel on issues related permit applications, Controlled Substance Act compliance, FDA compliance and enforcement action, USDA rule updates, asset seizure, and prosecution efforts by regulatory agencies and law enforcement
- Representation of businesses penalized or facing contempt action by the NC Industrial Commission for workers' compensation noncompliance. Collectively saved clients in excess of one million dollars sought by the state in penalties
- Represented government contractor under investigation by DCIS for procurement fraud. Case favorably resolved by corporate plea agreement without criminal charges against company owner individually

## RECOGNITION AND HONORS

- Best Lawyers in America, 2025
- Business North Carolina; Legal Elite, 2022, 2024
- North Carolina Rising Stars; 2018 - 2024
- E.A. Morris Fellowship for Emerging Leaders, John Locke Foundation
- John J. Gibbons National Criminal Procedure Moot Court Competition, runner-up
- Daniel Coker Horton & Bell Appellate Advocacy Competition, winner
- Blackstone Fellow, Alliance Defending Freedom
- University of Mississippi Moot Court Board, Chairman
- National Moot Court Team Member
- N.C. State Bar Disciplinary Hearing Commission; Member
- North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission; Member

## ASSOCIATIONS

- North Carolina Bar Association
- Wake County Bar Association
- North Carolina Advocates for Justice
- American Bar Association; Criminal Justice and Antitrust Sections

## ADMISSIONS

- North Carolina
- Virginia
- US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
- US District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina
- US District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina
- US District Court for the Western District of North Carolina
- Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals

## EDUCATION

- George Mason University, B.A., 2008
- University of Mississippi School of Law, J.D., 2011

## PRESS & PUBLICATIONS

- 55 Kaufman & Canoles Attorneys Named Best Lawyers in America© 2025, 7 Named “Lawyer of the Year,” and 13 Named “Ones to Watch”
- Joseph E. Houchin Named to Business North Carolina’s Legal Elite 2024 and 2024 North Carolina Super Lawyers Rising Star
- Justice Department Details Prioritization of Corporate Crime Prosecution, White-Collar Crime Blog, March 2022
- DOJ Civil Cyber Fraud Initiative and Cyber Incident Response and Reporting, presented to the North Carolina Military Business Center, January 12, 2022
- Government Contracts & Defense Industries Client Alert - Making Sense of the DOJ Cyber-Fraud Initiative and What it Means For Defense Contractor Compliance, December 2021
- Government Contracts & Defense Industries Team Client Alert - U.S. Government Accountability Office Releases Report Calling for Enhanced Efforts by the DoD to Curtail Procurement Fraud, October 2021
- North Carolina Labor & Employment Client Alert: North Carolina Industrial Commission Penalty Assessment Orders: Common Civil and Criminal FAQs, September 2021
- North Carolina Business Client Alert: NC Eliminates Hemp Pilot Program, September 2021
- Litigation Client Alert - PPP, EIDL, and UI Loan Fraud - What to Know About Financial Crimes under the CARES Act, August 2021
- Litigation Client Alert - What Happens When a Civil Case Turns Criminal?, July 2021
- Litigation Client Alert - Criminal and Civil Impact on the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act post-Van Buren, July 2021