SpencerFane®

Jonathon (Jon) Watson

Partner

Contact

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Overview

Jonathon (Jon) Watson represents clients with a singular focus: to serve as a solutions-oriented business partner for employers facing labor and employment issues. What sets Jon apart is his drive to learn clients' businesses and to give advice based on their unique circumstances and strategic priorities. Jon does more than simply tell clients what "can" and "cannot" be done; he helps clients assess and balance risk to meet each challenge. With a local and national practice, Jon assists businesses ranging from startups to Fortune 100 companies to mitigate risk and deliver results that align with their specific business operations.

Jon's practice encompasses the entire alphabet soup of federal labor and employment statutes, including Title VII, the ADA, the ADEA, the FLSA, the FMLA, and the NLRA. His practice also extends to state-specific labor and employment claims, and he has represented employers in matters across the continental U.S. Jon's state-specific practice has a particular emphasis on California and Colorado, states with among the most stringent employment requirements. These representations include counseling employers to ensure compliance, defending employers in litigation, as well as advising on collective bargaining and traditional labor matters. His experience runs the gamut of all size and scope, from single plaintiff and multiparty discrimination cases, to nationwide class and collective wage and hour actions.

Most importantly, Jon takes the time to understand the distinct facts at play in each matter. With a clear understanding of the business implications, Jon collaborates with clients to develop a strong defense strategy to drive cases from start to finish. Above all else, Jon seeks to partner with employers to drive pragmatic, cost-effective, and reasonable resolutions to any labor and employment issue.

Education

- University of Denver Sturm College of Law (J.D.), *Order of St. Ives*
- Truman State University (B.S.), *summa cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Colorado
- Wyoming
- California

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia
- California Superior Court for the County of Los Angeles
- California Superior Court for the County of Riverside
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Kentucky
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming

Community Involvement

- University of Denver's Advocacy Program, Volunteer
- Movember Foundation, Participant
- Equity Capital Groupe, Executive Committee Member

Distinctions

- *Best Lawyers in America,* Ones to Watch, 2023-2024
- *Colorado Super Lawyers*, Rising Star, 2018-2022

Memberships

- Colorado Bar Association, Labor and Employment Section
- American Bar Association
- Denver Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division
- William E. Doyle American Inn of Court, Barrister

Presentations and Publications

- "From Sidelines to the Suite: A GC's Playbook," ACC Colorado CLE, August 2025
- "Jump-Start Your Political and Advocacy Efforts for a New Presidential Administration," ACC Colorado CLE Dinner, January 2025
- "Employment Law Update," Western Region IPMA-HR Annual Conference, April 2019
- "Comprehensive Discrimination and Harassment Training," Office of the Secretary of State of Colorado, 2018
- "Check-In: EEOC, DOL, and NLRB Compliance – A Labor and Employment Law Roundtable," *Employment Law Daily*, June 2018
- "Drug Testing – What Breweries Need to Know About Testing Employees' Marijuana Use Under Colorado and Federal Law," Business of Beer Series, May 2017

Related Experience

- Currently defending a wage and hour class action under the California labor code alleging, among other things, that mechanics were misclassified as exempt.
- Lead counsel in nationwide collective action under FLSA alleging line supervisors and superintendents were misclassified in food manufacturing facility.
- Finalizing settlement in nationwide collective action alleging violations of the FLSA relating to COVID-related health screens and alleged violations of the regular rate requirements relating to COVID-era bonuses. The putative collective consists of more than 25,000 members.
- Achieved complete dismissal of a nationwide class action with more than 250,000 putative class members relating to allegations under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) for alleged unlawful employee background checks.
- Awarded complete defense verdict in a two-day arbitration in Pennsylvania challenging an employee's termination for violating the company's drug policy when the employee claimed to have a valid medical marijuana card.
- Achieved dismissal of class allegations and secured a nuisance value settlement with an individual named plaintiff in nationwide FCRA claims in New Jersey.
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive union avoidance campaign for a national retail employer, including policy updates, trainings, and an employee engagement strategy.
- Served as lead strategist in preparation for major labor stoppage at a food manufacturing location, including to coordinate collective bargaining, public relations, employee communications, and contingency planning.
- Obtained summary judgment and sanctions against a plaintiff and his attorney who brought a Section 301 hybrid action against a national medical transportation company and the union in Pennsylvania federal court.
- Represented a national staffing agency in investigations by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) of its pay practices in Tennessee, achieving a finding of no violations.
- Successfully defended a multinational food processing company in an action brought by an employee's former employer seeking a temporary injunction and to enforce non-solicitation and confidentiality agreements at trial.
- Obtained summary judgment against claims of national origin and race discrimination and retaliation in Colorado federal court on behalf of a multinational food processing company.
- Achieved dismissal of pregnancy and disability discrimination claims in Kentucky federal court for a multinational food processing company.
- Secured nuisance settlement in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan for a multinational food processing company on an FLSA donning and doffing collective action with more than 4,000 putative class members and successfully argued for a severely diminished attorneys' fee award to plaintiffs' counsel.
- Secured nominal settlement for a large temporary staffing agency in a nationwide wage and hour class and collective action involving tens of thousands of putative class members.

- Secured favorable settlement on behalf of a national trucking carrier in class actions in California and Washington concerning alleged violations of state wage and hour law and involving hundreds of putative class members.
- Prevailed in numerous arbitrations around the country regarding various claims that employers violated collective bargaining agreements.
- Lead counsel for nationwide wage and hour litigation claiming unpaid overtime for COVID-related health screening and protocols.
- Lead counsel in wage and hour class and collective action claims in Delaware and Ohio courts on behalf of multi-national food processing company.
- Lead counsel in nationwide EEOC investigation into an employer's COVID policies and practices.
- Currently serving as lead counsel for dozens of single-plaintiff employment discrimination, harassment, and retaliation cases in state and federal courts around the country.