



John Mulligan, executive vice president and chief financial officer of Target Corp., right, listens to Stuart Ingis, partner with Venable LLP and counsel, before the start of a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in Washington, D.C., U.S., on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2014.

Photographer: Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

Venable's First New Chair in a Decade is a Privacy Lawyer

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It's been a good decade for the Baltimore-founded law firm Venable, which on Wednesday voted to elect Stuart Ingis, co-head of its privacy and data security practice group, as its next chairman.

Based in Washington, D.C., Ingis, 45, will replace James Shea, 64, who held the role since 2006, and had served as managing partner for a decade before that. The position is effective Feb. 1st.

During Shea's tenure as chair, Venable's profits per partner grew from \$595,000 to \$1.06 million, according to [an analysis](#) of data reported by the American Lawyer. It also sprouted offices on the West Coast — in San Francisco and Los Angeles — and grew in New York, said Ingis. It now has 600 lawyers, according to its website.

"This is not a vote to change the firm in any way, but really to continue," said Ingis, about becoming chair-elect. "We're going to stick to our knitting."

Shea will become chair emeritus and continue practicing as a corporate litigator. His clients have included Verizon, M&T Bank and Marriott International.

Ingis said his election speaks to the growing significance of privacy and data security as a practice area. Since he joined from DLA Piper in 2006, the group has grown from three lawyers to 25. Its lawyers work with clients across different practice groups, he said, adding this is partially why Ingis said he was elected chair.

In 2014, he represented Target Corp's chief financial officer John Mulligan when he testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee after the retailer suffered a data breach about its cybersecurity practices.

Ingis said he will maintain his practice. He described it as government affairs-focused, including representing many advertising trade associations and companies with data in their interactions with government agencies and bodies.

As chair, he will be involved in strategic planning, outreach to the Venable community, and client outreach at a firm-level. A father of three kids, whose wife was an accountant from Ernst & Young but left work to raise their children, he said he is committed to helping the firm achieve diversity in its ranks.