



COUNSEL TO CALIFORNIA EMPLOYERS®

Denisha P. McKenzie

Partner

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About Denisha

Denisha P. McKenzie defends employers in all areas of labor and employment law in state and federal court, as well as before various administrative agencies, including the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), and the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE). Denisha's practice has a special emphasis on vigorously defending alleged claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wrongful termination. A significant portion of her practice is also dedicated to defending wage and hour single plaintiff, class action, and Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) lawsuits.

Denisha has successfully resolved a number of employment claims on summary judgment, including having a complete dismissal affirmed on appeal. As part of her trial experience, she has managed expert witness reporting and testimony, developed overall defense strategy, and conducted direct and cross-examinations of several key witnesses.

Denisha also provides proactive advice, counsel and training to management on emerging employment issues in California to ensure compliance with its ever-changing laws and regulations. This includes drafting policies, employee handbooks, and policy manuals regarding leaves of absence, wage and hour compliance, occupational safety and health, and several other statutorily-mandated requirements. She also regularly drafts employment contracts, as well as severance, settlement, and arbitration agreements.

Denisha is a formidable advocate for advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal industry, as well as her local community. She has authored several articles on diversity and inclusion, and regularly assists management with developing effective action plans

Education

University of California, Irvine
School of Law, J.D. 2012

- Pro Bono Honors
- Member of Inaugural Class
- Co-Founded the Orange County Human Rights Association (OCHRA)
- Co-Author of Inaugural Issue of the UC Irvine Law Review

Tufts University, B.A. 2009

- Honos Civicus

Sacramento

San Francisco

Los Angeles

Orange County

San Diego



to achieve a diverse and inclusive workplace. She is the Immediate Past President of the Thurgood Marshall Bar Association of Orange County and the recipient of the 2019 Legal Trailblazer Award from the Black Law Student's Association of the University of California, Irvine School of Law.

Publications

"Calif. Employers Note: Industrial Welfare Commission is Back," Co-Author, Law360, August 2023

"Understanding Employment Law Trends to Keep Pace with the Evolving California Workplace," Co-Author, Orange County Business Journal, November 2020

"25 Tips for California Employers Based on Recent and Proposed Changes in California Law," Co-Author, Orange County Business Journal, October 2019

"Diversity and Inclusion: It's Much More Than Just Legal Compliance," Co-Author, Orange County Business Journal, October 2018

"San Francisco Giants Narrowly Recover Right to Compel Arbitration on Appeal," California Employment Law Letter, November 2017

"Can You Fire an Employee For Off-Duty Conduct?," Co-Author, Orange County Business Journal, October 16, 2017

"The Price of Bullying: Why Pizzerias Should Protect Employees from Abusive Conduct on the Job," Co-Author, PMQ Pizza Magazine, May 2017

"Employee Bullying Claims Can Bury Your Business," Co-Author, QSRweb.com, April 2017

"Learn These 10 Strategies To Avoid Common – And Costly – Employee Lawsuits In The Transportation Industry In California," Co-Author, Transportation & Logistics International, January 2017

"Supreme Court Leaves Massive Attorney's Fee Award Against EEOC Unresolved," May 2016

"AB 1522 Requires California Employers to Update Paid Sick Leave Policies," September 2014



Presentations

"The Future of DEI for California Employers in a Shifting Legal Landscape," Panelist, CDF Webinar Series, April 2025

"Students for Fair Admissions One Year Later: Advising Employer Clients on DEI Programs; Title VII and Muldrow Effect," Co-Presenter, Stafford Management, October 2024

"Employer DEI Initiatives: Students for Fair Admissions and its Aftermath," Co-Presenter, Stafford Management, October 2023

"Top 10 Employment Concerns for CA Employers Related to Returning to Work and COVID Vaccinations," Co-Presenter, CDF Webinar Series, May 2021

"COVID-Related Wage and Hour Issues," ProVisors OCC, March 2021

"Developments, Updates and Predictions on Trade Secret and Non-Compete Laws for 2021," Co-Presenter, CDF Webinar Series, March 2021

"Remote Timekeeping and Gender Pay Data Reporting," ProVisors OCC Group, March 2020

"COVID-19 Related Wage and Hour Issues," Co-Presenter, CDF COVID Education Week, December 2020

Recognitions

Listed, Best Lawyers® - Labor and Employment Litigation (2024 - 2026), Irvine, CA

Listed, Best Lawyers® "Ones to Watch" - Labor and Employment Litigation (2023), Irvine, CA

President, Thurgood Marshall Bar Association, Orange County

Immediate Past President, 2019

President, 2018

President-Elect, 2017

Vice President, 2016

Listed, Super Lawyers Southern California - Rising Star, 2018 - 2022



COUNSEL TO CALIFORNIA EMPLOYERS®

Member, The National Black Lawyers Top 40 Under 40, 2022

CDF Labor Law LLP

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, 2021 - Present

Alumni Representative, University of California Irvine School of Law, Inclusion and Diversity Committee, 2016 - 2017

Recipient, Trail Blazer Award, University of California, Irvine School of Law, Black Law Student's Association, 2019

Civic Activities

Board of Directors, **One Voice**, 2023

Board of Directors, Family Support Network, 2016 - 2019

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San Diego

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