Brian H. Axelrad

Partner

320 S. Canal Street
Suite 4500, Chicago, IL USA 60606
t 312.606.3242 | f 312.267.2227
baxelrad@ktslaw.com



Services

Business & Finance

Emerging Companies

Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition-Search Funds

Venture Capital and Emerging Companies

Joint Ventures & Strategic Alliances

Mergers & Acquisitions

Private Equity

Industries

Financial Institutions

Technology

Brian Axelrad is a partner on Kilpatrick's Mergers and Acquisitions, Securities and Corporate team (MASC) and is co-leader of the MASC subpractice teams for Emerging Company and Venture Capital clients as well as in the Search Funds and Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition (ETA) area. For many clients, Brian serves as day-to-day general counsel and he regularly advises a broad range of companies, investors, acquirors, and executives on strategic and milestone transactions, often including venture capital and private equity transactions and mergers and acquisitions. Brian partners with investors, entrepreneurs, and executives on the legal and business issues they face at every stage, from startup through growth to exit. He coaches and guides his clients as they explore different strategies, transactions, and opportunities and has earned a reputation for pragmatic, solution-oriented outcomes, efficient and effective problem solving, and technical expertise.

The companies Brian works with are often technology driven or enabled and connected to a host of industries. His institutional clients include venture capital funds, private equity funds, family offices, search funds, and fundless sponsors. In the area of search funds and ETA, Brian established HMB Legal Counsel as a leader among law firms working with search funds and following the merger with Kilpatrick remains committed to being a go-to law firm for the search fund and ETA community. He has been a panelist and presenter at various conferences, such as those hosted by Harvard Business School, Chicago Booth School of Business and Kellogg School of Management, Michigan Ross School of Business, MIT Sloan School of Management, and the Southeast ETA conference, and presented to numerous ETA business school clubs and programs, such at Columbia Business School, Wharton School of Business, MIT Sloan, Chicago Booth, and the Zell Fellows program at Kellogg.

In collaboration with various practices and teams, Brian also supports the firm's practice with social impact oriented clients and helps clients deploy capital to support social impact and philanthropic outcomes. In addition to being a social impact lawyer, he is an active member of the global community previously serving for over a decade as the Chief Investment Officer of Beyond Capital Fund, an impact investment fund that invests in for-profit social enterprises in East Africa and India, and participating in the 2019-2020 cohort of the Emerging Leaders program at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. More locally, he served as the inaugural Impact Investor in Residence at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business from 2015-2018 and taught an MBA course on impact investing as an adjunct faculty member during that period.

Brian was named a "Leading Lawyer" in 2024 and 2025 for Closely and Privately Held Business Law and Securities and Venture Finance Law by *Leading Lawyers* magazine. He is recognized nationally in the 2025 and 2026 editions of *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business* for Impact Investing and is also listed in the 2026 edition of *Chambers Global* as a leading Impact Investing lawyer.

Education

Northwestern University School of Law J.D. (2006)

University of Chicago Booth School of Business M.B.A. (2009) Concentrations in Finance, Economics and Entrepreneurship, *with honors*

University of Michigan B.A., Economics and History (2002)

Admissions

Illinois (2006)

Professional & Community Activities

Beyond Capital Fund, Chief Investment Officer

University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Venture Capital Investing for Social Impact, Teacher

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Emerging Leaders Program, Class of 2020

Insights

News Releases

Kilpatrick Attorneys Earn 101 Rankings in 2026 Chambers USA and Global Guides

June 5, 2026

Events

2026 Ross ETA Conference

March 27, 2026

Perspectives

Brian Axelrad Interviewed for The Wall Street Journal Pro Venture Capital

February 18, 2026

News Releases

Kilpatrick Attorneys Earn a Record 100 Recognitions in 2025 Chambers USA

June 6, 2025

Webinars

ETA Unfiltered: A Candid Q&A Session

May 14, 2025