Proskauer

Special Halloween Edition! California's Scariest Employment Law Verdicts

California Employment Law Update on **October 16, 2025**

Ah, California: land of Hollywood, high-tech, empty ocean roads, and—all too often these days—eye-popping jury verdicts. Employment litigation in California now rivals the state lottery as a source of multimillion-dollar payouts. We've previously reported on some of the more astonishing numbers (see here, here, and here), but they are only the tip of the iceberg.

Recent cases have led to single-plaintiff jury awards exceeding $10 million (so-called "nuclear" verdicts) and even the occasional "thermonuclear" verdict in excess of $100 million. Even though such judgments are often trimmed on appeal, the message is clear: California juries are willing to flex, and neither Sacramento nor the courts have any intention of standing in the way.

EXTRA-LARGE CA VERDICTS

No doubt the best way to head off such catastrophes is, as we often remind our readers, ARBITRATION! Still, many California employers continue to ignore the risks and are willing to roll the dice with a jury. Still not convinced? Ask any good plaintiff's lawyer what they fear most—if they're being honest, they will say it's arbitration, which deprives them of the ability to bamboozle a well-meaning downtown jury.

Hold up an arbitration agreement to a plaintiff's lawyer, and you can expect the same reaction you'd get from flashing a cross at a vampire: They'll run away every time!

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