

Laura Lawless

Partner

Phoenix

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About Laura

Laura Lawless is a trial lawyer who represents employers before federal and state courts and administrative agencies, as well as in arbitration and mediation proceedings, defending employers in matters arising under federal and state employment laws, including claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, whistleblower retaliation, wrongful termination, wage and hour violations, and breach of contract, as well as in noncompetition, nonsolicitation, nondisclosure, trade secret and unfair competition cases.

Laura also counsels and collaborates with human resources professionals, including assisting in workplace investigations, auditing wage and hour practices under the Fair Labor Standards Act and analogous state laws, reviewing and advising on leaves of absence, preparing executive employment agreements and separation agreements, drafting employment policies and handbooks, advising on drug and alcohol testing and workplace violence prevention, delivering interactive management and executive training, and advising on reduction-in-force planning and implementation. She is also a frequent contributor and speaker on employment and labor law topics, including at state and local affiliates of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM).

In addition to her labor and employment practice, Laura assists private business owners in complying with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and analogous state laws, requiring disability accessibility in places of public accommodation.

Experience

- Won summary judgment on behalf of large supply chain management software developer on a former employee's claims of Title VII pregnancy discrimination and retaliation, federal and state Equal Pay Act violations and retaliation under the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- Won summary judgment in case brought against transportation safety solutions provider alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Conducted company-wide internal audit of large software developer for compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and multi-state wage and hour laws;
- Defended special event company in comprehensive Department of Labor investigation, including successfully defending claims of exempt employee and independent contractor misclassification.

- Won summary judgment on behalf of solar energy client in case brought by former executive alleging fraud and unjust enrichment, and obtained a substantial award of attorneys' fees.
- Successfully moved to dismiss claims brought by a competitor healthcare provider alleging breach of restrictive covenant agreements and unfair competition, and obtained a substantial award of attorneys' fees.
- Defeated claims brought by the Arizona Department of Economic Security against process service company alleging independent contractor misclassification.

Credentials

Education

- Arizona State University, J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2005
- Harvard University, B.A., *cum laude*, 2000

Admissions

- Arizona, 2005

Courts

- U.S. Ct. of App., Ninth Circuit
- U.S. Dist. Ct., Dist. of Arizona

Memberships & Affiliations

- Member, Schools and Scholarships Committee, Harvard Club of Phoenix, 2005-present
- Member, Board of Directors, Maricopa County Bar Association Labor and Employment Section, 2006-2016
- Member, Board of Directors, Recovery Innovations, Inc. (nka RI International), 2002-2015
- Member, Board of Directors, Arizona Foundation for Behavioral Health, 2012-2014
- Member, Board of Directors, Mental Health America – Arizona, 2006-2013
- Member, Board of Directors, Harvard Club of Phoenix, 2005-2013
- Member, Board of Directors, Institute for Mental Health Research, 2003-2009
- Member, Board of Directors, HOPE, Inc., 2002-2004

Recognitions

- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* since 2014 for Employment Law – Management and Litigation – Labor and Employment
- Recognized by *Chambers USA* 2016-2026 for Labor & Employment in Arizona, earning praise from clients as "excellent: very practical and knowledgeable, and very good at guiding us in the right direction."
- Recognized every year since 2012 by *Southwest Super Lawyers* as a Rising Star, which names the top 5% of lawyers in the region under the age of 40
- Chosen as an Outstanding Woman in Business by the *Phoenix Business Journal* in 2016 and recognized as one of the Forty Under 40 Phoenix-area business professionals by the *Phoenix Business Journal* in 2006

Expertise

Services

- Labor & Employment

Industries

- Healthcare

Publications & Speaking Engagements

Publications

- Co-author, "The ADA and Website Accessibility Post-Domino's: Detangling Employers' and Business Owners' Web and Mobile Accessibility Observations," *TIPS Law Journal: Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Law*, Winter 2021.
- Contributor, "Experts Give Their Solutions to Difficult Workplace Problems," *CFO & Controller Alert*, March 26, 2021.
- Co-author, "Top 10 Employee Benefits Issues in a Slowing Economy," *Law.com – Corporate Counsel*, March 23, 2020.
- Author, "Exploring the Limits of the At-Will Employment Doctrine," *Law360.com*, August 2016.
- Co-author, "Determining Supervisory Status in Harassment Cases," *Arizona Business Magazine*, June 2013.
- Author, "Two Recent Cases Analyze Classification of Nurses Under the National Labor Relations Act," *AHLA Labor & Employment Practice Group Newsletter*, January 2013.
- Chapter author, "Military Leave and Veteran's Rights" and "Settlement," *Arizona Employment Handbook*, T. Rogers ed., 2007 (and 2013 supplement).
- Columnist, "Ask the Employment Law Expert," *Arizona Republic*, 2012-present.
- Cited, employment law-related articles in the *Arizona Republic*, *WorkCompCentral.com*, *Bloomberg BNA* and *Phoenix Business Journal*.

Speaking Engagements

- Presenter, "Legal Power Hour Webinar: COVID-19 Preparedness for the Salon and Spa Industry," Professional Beauty Association, June 2020
- Roundtable participant, "How to Restart Your Business? Potential Employment Issues After a Prolonged Government Stay-at-Home Order," United States - Mexico Chamber of Commerce, May 2020.
- Roundtable participant, "The ADA and Website Accessibility Post-Domino's: Detangling Employers' and Business Owners' Web and Mobile Accessibility Obligations [CC]," American Bar Association, May 2020.
- Roundtable participant, "The Covid-19 Crisis: Update on US Labor & Employment Law," Gartner Webinar, April 2020.
- Commentary, "EEOC Coronavirus Guidance No Silver Bullet For ADA Risks," *Law360.com*, April 2020.
- Commentary, "Rapid Rollout of Economic Aid Presents Host of Challenges," *Crain's Cleveland Business*, April 2020.
- Roundtable participant, "Healthcare Industry on Employment and Benefits Impact of COVID-19," Willis Towers Watson, April 2020.

About our firm

One of the world's strongest integrated law firms, providing insight at the point where law, business and government meet. We deliver commercially focused business solutions by combining our legal, lobbying and political capabilities and invaluable connections on the ground to a diverse mix of clients, from long-established leading corporations to emerging businesses, startup visionaries and sovereign nations. More than 1,500 lawyers in over 40 offices across four continents provide unrivaled access to expertise.