

# Akerman Adds 13 Labor and Employment Lawyers in Los Angeles, New York, Florida

Akerman LLP has added 13 labor and employment lawyers to its Labor and Employment Practice Group in seven months. Those include partners Zachary Bulthuis from Huntington Legal Solutions, Michelle Lee Flores from Cozen O'Connor and Jeffrey Horton Thomas from Thomas Employment Law, all of whom join the Los Angeles office, in addition to Jeffrey Kimmel from Meister Seelig & Fein LLP in New York and Jessica Travers from Littler Mendelson P.C. in Jacksonville, Fla.

In a release, the firm said that, since 2016, the team's headcount has more than doubled in size from 21 to 50 lawyers in Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, Texas, Washington, D.C. and across Florida.

The release continues:

"We are dedicated to growing our capabilities for clients in areas where they need us most," said Eric Gordon, chair of the Labor and Employment Practice Group. "Employers today are faced with a new set of uncertainties brought on by significant shifts in U.S. employment and immigration policies. The expansion of our team in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and across Florida advances our ability to problem-solve on the ground with our clients while serving their interests nationally."

**Zachary Bulthuis**

A versatile lawyer with experience litigating employment, commercial and intellectual property disputes, Bulthuis focuses his practice on representing management in labor and employment disputes. His clientele is diverse, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to local businesses and individuals.

Bulthuis has extensive courtroom experience, and has obtained success for his clients in both alternative dispute resolution and trial settings. His work includes litigation of, and advice on, wage and hour, California's Private Attorney General Act (PAGA), trade secret, reimbursement and unfair competition claims arising from employment relationships. Bulthuis frequently provides outside general counsel services on myriad legal and business issues, including advising on licensing and employment policies and disputes, and advice and preparation of a wide range of contracts.

#### Michelle Lee Flores

Lee Flores is an employment litigation and consulting lawyer with deep experience handling jury and bench trials, arbitration, mediation and pre-litigation negotiations involving sex, race, religion, age and disability harassment and discrimination, and wage and hour violations, including class actions and wrongful termination. Lee Flores, a nationally recognized employment advisor, counsels clients on employment compliance, internal investigations, discipline, terminations, reductions in force, wage and hour matters and cannabis in the workplace. She formulates and guides clients on workplace policies and procedures manuals, drug testing policies, employment contracts and separation agreements, and harassment and discrimination prevention policies, including preventive counseling and in-house training. Regarded as a thought leader on employment matters, Lee Flores has been quoted in the Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, The Economist, Variety, Fast Company, Corporate Counsel, SHRM and Law360, among others. Lee Flores has received many honors and recognitions, most recently she was voted for the fifth year in a row as a Southern California Super Lawyer.

Active in the community and across prominent professional organizations, Lee Flores also leads the efforts of several business and civic institutions. Those include her involvement as trustee of the boards of the Mexican American Bar

Foundation and the University of California Press Foundation, among many others.

#### Jeffrey Horton Thomas

From Fortune 500 corporations to mid-market employers, Horton Thomas focuses his practice on representing employers and management in all aspects of California and federal employment law before state and federal courts and administrative agencies. He regularly defends employers on issues involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wrongful termination, disability accommodation, wage and hour, and PAGA lawsuits and administrative actions. His clients span various sectors including hospitality, technology, retail, professional services, manufacturing and apparel. Clients value his aggressive approach and mature judgment in defending litigation.

On the thought leadership front, Horton Thomas also has served as a contributing employment law editor to Modern Restaurant Management magazine and is a regular legal guest on KABC Talk Radio's "So, What's Your Problem."

#### Jeffrey Kimmel

With a diverse national practice focusing on employment law and complex commercial litigation, Kimmel represents clients in federal and state courts, as well as in various arbitration forums and before federal, state and local administrative bodies. His clients operate across multiple sectors, including technology, entertainment, hospitality, real estate, insurance and financial services and range in size from small, closely held companies to publicly traded corporations with thousands of employees. Kimmel routinely represents management in matters relating to wage and hour violations, wrongful termination and anti-discrimination and regularly counsels employers on day-to-day human resources and legal compliance issues.

Kimmel represents high level executives in connection with the

negotiation of employment contracts and compensation packages. Kimmell also works with many high net worth and high profile individuals on employment related matters to limit personal exposure arising from their direct or indirect employment relationships.

#### Jessica Travers

Travers focuses her practice on helping large and small employers avoid and resolve conflicts with employees. She is an experienced litigator handling a variety of intricate employment issues, including overtime and minimum wage, discrimination and retaliation, whistleblowing, workplace harassment, employee leave and reasonable accommodations, employee class and collective actions, and non-compete and breach of contract claims. Her clients span various industries, including the hospitality, retail, transportation and energy sectors.

Travers' representation of employers occurs before federal and state agencies, state and federal courts, the courts of appeal and arbitral forums. Whether the matter is small or complex, she brings the same amount of subject-matter expertise, efficiency, tenacity and experience to reach the best resolution for the client. Travers understands litigation can be costly and burdensome for companies. Thus, she believes litigation avoidance is key to her clients' overall success and uses her extensive litigation experience to counsel employers on implementing lawful policies, handling workplace conflicts within the law and mitigating workforce risks. Travers is also a frequent speaker on these topics.

Akerman's Labor and Employment Practice Group also has recently welcomed associates Zoe Bekas and Steven Gallagher from Thomas Employment Law and Jade Brewster from Constangy, Brooks, Smith and Prophete LLP in Los Angeles, Chris Eby from Semple, Farrington & Everall P.C. in Denver, Tiffany Hendricks from Perlman, Bajandas, Yevoli & Albright P.L. in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Melissa Overbeck from Bracewell LLP in New

York, Sasha Segall from Loeb & Loeb LLP in West Palm Beach, Fla. and Paul Rutigliano from Meister, Seelig & Fein in New York. They bring experience in employment litigation and counseling for employers.