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# Boston lawyer wins key role overseeing AT&T-DirecTV merger

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Greg Ryan

Law and Money Reporter- Boston Business Journal

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#)

Federal regulators' approval of **AT&T's** (NYSE: T) \$48.5 billion acquisition of **DirecTV** (Nasdaq: DTV) this summer came with some stipulations, and Donald Stern has been tapped as the guy who makes sure they live up to those conditions.

The Federal Communications Commission approved the former U.S. attorney for Massachusetts, now with the Boston-based corporate compliance firm Affiliated Monitors, to be the independent compliance monitor for the deal. The appointment marks the first time Stern has been appointed by the agency to oversee a merger.

When it approved the deal in July, the FCC prohibited the combined company from favoring certain online video services over others on its broadband Internet services, based on concerns that it would limit broadband access to DirecTV's competitors. The agency also required the company to offer services to low-income customers at a discount and to expand high-speed services to 12.5 million customer locations. The conditions remain in effect for four years following the closing of the merger, for the most part.

Affiliated Monitors works with government agencies on monitoring a variety of regulated industries and with companies on internal reviews. It has served as monitor in more than 400 matters since its 2004 founding, according to the company.

In addition to his U.S. attorney stint from 1993 to 2001, Stern has worked as a white collar and government investigations lawyer at **Cooley LLP**, **WilmerHale** and the former Bingham McCutchen LLP and as chief legal counsel in the Dukakis administration. Stern declined comment on his new role.