



Contact

Joseph C. O'Keefe

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Joseph C. O'Keefe is a partner in the Labor & Employment Law Department and Co-Head of the Restrictive Covenant and Trade Secret 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 pay equity, use of Artificial Intelligence in the workplace, 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 writes articles concerning developments in the law and speaks at seminars concerning legal developments in the labor and employment law field.

Matters

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 on the basis of age, disability and religion
- Multiple defense awards in arbitrations for a global financial services firm in matters alleging defamation, breach of contract, and discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, and disability
- Resolution of FLSA and state wage and hour law class action against a large hospitality industry client
- Representation of trustees of union welfare fund in connection with claims of gender discrimination and harassment
- Representation of global financial services firms in multiple matters concerning claims asserted by registered representatives before FINRA
- Representation of a prestigious university in claims brought by a former professor alleging defamation and breach of contract
- Representation of a publisher in a matter alleging age and gender discrimination
- 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

- 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

Practices

Employment Litigation & Arbitration, Non-Compete & Trade Secrets, Hiring & Terminations, Class Actions, Wage and Hour, Whistleblowing & Retaliation, Employment Counseling & Training

Industries

Financial Services

Education

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

New York

New Jersey

Court Admissions

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

New Jersey State Bar Association

Essex County Bar Association

American Bar Association

Awards & Recognition

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 Labor & Employment Stars 2019-2021

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