

Michael L. Ludwig | Partner

Labor & Employment

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Michael L. Ludwig is a partner in the Firm's Labor and Employment practice group. Michael regularly counsels employers on a wide range of labor and employment law issues, including wage and hour compliance (including PAGA representative actions), employee separations and terminations, personnel policies and procedures, employee leaves of absence, and employee discipline. He has significant experience drafting employment agreements, separation and severance agreements, and workplace policies.

Michael represents a wide variety of clients, ranging from large public corporations to small family-owned local businesses, in all facets of the litigation process in labor and employment matters.

He has defended numerous wage and hour class action lawsuits in federal and state courts involving claims of misclassification of independent contractors, meal and rest period violations, overtime pay, minimum wage violations, failure to reimburse business expenses, and improper handling of employee tips. Michael also routinely defends companies facing claims of wrongful termination, sexual harassment, defamation, trade secret misappropriation, unfair competition, retaliation, and breach of contract. He has handled cases involving allegations of discrimination based on race, sex, disability, pregnancy, age, religion, medical condition and sexual orientation.

In addition, Michael is experienced in alternative dispute resolution, having assisted clients in obtaining favorable resolutions to disputes through mediation and direct negotiation.

Select Engagements

- Won summary judgment in an arbitration for the largest commercial real estate services company in the world. The plaintiff, a former employee, claimed that the company discriminated against her because of a disability, failed to accommodate her disability, harassed her because of her disability and race, and retaliated against her.
- Prevailed on summary judgment for a national bank in a case brought by a former employee who alleged constructive discharge, disability discrimination, failure to accommodate a disability, race discrimination and race harassment, failure to engage in the interactive process, retaliation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and wrongful termination in violation of public policy. Presented oral argument to the California Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District and obtained affirmance of the summary judgment ruling and dismissal.
- First-chaired the defense of a contract claim for unpaid wages brought by a highly-compensated employee of a national bank and obtained a complete judgment in the client's favor.
- Prevailed on summary judgment for a major national bank in a case that included claims for age, race, and gender discrimination; retaliation; breach of contract; and unfair competition.
- Prevailed on a summary judgment motion for a national bank in a case that included claims for disability and age discrimination. Presented oral argument to the California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District and obtained affirmance of the summary judgment ruling and dismissal.
- Defeated class certification in the California Superior Court, Alameda County on a proposed wage and hour class action for alleged misclassification of mortgage employees. The case was against a California-based financial institution and included claims for unpaid overtime wages, meal and rest period violations, itemized wage statement violations, waiting time penalties, and unfair competition under Business & Professions Code section 17200.
- Defeated class certification in the Eastern District of California in a proposed misclassification class action brought against a California-based bank and mortgage company. The case included California wage and hour claims, including overtime and meal and rest period violations.
- Defeated class certification in a class action lawsuit for a company in the tourism industry that included allegations of misclassification of independent contractors and claims for unpaid overtime wages, meal and rest period violations, unfair competition, and mishandling of employee tips.

Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- California
- U.S. District Court - Central District of California
- U.S. District Court - Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court - Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court - Southern District of California

Memberships

- California State Bar Association
- Los Angeles County Bar Association

Education

- University of Southern California, BS, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa
- University of Southern California Gould School of Law, JD

Professional Activities

Mike supports pro bono efforts at the firm in partnership with the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program, including representation before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Mike also has first-chaired prisoners' rights cases through Public Counsel, and volunteered for the Name/Gender Marker Change Petition Clinic with Bet Tzedek.

Mike served as Vice Chair of Blank Rome's national labor and employment practice group from January 2014 to January 2017.

Mike is a member of the labor and employment sections of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and California State Bar Association.