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New leadership at the American Association Justice

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Members of the American Association of Justice chose to stick to their habit of stable board leadership as the trial lawyers' group faces a heavy lobbying agenda in Washington.

Anthony Tarricone, managing partner of Kreindler & Kreindler in Boston, Mass., is the group's new president. Members chose him as president-elect last year, and he automatically assumed the position at the annual convention in San Francisco, Calif., this week. Gibson Vance was chosen as the new president-elect. Vance is a partner at Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis & Miles, and was the AAJ's vice-president last year. He will take over the presidency in a year. Board members typically move up through the various positions until they assume the presidency.

Parliamentarian Rhonda Hill Wilson, who runs her own firm in Philadelphia, was the only new member elected to the board in Wednesday morning's vote, and former president Les Weisbrod rotated off. All candidates were unopposed.

Kreindler & Kreindler bills itself as the largest aviation law firm representing plaintiffs in the country, and also handles product liability, medical malpractice, and other types of suits. In a case that drew attention when it was filed in 2007, Tarricone sued Continental Airlines in 2007 on behalf of a father whose child was illegally taken to Mexico by her mother via a Continental flight. Vance's firm biography says he practices in the firm's consumer fraud section, and specializes in representing plaintiffs against insurance companies.

Tarricone, 56, says he plans to spend some time in Washington "frequently meeting with members of Congress to discuss the issues." High on the group's legislative agenda: Making sure that any health care overhaul doesn't limit medical malpractice suits, and ending mandatory arbitration clauses in consumer contracts. The group reported spending \$2.27 million on lobbying during the first half of 2009.

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