



Susannah K. Howard

Partner

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Susannah Howard is an experienced labor and employment lawyer with significant experience in a range of employment and labor matters, including wage-and-hour disputes, discrimination based on age, race, sex, national origin, physical handicap, enforcement of non-compete agreements, background check procedures, employee discipline and termination, and related matters. Susannah also conducts independent investigations on behalf of companies into high profile allegations of employee misconduct. She has a notable track record of defending and representing clients in a diverse array of industries including the airline, staffing, financial services, technology, and private equity sectors.

Experience

Wage & Hour

- Representing **American Airlines** in connection with several wage and hour and workplace safety class actions
- Defending a global insurance provider in a putative class and collective action alleging misclassification of insurance underwriters
- Defending a major financial institution in several putative wage and hour class actions alleging, among other things, that the bank failed to reimburse employees for necessary business expenditures
- Defending a major financial institution in a number of putative class and collective actions alleging misclassification of mortgage lending officers; has thus far successfully defeated class and collective certification in two of these cases

Admissions

Bar Admissions

California

New York

Court Admissions

US District Court, Northern District of California and Southern District of New York

Education

University of Toronto, J.D.: Senior Editor, *University of Toronto Faculty of Law Review*; Patricia Julia Myhal Scholarship in Legal Writing; Judy LaMarsh Prize in Feminist Analysis of Law; Nancy Park Book Prize in International Women's Rights; Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP Award for Academic Excellence; Canada Law Book Prize in Property

University of Toronto, B.A., History and Women's Studies: with distinction; Gordon Cressy Student Leadership Award; Alan Coatsworth Memorial Scholarship

- Defended **The Ritz-Carlton** in a putative class action brought by a banquet server who alleged the hotel chain violated California Labor Code § 351; after presenting evidence at a one day bench trial, the judge ruled in favor of the hotel chain
- Defeated class certification on behalf of **The Ritz-Carlton** in a putative wage and hour action which alleged a number of wage and hour violations on behalf of a putative class of non-exempt housekeeping employees
- Defended **Robert Half International** in several California wage and hour class actions alleging violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) in connection with adverse employment actions; successfully compelled claims to arbitration
- Defended **H&R Block** in a complex, nationwide wage and hour class action brought by former employees challenging the company's continuing education policy under the Fair Labor Standard Act and California and New York law; successfully obtained summary judgment dismissing all claims
- Routinely defend employers against wage claims before the California Department of Industrial Relations

Investigations & Strategic Response

- Leading the strategic response to a government investigation related to alleged systemic gender discrimination, harassment, and retaliation for a major technology company
- Leading an internal investigation for a technology company in response to sexual harassment allegations against a key executive of the company
- Representing a major film studio in a systemic investigation brought by the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission alleging that the studio discriminates against women in the hiring of directors

Discrimination

- Representing a multinational technology company in a pay equity class action alleging that the company discriminated against women employees in terms of pay and promotions
- Defending **Robert Half International** in a statutory discrimination lawsuit
- Represented **American Idol**'s production companies, broadcasting companies, and certain of its executive producers and sponsors against race discrimination and other claims brought by 10 former contestants; prevailed on motion to dismiss
- Defended a major private equity fund in employment discrimination litigation; successfully obtained dismissal of all claims
- Routinely defend employers against discrimination charges before the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing
- Defended a major financial institution in large-scale litigation by over 200 former and current employees alleging fraud, conspiracy and employment discrimination

Traditional Labor

- Secured two major summary judgment wins for **United Airlines**, confirming that California labor and employment law does not apply to individuals who work primarily outside the state's borders

- Won full dismissal for **American Airlines** of a putative class action brought by former America West and US Airways pilots challenging the proposed seniority resolution that followed the US Airways/American 2013 merger
- Won full dismissal for **American Airlines** in an action brought by a local union representing American's mechanics on the ground that plaintiffs' claims were "minor disputes" under the Railway Labor Act and could therefore be remedied through the parties' collective bargaining agreement's grievance and arbitration procedures

Professional Activities

Clerkships

- Hon. Louis LeBel, Supreme Court of Canada

Co-Author

- "Accommodating Women's Differences under the Women's Anti-Discrimination Convention," 56 *Emory Law Journal* 1039 (2007)

Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "Recent Amendments to the California Fair Pay Act," California Employment Law Council Conference (November 15, 2018)
- Panelist, "What #MeToo Means for You Too," O'Melveny Newport Beach CLE Marathon (November 29, 2018)
- Panelist, "Pay Equity," *California Lawyer* Employment Law Forum (July 2017)

Honors & Awards

- Named to *Legal 500's* "Next Generation Lawyer" list in Labor and Employment (2019-2022)