Labor & Employment PAGA Attorney Joins Blank Rome in Los Angeles

Blank Rome LLP announces that Laura Reathaford has joined the firm as a partner in the Labor and Employment group in the Los Angeles office. She joins from Venable LLP.

In a news release, the firm said Reathaford focuses her practice on management-side employment litigation, with special emphasis on representative actions under the Private Attorney General Act (PAGA) and other wage and hour collective and class actions. PAGA allows aggrieved employees to file lawsuits to recover civil penalties on behalf of themselves, other employees, and the State of California for Labor Code violations. The act represents a significant threat to California employers and is in a constant state of change, requiring the most experienced, creative defense counsel.

“We are very excited to welcome Laura to the Firm,” said Alan J. Hoffman, Blank Rome’s Chairman and Managing Partner. “Laura is well known to our labor and employment team for her leadership in the defense of wage and hour claims, especially claims brought under PAGA. She brings considerable strength to this essential labor and employment capability in California, and adds equally considerable strength more broadly across the spectrum of defense-side labor and employment law for our clients across the country.”

The release continues:

> Reathaford is a distinguished litigator across the full range of employment disputes, including claims for wrongful termination, sexual harassment, unpaid wages, discrimination, and union grievances. She is also an experienced trial attorney having achieved favorable

judgments in numerous PAGA actions, as well as FLSA actions and in single plaintiff retaliation matters. In addition to high-stakes litigation, Reathaford counsels clients on termination issues, employee handbooks, leave and disability rules, and California and federal wage and hour laws. She represents the management of public and private businesses in the manufacturing and grocery industries, as well as in banking, healthcare, and telecommunications, both in California and nationwide.

“Still a relatively new law, PAGA is constantly evolving and our clients in California need the most experienced counsel to respond creatively and effectively to a rapidly increasing number of claims,” said Scott F. Cooper, Partner and Co-Chair of the Firm’s Labor and Employment practice. “Just recently, the California Supreme Court approved class-action like discovery of employee contact information in representative PAGA cases. Laura has been ahead of the curve on PAGA since the beginning. And as we field a growing number of calls from clients regarding PAGA, they will quickly see the benefits of having Laura join our team.”

“The labor and employment group at Blank Rome offers clients an exceptional depth and breadth of talent that I am excited to join and help grow,” said Reathaford. “I also look forward to once again collaborating with Partner Howard M. Knee, with whom I have worked before, as well as contributing high-level client service and legal practice to the Firm as it continues to expand both locally and nationally.”

“Laura will be a tremendous resource to the Firm’s ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, particularly with regards to our Women’s Forum,” adds Brooke T. Iley, Partner and Co-Chair of the Firm’s Labor and Employment practice. “Her previous role and experience in leading women’s diversity initiatives at Venable will be instrumental in advancing not only Blank Rome’s affinity groups, but also

our firm’s efforts in diversifying the legal profession at large. I am excited for the new insights that she will bring to the table, which will greatly benefit both our clients and Firm.”

Reathaford earned her J.D. from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and B.Comm. from the University of Alberta.

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