

# LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: Labor & Employment Attorneys



**T**HERE ARE MANY BRILLIANT ATTORNEYS IN LOS ANGELES – MASTERS OF THEIR CRAFT THAT CAN PREPARE individuals and businesses for any legal issue that might arise while expertly providing counsel as needed and writing and overseeing the documents designed to protect their clients’ assets and livelihoods.

When it comes to the intricacies of employment and labor, a whole additional set of skills is required. The leading employment attorneys and experts in the region have their finger on the ever-changing pulse of labor legislation, what changes have come to the labor law landscape in recent times, the new rules of hiring and firing, and the various trends that they have been tirelessly monitoring and managing for their clients.

In this special section we’ve alphabetically listed this lineup of superb specialists, along with information about their careers, practice and some of the relevant recent successes they’ve achieved. Congratulations to the attorneys who made this prestigious class.

*Methodology: The professionals featured in these pages did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials submitted to the Los Angeles Business Journal. Those selected for inclusion were reviewed by the editorial department. The professionals were chosen based on a demonstration of impact made on the profession and on the Los Angeles community.*

LOI: LABOR & EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS



**NATALIE ALAMEDDINE**  
*Partner, Labor & Employment*  
Blank Rome LLP

Natalie Alameddine is a partner in Blank Rome’s Labor & Employment practice group. She defends employers in single-plaintiff and class action employment matters, and represents employers on labor and employment matters such as federal and California wage and hour issues, class actions and PAGA representative actions, discrimination and harassment, and more.

In 2024, Alameddine led a Blank Rome team in securing a major appellate victory for Motive Energy Telecommunications, Inc. in a labor and employment-related class action. Alameddine also recently served as employment counsel for numerous matters for BYD Coach & Bus LLC, BYD Motors, Inc., and BYD America LLC, American subsidiaries of BYD Company Ltd, which is the largest domestic auto-manufacturer and electric-bus manufacturer in China.



**KATHIANA AURELIEN**  
*Counsel*  
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Kathiana Aurelien serves as counsel in Willkie Farr & Gallagher’s Labor and Employment Group in Los Angeles. She focuses her practice on California employment issues, representing industry-leading clients on a wide range of labor and employment matters. Aurelien regularly advises on the employment implications of corporate transactions and has extensive experience working with clients on workplace investigations, evaluating worker classification issues, and implementing reductions-in-force.

Aurelien regularly advises clients on sensitive executive separation matters, compliance issues, and developing, implementing and enforcing personnel policies. A thought leader in the industry, Aurelien writes and speaks extensively on employment-related topics ranging from cannabis in the workplace to the impact of Dodd-Frank on employers.



**CHANDRA BEATON**  
*Partner*  
LightGabler LLP

Chandra Beaton was named a partner at LightGabler LLP in January 2024 and is a member of the firm’s executive committee. As the chair of the litigation department, she oversees 15 litigation attorneys and seven paralegals, in addition to their cases on behalf of employers and managers in all types of employment-related disputes. Under her guidance, the firm has successfully represented thousands of businesses throughout California in employment matters in court, arbitration proceedings and before government administrative agencies.

Beaton’s litigation background encompasses a broad range of disputes, including construction defect and mold claims, personal injury defense, general and professional liability defense, intellectual property litigation, real estate litigation, business litigation, and homeowners association matters.



**PAUL BERKOWITZ**  
*Partner*  
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton

As a partner in Sheppard Mullin’s Labor and Employment Practice Group, Paul Berkowitz has garnered recognition for both his results in high-stakes litigation and his role as a trusted advisor to major employers across a wide range of industries, including financial services, insurance, retail, healthcare, hospitality and education.

In 2025, Berkowitz defeated class certification in a cutting-edge case alleging that an employer’s unlimited vacation policy violated Labor Code section 227.3. In addition to obtaining multiple class certification denial orders, Berkowitz achieved a watershed appellate victory in Ibarra v. Manheim Investments, Inc., when his advocacy led the Ninth Circuit to adopt a more employer-friendly standard under the Class Action Fairness Act – influencing how future wage and hour class actions are litigated and removed to federal court.



**JAMES BERRY**  
*Partner*  
Munck Wilson Mandala, LLP

James Berry is a partner of Munck Wilson Mandala’s employment and labor and litigation practice groups, as well as a co-managing partner of the firm’s Los Angeles office. Practicing law for over 30 years, Berry has successfully resolved hundreds of individual employment discrimination and retaliation claims across California and other states.

Berry has developed protocols for clients to respond to employment records requests from former employees, significantly reducing the risk of subsequent litigation and PAGA (Private Attorneys General Act) claims. This forward-thinking strategy helps clients avoid potential legal pitfalls and is a testament to his deep understanding of employment law. Additionally, he has achieved favorable settlements in numerous class actions and PAGA claims, often securing outcomes more favorable than initial mediator proposals.



**DEBBIE BIRNDORF-ZEILER**  
*Partner*  
Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP

After over 20 successful years as founder and managing partner of Birndorf Law Offices – an employment counselling and litigation boutique – Debbie Birndorf-Zeiler joined Norton Rose Fulbright’s Los Angeles office, bringing her experience to help build a talented team at the firm. Birndorf-Zeiler currently represents employers in all aspects of employment law, including defense of harassment and discrimination claims, wage claims, wage and hour class actions, Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) claims, disability claims and misappropriation of trade secrets.

Birndorf-Zeiler has been recognized for her legal capabilities with many accolades, including by Thomson Reuters Super Lawyers in 2013 and from 2015 to 2025.



**PHILIP BONOLI**  
*Partner*  
BG Law

Philip Bonoli is a seasoned litigator with extensive experience in a diverse range of employment matters, including wrongful discharge, discrimination, harassment, tort claims, and contractual disputes. He regularly represents employers before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and the California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Labor Standards Enforcement.

Bonoli recently handed a high-stakes case involving age-based discrimination. He won summary judgment and had affirmative defenses stricken. Bonoli also recently handled a pro bono matter representing a sexual assault victim. He helped her receive a temporary restraining order against the assailant and guided her through the criminal and civil procedures relating to this claim.



**MICHAEL BRODY**  
*Partner*  
LightGabler LLP

Michael Brody has devoted almost 20 years to representing businesses in legal disputes involving employment litigation matters. Brody litigates a broad range of employment and business matters in both state and federal court, as well as in administrative proceedings. He represents businesses at all stages of litigation, from the initial claim through trial and in alternative dispute resolution, consistently securing major wins for his clients.

Brody recently served as lead counsel in Lucy Bernal v. Ghitteman, Ghitteman & Feld. In this jury trial in Santa Barbara County Superior Court, an employee claimed disability discrimination, wrongful termination, and related causes of action against her former employer, a law firm. The jury returned a complete defense verdict on behalf of Brody’s client.



**JOSE CABADA**  
*Principal*  
Scali Rasmussen, PC

Jose Cabada has represented employers in a wide range of employment litigation, including sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and wrongful termination. He also has extensive experience in wage and hour class actions and representative lawsuits brought under California’s Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA).

Cabada has represented businesses in state and federal courts, arbitrations, and before the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and the National Labor Relations Board’s Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. He also regularly handles both judicial and private employment dispute mediations on behalf of employers. Prior to joining Scali Rasmussen, Cabada was a litigator and trial counsel for a preeminent management-side labor and employment law firm in Los Angeles where he litigated employment matters.



**JESSE CRIPPS**  
*Partner*  
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Jesse Cripps is consistently recognized as a leading attorney for his track record of major victories in high-stakes employment actions throughout California and nationally. He has achieved unique success at both the trial and appellate court levels and, against odds, has taken class and representative actions to trial.

In June 2025, Cripps led the Gibson Dunn team in securing a complete summary judgment victory for Northrop Grumman Corporation in a PAGA-only case initiated by a former employee in 2017. In February 2025, Cripps and Gibson Dunn secured a complete defense victory for Atlas Assembly, Inc. in a multi-faceted case alleging various wage and hour violations, including failure to factor bonus payments into overtime pay and failure to provide compliant meal breaks.



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**TANJA DARROW**  
*Shareholder*  
Littler Mendelson P.C.

As co-chair of the Littler Mendelson P.C. litigation and trials practice group and a core member of the complex litigation and PAGA practice group, Tanja Darrow has built a reputation for handling complex, high-stakes labor and employment law matters with precision and strategic insight. Darrow’s experience spans a wide range of issues, including wage and hour disputes, discrimination, harassment, and compliance with key employment laws such as Title VII, the ADA, and the FMLA.

Darrow has achieved noteworthy courtroom success, serving as lead counsel in hundreds of cases and consistently securing complete defense verdicts. Recently, Darrow played a pivotal role in securing a unanimous 9-0 defense verdict for Providence Health & Services in a complex federal trial in Alaska.



**JON DARYANANI**  
*Partner*  
Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP

With more than 20 years of experience, Squire Patton Boggs’ Labor & Employment Practice Group partner Jon Daryanani is a trial and litigation attorney with a range of diverse experiences resolving high-stakes disputes for blue chip companies in California and around the country.

Daryanani’s practice includes wage and hour class actions and high-profile trade secret litigation matters. He also provides strategic planning on an array of employment matters, including severance agreements, workforce reductions and implementation of wage and commission structures. He routinely works with firm mergers and acquisitions lawyers, conducting due diligence regarding employment issues in conjunction with the purchase and sale of California entities. He has represented several household name clients.



**EMIL DAVTYAN**  
*Founder; Managing Attorney*  
D.Law

Emil Davtyan primarily defended companies in the realm of employment issues before shifting to plaintiffs’ work and founding D.Law in 2015. Currently, his team of over 150 lawyers and staff have helped hundreds of thousands of California workers recover over \$1.5 billion from their employers. To date, the firm has helped pursue over 6,000 cases. Throughout an unprecedented level of employment disruption as a result of the pandemic in 2020, the firm fielded over 70,000 inquiries for potential cases.

From working-class jobs at Home Depot and Hollywood Video to graduating cum laude from Southwestern Law School, Davtyan’s journey fuels his advocacy for the underdog. He is a board member of The Pan-Armenian Futbol Association and is a deeply involved in the Armenian community in Southern California.



**RODNEY DIGGS**  
*Director*  
Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs

Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs partner Rodney is a practiced litigator with substantial experience trying cases to verdict in both federal and state courts. He is co-chair of the labor and employment practice group, which focuses on harassment, discrimination, retaliation, wage and hour issues and claims with the labor commissioner’s board on behalf of his clients. He also handles civil rights litigation.

Diggs has obtained over \$200 million in verdicts and settlements on behalf of his clients. In 2024, Diggs settled over \$20 million in cases including sexual harassment, sexual battery, wrongful termination, wrongful death and personal injury. Currently, Diggs is handling cases filed against Sean “Diddy” Combs, including Rodney Jones v. Sean Combs, et al., Grace O’Marcaigh v. Sean Combs, and others.



**CAROLINE DONELAN**  
*Partner, Labor & Employment*  
Blank Rome LLP

A partner of labor and employment at Blank Rome LLP, Caroline Donelan is a trusted adviser and strategic partner to both domestic and foreign clients, providing advice and defense counsel in all areas of employment law compliance and litigation. Her work encompasses wage and hour class and representative (“PAGA”) actions, wrongful termination/retaliation, discrimination, harassment, trade secret disputes, data protection, and alleged fiduciary breaches.

Donelan’s proactive risk management practice includes drafting key workplace policies and agreements, providing practical implementation guidance, conducting workplace trainings, managing internal audits and investigations, and providing day-to-day counseling on the wide variety of employment issues her clients face.

Congratulations,  
Dana Kravetz

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**RYAN EVANS**  
*Principal*  
Scali Rasmussen, PC

Scali Rasmussen principal Ryan Evans defends employers in all aspects of employment law, including discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, and wage and hour litigation. He is an experienced trial attorney who has obtained favorable results for his wide range of clients at trial, arbitration, and mediation.

Evans was a judicial extern for the honorable Michael Daly Hawkins of the United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. He was also a quarterfinalist in the Hale Moot Court program at Gould School of Law, and an extern for the United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California.



**PHILIP EWEN**  
*Partner*  
Musick Peeler

Philip Ewen serves as the chair of the Musick Peeler Labor and Employment Law Department. He specializes in the defense of employment litigation in state court, federal court, and arbitration. He has served as lead trial counsel in the defense of employers in wrongful discharge, employment discrimination, wage and hour, and class action litigation. He also handles collective bargaining negotiations, contract arbitrations, and administrative hearings before state and federal agencies.

Ewen coordinates an employment law hotline service for medical professionals, and he advises employers on discipline and terminations, layoffs, wage and hour concerns, disability issues, the investigation of internal complaints, stock options, employment policies, and employment and severance agreements.



**SHAREEF S. FARAG**  
*Partner; Co-Leader, Wage and Hour Team; Los Angeles Office Team Lead, Labor and Employment Group*  
BakerHostetler

Shareef Farag is a nationally respected employment litigator and strategic advisor, serving as co-leader of BakerHostetler’s wage and hour compliance team and Los Angeles office team lead for the Labor and Employment Group. He is known for his deep experience and leadership in high-stakes wage and hour matters.

Farag represents employers in their most sensitive and high-profile class and collective actions, wage and hour disputes, and compliance matters. His practice spans industries – from healthcare and retail to hospitality and tech – and his advice is frequently sought for wage and hour audits, strategic litigation, and day-to-day employment counseling. Farag regularly helps employers revise policies, navigate legislative changes, and implement compliance programs.



**LAURA FARBER**  
*Partner*  
Hahn & Hahn LLP

Laura Farber is a partner in the Pasadena law firm of Hahn & Hahn LLP and is an accomplished trial lawyer in the areas of employment, commercial litigation and personal injury. Farber practices civil litigation with an emphasis in employment disputes and also counsels clients in a variety of matters. She currently serves as immediate past chair of the 2024–25 American Bar Foundation Fellows.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Farber’s native language is Spanish. In 2023, she received the Latina Lawyers Bar Association’s Mary V. Orozco Abriendo Caminos Award. With a deep commitment to community engagement, Farber has contributed her energy and efforts to several Pasadena-based nonprofits, in addition to her active involvement in the American Bar Association.



**MAX FISCHER**  
*Partner*  
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

With a track record of high-stakes litigation victories and tailored counsel to some of the country’s biggest employers on pressing labor and employment issues, clients turn to Morgan Lewis partner Max Fischer for strategy development designed to meet their needs. Fischer is trusted by clients as both a winning first-chair trial lawyer and a strategic advisor who helps build stronger internal practices, not just stronger defenses.

Tech giants, healthcare providers, and consumer goods firms, among others, rely on Fischer’s experience and knowledge to defend against claims of discrimination, ERISA wrongful termination, and defamation, as well as traditional labor disputes. He works with clients to both enforce and seek rescission of restrictive covenants, arbitration agreements, and nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements.



**KATHERINE FORSTER**  
*Partner*  
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP

Seasoned employment practitioner, Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP partner Katherine Forster has litigated over 100 class, collective and representative actions. She also has specialized expertise in helping companies navigate highly sensitive claims for sexual harassment and abuse, gender discrimination, whistleblower retaliation and pay equity, including at the pre-filing stage to avoid any public filing.

Forster recently represented BlackBerry in a lawsuit filed by a former executive alleging sexual harassment, retaliation and pay inequity. She achieved dismissal with prejudice of the harassment and pay equity claims, including all claims against the CEO. Forster also recently represented Downtown Women’s Center in defeating certification of all but one narrow claim in a putative wage-and-hour class action and PAGA action.



**AARON GBEWONYO**  
*Managing Trial Attorney*  
Shegerian & Associates

Over the past several years, Aaron Gbewonyo has emerged as one of the most dynamic and successful employment law litigators in California. Gbewonyo advances the legal landscape in areas that are often under-protected, such as whistleblower rights, age discrimination, and good-faith employment practices.

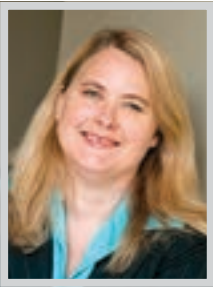
Among Gbewonyo’s most significant accomplishments is his recent role as lead counsel in *Ruelas v. City of Baldwin Park*. In this case, Gbewonyo represented a long-time city employee who alleged she was wrongfully forced to resign in retaliation for exposing misconduct involving the misuse of federal housing funds and for reporting racially charged comments made by the city’s CEO. Under Gbewonyo’s leadership, the case highlighted the systemic failures that undermine public trust.



**LONNIE GIAMELA**  
*Partner*  
Fisher Phillips

Lonnie Giamela has built a career helping businesses of all sizes navigate the complex world of employment law. His legal approach stems from growing up working in one of Los Angeles’s oldest family-owned restaurants: Giamela’s. He has applied his deep-rooted principles over his 22 years at Fisher Phillips to grow the LA office to one of the largest labor and employment law firm offices in the city.

Giamela has handled a full range of labor and employment matters in both federal and state courts. He has particularly deep experience in wage and hour law, including class actions and representative PAGA claims. He’s led more than 200 of these cases across the country and has taken two wage-and-hour class actions to trial as lead counsel.



**MARY TESH GLARUM**  
*Partner*  
Doll Amir & Eley LLP

Doll Amir & Eley LLP partner Mary Tesh Glarum is the chair of the firm’s employment law practice. Her practice includes individual discrimination and wrongful termination claims, both in court and in administrative proceedings. Glarum’s pragmatic approach to disputes has also resulted in highly favorable settlements in the early stages of litigation.

Glarum has conducted successful trials in the California federal and state courts and has represented clients in appellate matters before the California Courts of Appeal. She regularly advises businesses and nonprofit organizations on traditional “nuts and bolts” human resources issues, including contracts, severance agreements, employee discipline, and terminations. She also routinely drafts and audits company policies and handbooks and leads internal investigations.



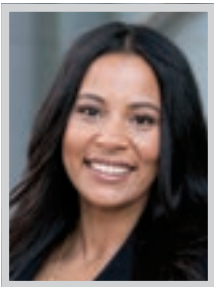
**SAMANTHA GRANT**  
*Partner*  
Reed Smith LLP

Samantha Grant is a go-to labor and employment litigator for national and global companies in administrative, arbitration, and trial proceedings who leverages her analytical and strategic skills to deliver superior results in the most difficult matters facing her clients. She was the first woman of color to be elected as chair of the American Bar Association Section of Labor and Employment Law.

With insight and experience gained on her secondment working as in-house employment counsel for a Fortune 50 company, Grant is a particularly pragmatic and strategic outside counsel. Grant frequently speaks and writes on developments in employment law for bar organizations such as the American Bar Association, the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, and the National Employment Law Council.



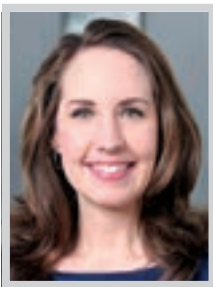
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**MIRA HASHMALL**  
*Partner*  
Miller Barondess, LLP

Mira Hashmall is an accomplished trial attorney and certified appellate specialist with over two decades of experience guiding clients through complex, high-profile employment disputes. Her landmark victories have helped shape California employment law and earned her a reputation for skillfully handling intricate legal challenges affecting public entities and employers statewide.

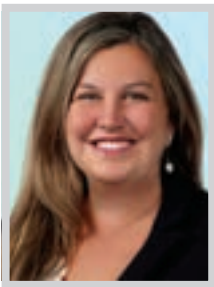
In a July 2025 landmark victory, Hashmall successfully represented the City of Inglewood before the California Supreme Court in a pivotal case that clarified elected public officials are not “employees” under the state’s whistleblower protection laws. The case arose from retaliation claims brought by the elected city treasurer following public disputes with city leadership.



**ESRA HUDSON**  
*Partner; Leader, Employment and Labor*  
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

As leader of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP’s Employment and Labor practice, Esra Hudson has established herself as the go-to employment adviser for iconic entertainment companies, national insurance providers, well-known medical centers and leading financial services companies through her deft defense against wage and hour class and collective actions, PAGA representative matters, and trade secret and unfair competition claims.

With extensive experience in crisis management and media relations – including in sensitive matters involving executives and high-profile individuals – Hudson is currently lead counsel representing Blake Lively in her ongoing litigation against Justin Baldoni, Wayfarer Studios, and related parties.



**ARWEN JOHNSON**  
*Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office*  
King & Spalding

A leading IP and trade secret lawyer, King & Spalding managing partner Arwen Johnson is a first chair commercial litigator who delivers results in high-stakes cases. She represents some of the nation’s top entertainment clients in high profile idea theft and copyright infringement matters. She also represents companies in trade secret disputes over their highly valuable technologies and innovations, and public companies in complex class action and commercial disputes.

Johnson and her team recently secured a complete trial victory for Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company, in a copyright litigation matter before United States District Judge Consuelo B. Marshall concerning the 2016 animated feature film Moana.



**CHERYL JOHNSON-HARTWELL**  
*Partner*  
Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

For employers in need of defense counsel, Burke, Williams & Sorensen partner Cheryl Johnson-Hartwell is a triple threat. A seasoned litigator and workplace investigator, she provides counsel and advice an array of clients across industries, including automotive manufacturers, public transportation providers, large-format retail, non-profit entities, security services, entertainment, manufacturing, and public-sector employers.

As a litigator and trial attorney, Johnson-Hartwell has successfully handled over 1000 disputes to conclusion. She has significant experience in federal and state court, with arbitration panels, and before federal and state administrative agencies. Johnson-Hartwell is also an Association of Workplace Investigators certificate holder.



**ROLAND JUAREZ**  
*Partner*  
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Roland Juarez is known for handling high-stakes labor and employment cases for some of California’s largest and most high-profile employers in the temporary staffing, service, manufacturing, and retail industries. Juarez defends clients against challenging wage and hour, discrimination, non-compete and anti-raiding claims. Juarez is currently defending multiple clusters of PAGA and class actions for several clients, in varied industries.

Juarez is currently representing one of the largest accounting and finance staffing firms in a series of high-profile complex litigation matters filed across Northern and Southern California. He is coordinating the lead defense on all cases and managing a consulting sub-group with other peer firms on important class action and PAGA representative action projects.



We celebrate our partner

**MICHAEL KUN**

named one of *Los Angeles Business Journal's*

**Leaders of Influence:**

**Labor & Employment Attorneys**

A well-deserved recognition of his dedication!

thompsoncoburn.com



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**MICHAEL J. KENT**  
*Founding Partner*  
Kent | Pincin

**K**ent | Pincin co-founder Michael Kent has spent his career fighting for employees who have been wronged in the workplace. He practices in all areas of civil litigation, including personal and catastrophic injury, employment law, wage and hour, and other consumer-related matters. Kent believes fewer cases should be taken so that the involved attorneys are able to spend the appropriate amount of time and energy developing it and working to obtain the maximum recovery. Kent has been recognized as a Super Lawyers Rising Star every year since 2017. He recently obtained a \$1.65 million settlement for a county employee who faced retaliation. He also recently obtained a \$1.45 million settlement on behalf of a city firefighter who was wrongfully demoted.



**GREGORY KNOPP**  
*Partner*  
Proskauer Rose LLP

**F**or over 25 years, Greg Knopp has built a strong track record of successfully defending some of the world's most prominent companies in complex employment, including high-profile class action and Private Attorneys General Act cases. Knopp recently secured a total victory on behalf of Michaels Stores in a matter in the US District Court for the Northern District of California alleging wage and hour violations on behalf of a putative class of the company's California non-exempt employees. Knopp also led a team in securing a victory for Walmart in a putative class action in California federal court, involving a putative class of employees across all California Walmart retail stores and alleging that employees were required to download Walmart apps to their personal cell phones to assist customers.



**DANA KRAVETZ**  
*Firm Managing Partner*  
Michelman & Robinson, LLP

**M**ichelman & Robinson firm managing partner Dana Kravetz represents some of the nation's most prestigious companies across a range of sectors, navigating issues that are legally complex and reputationally sensitive. Kravetz recently negotiated a class action settlement involving a major hotel chain over donning and doffing claims, closing the matter for just 5% of the initial demand. He also recently engineered the successful defense of a Fortune 100 company in an EEOC pay equity investigation, resulting in a no-liability resolution. Beyond litigation, Kravetz has helped guide C-suite leaders through exits and new appointments at some of the most recognizable global brands – including a major social media company, a leading streaming service, and a top-tier delivery platform.



**MICHAEL KUN**  
*Partner; National Co-Chair, Labor & Employment Practice Group; National Chair, Wage and Hour Practice Group*  
Thompson Coburn LLP

**H**aving tried cases and litigated more than 200 wage and hour class actions nationwide, Michael Kun, partner and co-chair of Thompson Coburn's labor and employment practice group, has earned a reputation for shutting down high-stakes case – defeating class certification and reducing multimillion-dollar claims to zero. Kun boasts over three decades of prevailing on behalf of his clients. With 160 to 180 active lawsuits at any given time, and with 29 cases currently on his trial calendar in the next 16 months, Kun is one of the most prolific and impactful labor and employment attorneys in California. He is widely known for developing the “Serrano defense,” a landmark defense strategy that has reshaped how employers approach all “joint employer” lawsuits.



**KATE LaQUAY**  
*Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office*  
Munck Wilson Mandala, LLP

**K**ate LaQuay joined Munck Wilson Mandala in 2021 and was unanimously elected partner within two years. In 2024, she was promoted to the role of managing partner in Los Angeles, overseeing a 14-attorney office. Most of LaQuay's work involves the defense of claims for wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, wage/hour violations, and whistleblower retaliation. She provides guidance at every stage of the employment relationship, from pre-hiring to individual separations and mass layoffs. Additionally, she serves as an impartial investigator of reports of workplace misconduct, conducting fact-finding and preparing reports of her conclusions. LaQuay notably wrote a comprehensive article on California's Private Attorneys General Act reforms, which has been a topic of significant interest due to its impact on employer liability.



**TAO LEUNG**  
*Partner; California Employment Practice Head*  
Hogan Lovells

**A**practical, business-oriented employment practitioner, Tao Leung has obtained favorable resolutions on some of the highest-stakes wage and hour class action litigation. He advises global household name companies on the full range of employment issues. He has written and spoken on the implications of the Trump administration's focus on immigration, the recent changes to the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) in California, AI in the workplace, non-compete agreements, the impact of whistleblowing on employment agreements, and more. Some of Leung's most notable accomplishments have come from his representation of leaders in the sports, media, and entertainment sectors. Leung has served as lead employment counsel on cross-border mergers and acquisitions totaling over \$100 billion.



**MARGARET MARASCHINO**  
*Partner*  
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP

**O**ne of Los Angeles' premier employment lawyers, Maggie Maraschino combines courtroom excellence with sophisticated advisory work for some of the world's most high-profile clients. A Chambers-ranked practitioner and rising star, Maraschino regularly leads the defense of cases against leading companies in wage-and-hour class and collective actions, discrimination claims and termination challenges. In addition to the litigation, trial and appeal of employment disputes, Maraschino provides strategic advice to major companies on a broad range of employment matters, including issues related to mergers and other corporate transitions. She advises multiple internationally recognized celebrities, the top leaders in the corporate world, Silicon Valley, and Hollywood, and game-changing companies.



**DWAYNE MCKENZIE**  
*Managing Partner*  
Cox, Castle & Nicholson

**C**ox, Castle & Nicholson managing partner Dwayne McKenzie has developed a diverse practice that meets the needs of various clients in the real estate and construction industries – particularly in traditional labor relations, employment law, ERISA matters, and litigation in both state and federal courts. McKenzie has been deeply involved in prevailing wage law legislation, interpretation, and litigation for over twenty years. He actively represents developer, contractor, and property owner trade associations, as well as individuals, before the Department of Industrial Relations and in court. Furthermore, he counsels employers on their daily operations, including managing and negotiating employment issues during merger and acquisition transactions and addressing risk management issues.



**MATTHEW MCNICHOLAS**  
*Partner*  
McNicholas & McNicholas, LLP

**A**s panel counsel to the Los Angeles Police Protective League and the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, Matthew McNicholas is Southern California's go-to employment attorney for first responders who have faced discrimination, harassment, and retaliation at work. McNicholas secured over \$27 million in employment resolutions in 2024 alone, standing as the leading advocate for law enforcement professionals committed to eradicating misconduct within their departments. McNicholas is currently lead counsel in a matter representing over 300 employees from LA County Probation in a mass failure to accommodate action, reinforcing his reputation as the attorney first responders turn to when their rights are violated. Additionally, in the wake of the devastating Eaton Fire, McNicholas is representing two dozen first responders.



**JONATHAN MELMED**  
*Founder*  
Melmed Law Group P.C.

**A**s the founder of Melmed Law Group P.C., Jonathan Melmed has spearheaded numerous high-stakes employment litigation cases, achieving significant victories that have positively impacted countless workers across California. Since establishing his firm in 2015, Melmed has served as lead or co-lead counsel in hundreds of class and representative actions, securing multi-million dollar settlements, including several eight-figure resolutions. His cases have addressed critical issues such as unlawful discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, and wage theft, reflecting his dedication to combating workplace injustices. Melmed has been recognized as a Super Lawyers Rising Star from 2018 through 2025. In 2024, he was included in the Lawdragon 500 Leading Civil Rights & Plaintiff Employment Lawyers list.



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**SHELBY MESKIN**  
*Attorney*  
Hill Farrer & Burrill LLP

Attorney Shelby Meskin advises employers of all sizes on labor and employment law and general civil litigation, defending them against claims and disputes related to discrimination, retaliation, sexual harassment, and wage and hour violations. Whether by meticulously preparing for trial or by filing dispositive motions to eliminate claims, Meskin leverages her knowledge and experience in arbitration and civil jury trials to secure favorable outcomes for her clients.

Meskin also counsels clients on a wide range of personnel issues, advising them on remaining compliant with evolving laws and regulations to ensure they are well-informed of their rights and responsibilities. After she earned her bachelor's degree in history from UCLA, Meskin attended Loyola Law School to complete her J.D.



**ROBERT "BOB" MILLMAN**  
*Shareholder*  
Littler Mendelson P.C.

With 50 years of experience practicing labor and employment law, Bob Millman continues to be widely recognized as one of the deans of the Management Labor and Employment Bar in California. Millman joined Littler Mendelson P.C. in the fall of 1974 as the firm's 18th attorney and is now a senior shareholder at the firm. As the founder of Littler's LA offices and former chair of its board of directors, he has been an integral part of the firm's development and success for five decades.

Millman has successfully represented employers in proceedings and unfair labor practices before the National Labor Relations Board and in employment litigation, including complex class actions.



**JASON MILLS**  
*Partner*  
Sidley Austin LLP

A partner at Sidley Austin LLP, Jason Mills is a nationally recognized labor and employment litigator with a keen sense of trial tactics and more than 25 years of experience defending Fortune 500 employers against high-profile employment claims and complex Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) violations. He is one of only a few attorneys ranked as Band 1 for Nationwide Occupational Safety and Health by Chambers USA (2022–2025).

Mills has built his reputation on a willingness to take multimillion-dollar cases to trial. He is one of the few lawyers in California to have taken a Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) representative action to trial, where he, in 2016, convinced the court that PAGA penalties should not be awarded.



**ALI MOJIBI**  
*Partner*  
Covington & Burling LLP

Ali Mojibi, partner in Covington's Los Angeles office, is a dynamic trial lawyer who has represented leading global businesses across the telecommunications, software, medical device and biotech industries. He represents international corporations and senior executives in complex employment matters including discrimination disputes, whistleblower retaliation disputes, employee mobility disputes (breach of non-compete, non-solicit, and confidentiality agreements) as well as disputes among founders of successful early-stage companies over ownership of the company and its intellectual property.

Mojibi currently represents one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies in a complex employment litigation in the Eastern District of California.



**ROBERT MUSSIG**  
*Partner*  
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton partner Robert Mussig stands out as a preeminent labor and employment attorney, both for the breadth of his subject-matter expertise and for the results he has achieved on behalf of employers in complex and high-profile workplace disputes. Mussig has successfully resolved complicated wage and hour class actions, discrimination, harassment and retaliation litigation for clients, and has guided them through crisis matters including contentious executive separations and sensitive internal investigations.

Mussig recently obtained a jury verdict in favor of the firm's long-time client, Hawaiian Gardens Casino, after a five-day trial in downtown Los Angeles County. The plaintiff in the case alleged claims under the Bane Act and Unruh Civil Rights Act.

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Polsinelli congratulates **Tina Tellado** for being selected as one of Los Angeles Business Journal's 2025 Leaders of Influence: Labor & Employment Attorneys.

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Los Angeles Business Journal's 2025  
Leaders of Influence:  
Labor & Employment Attorneys

Jared Slater, Partner

Cate Veeneman, Partner



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**ANTHONY (TONY) ONCIDI**  
*Partner; Co-Chair, Labor & Employment Law Department; Head, West Coast Labor & Employment Practice*  
Proskauer Rose LLP

Anthony (Tony) J. Oncidi is the co-chair of Proskauer Rose’s market-leading Labor & Employment Law Department and heads the West Coast Labor & Employment Group in the firm’s Los Angeles office. His work over decades has focused on major entertainment and media clients. Oncidi is a go-to employment lawyer in Los Angeles for A-list entertainment clients. He acts as lead counsel for the GRAMMY Organization, overseeing all employment matters, counseling, and litigation. Oncidi led the defense team in the highly publicized dispute with former president/CEO Deborah Dugan and is currently representing the organization in several other recently filed, highly publicized litigation/arbitration matters.



**EMILY PATAJO**  
*Partner, Labor and Employment*  
Akerman LLP

A labor and employment partner at Akerman LLP, Emily Patajo focuses her practice on employment litigation in state and federal courts and in arbitration. She represents employers across a wide range of industries, including grocery, retail, technology and health-care. She is highly regarded for her expertise in litigation matters involving wrongful termination, unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in violation of California law. Clients also rely on her for litigating complex wage and hour class action cases. Patajo regularly defends employers facing charges and complaints before state agencies such as the California Civil Rights Department and the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. She also provides strategic advice to human resources and employee relations teams on personnel management.



**EMILY PINCIN**  
*Founding Partner*  
Kent | Pincin

Emily Pincin’s practice is focused primarily on representing employees who have been wrongfully terminated, harassed, discriminated against, or retaliated against by their employer. She also represents individuals who have suffered personal or catastrophic injuries and family members who have lost a loved one to a wrongful death. This commitment to advocating for justice has been the cornerstone of her professional journey. Pincin was two years into her legal career before she departed from a highly-regarded plaintiff’s firm to establish her own law firm, driven by determination to make a meaningful impact and champion the rights of those in need. Pincin was lead counsel on a disability discrimination, associational discrimination, and retaliation case, in which she successfully obtained a \$207,475 pre-litigation settlement for her two clients.



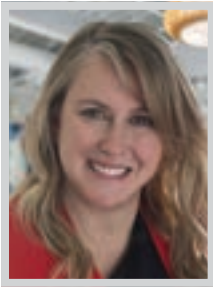
**RYNE POSEY**  
*Partner*  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Companies and high-profile executives frequently turn to Ryne Posey for guidance on their most challenging and delicate employment-related matters. As the lead employment attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Posey has guided teams over the past two years in litigation and other high-stakes controversy matters, offering strategic counsel on complex and sensitive matters. Posey provides organizations with strategic guidance to navigate the constantly shifting regulatory landscape, helping mitigate risks related to labor laws, workplace safety and employee benefits. Additionally, Posey frequently negotiates employment-related arrangements for CEOs, senior executives, and high-profile talent across the US. He also provides strategic counsel on executive-level separations.



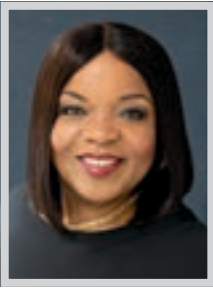
**DAVID PRAGER**  
*Partner*  
Nixon Peabody

David Prager is a seasoned litigator and trusted counselor who represents large and mid-market employers in high-stakes disputes and strategic employment matters. Based in Nixon Peabody’s Los Angeles office, he advises clients across industries, including financial services, healthcare, sports and technology, on issues spanning unfair competition, non-compete agreements, trade secrets, whistleblower claims, employment discrimination, and harassment. Widely regarded as a leading practitioner in Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) litigation, Prager has successfully defended employers in complex, high-stakes PAGA actions – securing dismissals, favorable settlements, and strategic procedural wins that significantly reduce client exposure. Additionally, Prager serves as a trusted advisor to some of California’s most prominent employers.



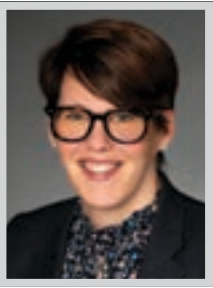
**LAURA REATHAFORD**  
*Partner in Charge, Los Angeles Office*  
Lathrop GPM LLP

Laura Reathaford is a distinguished employment litigator and a driving force behind Lathrop GPM’s California-based Labor and Employment practice. Since joining the firm in 2019, Reathaford has led the group from the Los Angeles office, where she was appointed partner in charge in January 2023. Reathaford is nationally recognized for her expertise in high-stakes employment cases, particularly wage and hour class and collective actions, with a strong focus on California’s Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA). She has litigated hundreds of these cases, often involving novel legal theories and significant implications for employers. She defends clients in enforcement actions that test the boundaries of California labor laws, such as the applicability of the Grocery Workers Retention Act.



**ANGELA REDDOCK-WRIGHT**  
*Employment & Title IX Mediator*  
Signature Resolution/RLG

After working as an employment litigator, workplace and Title IX investigator for 25 years, Angela Reddock-Wright transitioned to becoming a full-time neutral in 2020. Reddock-Wright has mediated some of the most sensitive and high-profile cases involving private, public, entertainment, gaming, technology, union and non-profit sector employers on a range of issues including race and gender discrimination, retaliation, sexual harassment, pay equity, PAGA and wage and hour claims. Reddock-Wright is a past president of the Southern California Mediation Association and is a member of the panel of mediators with the US District Court, Central District of California. She is a distinguished fellow with the International Academy of Mediators.



**KATHERINE A. ROBERTS**  
*Partner; Co-Chair, Labor, Employment and Immigration group*  
Sidley Austin LLP

As co-chair of Sidley Austin LLP’s Labor, Employment and Immigration group, Katherine Roberts is a leading authority in employment litigation and labor relations, known for her strategic counsel on complex wage and hour class actions – including claims under the California Private Attorney General Act (PAGA) – as well as discrimination, harassment and wrongful termination claims. She also leads board-level investigations and advises on traditional labor matters under the National Labor Relations Act, including collective bargaining, strike response, union organizing and decertification campaigns, unfair labor practice proceedings, and grievance arbitrations. Roberts’ recent accomplishments include securing a complete victory at trial in a major employment wage and hour lawsuit.



**STEPHANIE ROESER**  
*Partner, Employment & Labor*  
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

A reputable lawyer, Stephanie Roeser counsels high-profile individuals and corporate clients in the entertainment, health care, start-up and financial services sectors on all aspects of employment law and related litigation. Stephanie partners with clients to navigate sensitive employment issues, including internal investigations, personnel management and terminations, crisis management, scaling (from 10 to 1,000 or more employees) and other operational issues in a way that mitigates the risk of costly employment litigation down the road. Roeser is a senior member of the leadership team representing Blake Lively in her ongoing litigation against Justin Baldoni, Wayfarer Studios, and related parties, and defending Lively and Ryan Reynolds in the recently dismissed countersuit in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York.

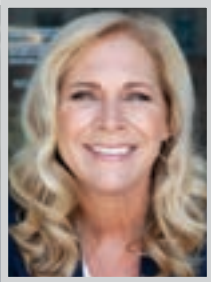


**MELANIE RONEN**  
*Partner; Chair, Employment*  
Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP

Melanie Ronen is the go-to employment lawyer for employers across industries, including financial services and broker-dealer clients in California. Ronen has achieved success in some of the most challenging and high-exposure matters facing employers today. She handles single-plaintiff and complex employment disputes in state and federal courts and arbitration involving claims related to discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, breach of contract, defamation, trade secret, unfair competition, and wage and hour issues, including class action and Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) claims. Since joining Stradley Ronon as a partner and chair of the firm’s employment practice in 2024, Ronen has been instrumental in the firm’s strategic West Coast expansion.



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**JOLYNN M. SCHARRER**  
*Shareholder; Labor & Employment  
Practice Group Leader*  
Hunt Ortmann Palffy Nieves Darling  
& Mah

For 36 years, JoLynn Scharrer has specialized in the fields of labor and employment, insurance counseling and litigation, business counseling and litigation, and construction matters. A shareholder at Hunt Ortmann Palffy Nieves Darling & Mah, she leads the firm’s Employment Law Group and Insurance practice. She is a mentor to her colleagues within her professional associations on matters involving labor and employment. Scharrer actively litigates wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation claims based upon gender, age, race, disability, and other protected classes. She defends wage and hour litigation, PAGA claims and class action lawsuits. She also maintains an active practice counseling clients in all facets of insurance.



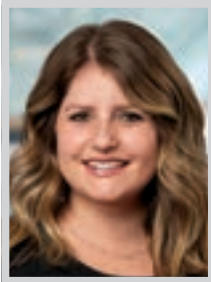
**TODD SCHERWIN**  
*Regional Managing Partner*  
Fisher Phillips

Fisher Phillips’ Todd Scherwin is a powerful and effective advocate for Los Angeles-area business clients facing thorny employment issues and perilous lawsuits. One of California’s premier labor and employment attorneys, Scherwin has blazed a trail in the ever-evolving world of California employment law through highly successful advocacy – including a track record of victories for employers and sitting at the counsel table before the US Supreme Court. He has led the firm’s growing Los Angeles office since 2013, opened a Woodland Hills office in 2020, and founded the firm’s Sports Industry Team of which he is co-chair. Scherwin is responsible for the firm’s strategic growth and direction, which involves recruiting and developing attorneys and directing client service programs.



**CARNEY SHEGERIAN**  
*Founder*  
Shegerian & Associates

Carney Shegerian, a seasoned trial attorney and the founder of Shegerian & Associates, is widely recognized as one of the nation’s leading litigators and a premier advocate for employees who have been wrongfully terminated. Since establishing his firm, Shegerian has successfully tried hundreds of cases, securing seven, eight, and nine-figure verdicts in over 70 of those cases. In just the past three years, Shegerian has led his firm to recover over \$500 million for aggrieved employees. In 2024 alone, Shegerian & Associates achieved a remarkable \$51.1 million in employment jury verdicts, with total client recoveries exceeding \$130 million. One of the firm’s notable 2024 verdicts, Pinter-Brown v. UC Regents, was honored by the Daily Journal as one of the “Top Verdicts of 2024.”



**ERIKA SILVERMAN**  
*Partner*  
Hill Farrer & Burrill LLP

Erika Silverman represents employers in defending against wrongful termination, discrimination, retaliation, harassment, and wage and hour claims, and she advises them on how to proactively avoid litigation. Silverman’s clients include companies of all sizes active in several industries, such as health care, telecommunications and hospitality. A fierce advocate for employers, Silverman achieves favorable outcomes in arbitration and jury trials, often disposing of cases through motion practice or early settlement. Silverman’s experience extends from arbitration to federal and state trial and appellate courts, and individual and class action employment claims. She has appeared before the California Courts of Appeal and assisted in briefing matters before the Supreme Court of California.



**JARED SLATER**  
*Partner*  
Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP

Jared Slater’s practice focuses on defending labor and employment actions, including claims for wage and hour violations, harassment, and discrimination both in the individual and class action arenas. He also devotes a significant portion of his practice to defending professionals whose former clients bring claims against them. Prior to joining Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP, Slater obtained complete defense verdicts at trial and favorable results on dispositive motions and in mediations. His clients have lauded him for his personal approach to each of their cases. He has also gained substantial trial experience defending legal malpractice, employment and personal injury actions. This year, Slater has been honored as a Super Lawyers “Rising Star” and JD Supra Readers’ Choice Top Author.

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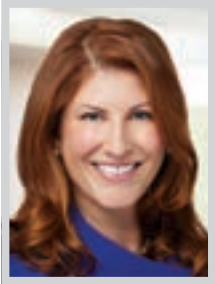


KATHERINE SMITH

Partner; Co-Chair, Labor and Employment Practice Group  
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Katherine Smith, co-chair of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher's Labor and Employment Practice Group, leader of the firm's DEI Task Force, and a partner in its Los Angeles office, has extensive experience representing employers in individual, representative and class action litigation at both the trial court and appellate level. Additionally, Smith dedicates a significant portion of her practice to advice and counseling, as well as internal investigations.

Smith serves as lead counsel in various DEI-related representations for clients, including Fortune 100 companies and major law firms. She helps these clients navigate the evolving legal landscape following significant rulings, executive actions, and EEOC investigations around DEI and affirmative action.



LAURA D. SMOWE

Partner  
Akin

As a first-chair litigator and trial lawyer, Laura Smolowe has successfully led complex commercial and employment-related cases for Fortune 500 companies across several industries, including technology, entertainment, fashion, retail, finance and pharmaceuticals. Her ability to win on both the plaintiff and defense sides – with multiple successful arbitration and trial verdicts – demonstrates her exceptional courtroom skill and strategic insight.

Smolowe is particularly known for her command in matters involving trade secrets, employee mobility and worker classification. Her current representation of Yipit LLC in two trade secret misappropriations cases in the Southern District of New York against M Science exemplifies her strategic acumen in protecting corporate innovation and promoting competition.

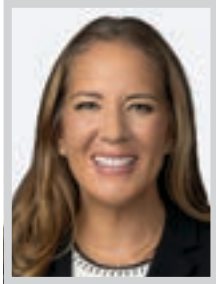


KARINA STERMAN

Partner, Litigation & Employment Law Department  
Greenberg Glusker LLP

Karina Sterman, partner in Greenberg Glusker's litigation and employment Law Departments, ardently advocates for her clients with creativity and pragmatism. Sterman represents businesses in employment litigation and disputes, from wage and hour class actions and representative PAGA actions to harassment, discrimination, retaliation, wrongful termination, and other employment claims.

Sterman has expertise across a wide array of industries, including technology, real estate, warehousing and retail, professional services, and skilled trades. Sterman also leverages her significant experience as a litigator in "behind-the-scenes" counseling to help her clients avoid or efficiently resolve claims. Sterman provides comprehensive employment law due diligence in the sale or purchase of companies.



TINA TELLADO

Shareholder  
Polsinelli

Tina Tellado is a nationally recognized labor and employment attorney with deep experience advising employers in high-stakes litigation and complex workplace issues across a range of industries. Her practice blends a deep understanding of employment law with an acute awareness of brand values and business priorities, making her a trusted advisor to major employers in fast-evolving sectors.

Tellado has recently served as lead counsel for one of the largest multinational luxury goods companies in several high-impact wage and hour disputes. In one matter, she defended the luxury retailer and manufacturer in a set of coordinated lawsuits brought by more than 1,000 employees. She guided the company through every stage of the legal process, helping protect the brand's reputation while addressing the claims strategically.

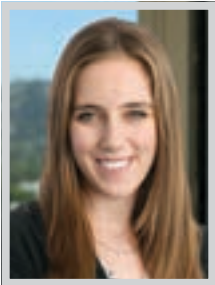


GUILLERMO TELLO

Member  
Clark Hill

Labor and employment attorney Guillermo Tello has amassed an impressive set of accomplishments as a successful client advocate at Clark Hill, a leader within the Hispanic National Bar Association, and as committed participant in his community. Tello has been instrumental in the growth of Clark Hill's California labor and employment practice. A trusted "go-to" employment litigator, his experience includes obtaining full defense jury trial verdicts and arbitration awards, and successfully resolving complex class actions and PAGA representative actions across varying industries, including gig economy.

Shortly after joining Clark Hill, Tello chaired the firm's COVID-19 Employment Litigation Task Force. He steered clients in the implementation of return-to-work policies.



CATHERINE VEENEMAN

Partner  
Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP

Catherine Veeneman represents California employers in responding to a wide range of employment claims and minimizing litigation risk. Her clients include small and medium-sized employers in the hospitality, retail, media, security and construction industries. Veeneman has defended her clients against wrongful termination, retaliation, discrimination, harassment, and wage and hour claims. In addition to obtaining favorable outcomes for her clients in dozens of individual matters, she has experience defending her clients against both class and PAGA claims.

Veeneman has published several articles on employment, food and beverage, and class action issues. She was recognized by J.D. Supra in its 2022 and 2023 Readers' Choice Awards as a top author in the categories of food and beverage and class action.



EMILY BURKHARDT VICENTE

Partner  
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Emily Burkhardt Vicente is co-chair of the Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP's national labor and employment team – a role she was selected for after only eight years as a partner. Vicente has defended some of the largest Fortune 100 companies in high-stakes employment litigation and is one of few lawyers to take hybrid class and collective action cases to jury trial.

Vicente demonstrates exceptional legal analysis and case management in large wage and hour and PAGA litigation matters. Vicente recently represented an entertainment operations company, a publicly traded beverage manufacturer, a technology manufacturer, and a transportation company in multiple California state and federal lawsuits.

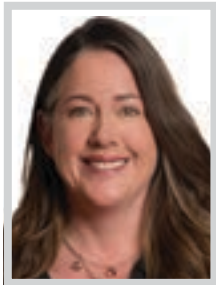


LISA VON ESCHEN

Partner  
Greenberg Glusker

With over three decades practicing law, Lisa Von Eschen has earned an impeccable reputation for counseling and defending businesses and nonprofit organizations in state and federal employment law matters. As partner at Greenberg Glusker, she advises management on day-to-day compliance issues, including leaves of absence, accommodations, exempt classifications, discipline, terminations, and reductions in force. Von Eschen also handles executive employment contracts, commission and bonus plans, restrictive covenants, confidentiality issues, and severance agreements.

Von Eschen recently resolved two wage & hour class action and PAGA cases filed by separate plaintiffs and firms within days of each other. She strategically consolidated the cases and negotiated favorable settlements at mediation.



ELAINE VUKADINOVICH

Partner  
Musick Peeler

Elaine Vukadinovich is a partner at Musick Peeler's and co-chairs the firm's labor and employment group. For over 25 years, she has represented and advised private and public employers in a variety of industries including colleges and universities, maintenance, security, healthcare, health plans, regional centers, restaurants, and religious entities.

Vukadinovich regularly counsels clients on difficult personnel decisions and on compliance with state and federal law. She also audits employer practices, provides training, and develops strategic planning for employers with respect to all employment issues. When litigation is unavoidable, Vukadinovich represents employers in litigation in state and federal courts.



DAVID WIMMER

Partner  
Swerdlow Florence Sanchez Swerdlow & Wimmer, A Law Corporation

David Wimmer has extensive experience advising management on a wide range of labor and employment issues, including establishing effective human resource policies, maintaining a union-free workplace, and complying with federal, state, and local laws. Wimmer represents companies in labor-relations matters, such as union-avoidance strategies, election campaigns, collective bargaining, supervisory training, arbitrations, state and federal court litigation, and proceedings before the National Labor Relations Board.

Wimmer defends employers in single-plaintiff through class-action wrongful termination, retaliation, harassment, discrimination, wage-and-hour and PAGA matters – and in criminal investigations and prosecutions.



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**LAURA WORSINGER**  
*Senior Counsel*  
Dykema

Laura Worsinger has established herself as an indispensable strategic partner to employers seeking to comply with the complex legal terrain of California labor and employment law and successfully do business in California. Through unparalleled litigation success and innovative approaches to assist clients in dealing with California’s constantly evolving workplace policies and protocols, Worsinger has become one of the most respected and impactful figures in her field.

In every wage-and-hour class action Worsinger has defended, the plaintiffs have failed to secure class certification. This perfect record is the result of meticulous strategy and a unique command of the nuances of California’s Labor Code. She has repeatedly protected her clients from the crippling financial and operational costs of mass litigation.



**KERRY GARVIS WRIGHT**  
*Partner; Chair, Employment Practice*  
Glaser Weil

Litigation partner, trial attorney, and chair of Glaser Weil’s employment practice, Kerry Garvis Wright is widely recognized for her experience and caliber of service. Since launching the firm’s employment practice, she has been consistently named one of the top employment lawyers in California.

Wright recently represented Adel Hagekhalil, former CEO and general manager of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – the agency responsible for supplying water to 19 million people across six counties – in a series of highly politicized and publicized workplace investigations. Hagekhalil’s employment has since been terminated, and Wright continues to represent him in connection with potential legal action arising out of discriminatory and retaliatory actions.



**JASON YU**  
*Partner*  
Snell & Wilmer

Snell & Wilmer partner Jason Yu is a distinguished labor and employment attorney whose 20 years of experience have made him a trusted advisor for employers navigating complex workplace challenges. Yu has successfully defended high-stakes matters ranging from wrongful termination, harassment and discrimination claims to trade secret misappropriation and commercial disputes. He has represented major manufacturers, banking and financial institutions, transportation companies, and technology firms in litigation involving wage and hour disputes, trade secret protection, and contract enforcement.

Yu’s fluency in Mandarin Chinese and his deep understanding of Asian markets uniquely position him as a trusted advisor for foreign companies doing business in the United States.

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Cox Castle is proud to congratulate  
**Managing Partner  
Dwayne McKenzie**  
on his recognition as a  
**2025 Leader of Influence:  
Labor & Employment Attorney**  
by the **Los Angeles Business Journal**.



**Congratulations!**  
Partner Laura Reathaford has  
been selected for the Los Angeles  
Business Journal’s 2025 Leaders  
of Influence: Labor & Employment  
Attorneys.

Congratulations,  
Laura, on this  
well-deserved honor.

Collaborative. Accountable.  
Authentic.



**Laura Reathaford**  
310.789.4648  
laura.reathaford@lathroggpm.com



This is an advertisement. The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be made based solely upon advertisements. Lathrop GPM LLP, 2029 Century Park East, Suite 1280N, Los Angeles, CA 90067. For more information, contact Laura Reathaford at 310.789.4600.