



Contact

**Joseph C. O'Keefe**

**Partner**

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Joseph C. O'Keefe is a partner in the Labor & Employment Law Department and Co-Head of the Restrictive Covenants, Trade Secrets & Unfair Competition Group.

Joe is an experienced trial lawyer who, for more than 30 years, has litigated employment disputes of all types on behalf of employers, before federal and state courts, arbitral tribunals (e.g. FINRA and AAA), and state and federal administrative agencies throughout the U.S. Joe has litigated employment-related lawsuits alleging breach of non-compete agreements, theft of trade secrets, discrimination, sexual harassment, whistleblowing, wage and hour violations, Title IX violations, breach of contract, defamation, fraud and other business related torts. Joe's practice includes representing clients in complex class and collective litigation, including alleged violation of state and federal pay equity laws, violations of wage and hour laws and discrimination claims. Joe's experience includes appellate work in both federal and state courts.

In addition to his extensive litigation practice, Joe regularly advises employers, writes, and speaks on a wide range of employment related issues. He counsels clients concerning the integration of Artificial Intelligence in the workplace, employee mobility and restrictive covenants, pay equity, management of personnel problems, ADA/FMLA compliance, reductions in force, investigation of employee complaints,

state and federal leave laws, wage and hour issues, employment policies and contracts.

Joe represents employers in a variety of industries including financial services, higher education (colleges and universities), pharmaceuticals/medical devices, health care, technology, communications, fashion, consumer products, publishing, media, and real estate. He frequently authors articles concerning developments in the law and speaks at seminars concerning legal developments in the labor and employment law field.

## Matters

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### Representative matters:

- Defense award in FINRA proceeding representing financial services firm and individual financial services representatives in raiding and business tort matter brought by regional competitor
- Defense verdict in an eight-week New Jersey Superior Court jury trial concerning alleged discrimination based on age, disability, and religion
- Multiple defense awards in arbitrations (FINRA and AAA) for global financial services firms in matters alleging defamation, breach of contract, and discrimination based on gender, race, age, and disability
- Favorable resolution of FLSA and state wage and hour law class action against a large hospitality industry client
- Favorable resolution of NY state gender pay equity class action against a prominent university client.
- Summary judgment in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts in a matter alleging gender discrimination against a property and casualty insurer
- Summary judgment as to liability in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey, for a Plaintiff corporation, in a matter involving breach of restrictive covenants by departing sales representative employees.

- Prevailing on a motion to dismiss in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York in a matter alleging federal, state and city law claims of race discrimination and retaliation against a health care services provider
- Prevailing on a motion to dismiss in New York Supreme Court, and affirmance by the Appellate Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Department, on *collateral estoppel* grounds, in a matter brought by a university professor alleging sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.
- Joe has also represented multiple *pro-bono* clients appearing as *amici* in high profile matters involving gun safety, voter disenfranchisement, and DHS rules concerning student visas.

#### Practices

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Employment Counseling, Training & Pay Equity, Employment Litigation, Restrictive Covenants, Trade Secrets & Unfair Competition, Reductions In Force, Hiring & Terminations, Class & Collective Actions, Wage and Hour, Whistleblowing & Retaliation

#### Industries

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Financial Services, Private Capital

#### Education

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George Washington University National Law Center, J.D.

With Honors

Member, *George Washington Journal of International Law*

College of the Holy Cross, B.A.

#### Admissions & Qualifications

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New York

New Jersey

#### Court Admissions

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U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit  
U.S. District Court, New Jersey  
U.S. District Court, New York, Eastern District  
U.S. District Court, New York, Southern District  
U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit  
U.S. District Court, Michigan, Eastern District

#### Memberships

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American Bar Association

#### Awards & Recognition

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New Jersey Super Lawyers 2015-2017  
New York Legal Aid Society Pro Bono Publico Award 2007  
New York Legal Aid Society Pro Bono Award 2006  
Benchmark Litigation Labor & Employment Stars 2019-2021, 2024  
The Legal 500 United States: Litigation: Trade Secrets 2021  
The Legal 500 United States: Labor & Employment: Disputes (including Collective Actions): Defense 2019-2021  
Best Lawyers in America 2023-2024