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Control of Reality TV Stars Muddles Employee Status Debate

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Tracey Diamond, a partner in Troutman Pepper Locke's Labor + Employment Practice Group, was quoted in the January 9, 2025 *Law360* article, "[Control of Reality TV Stars Muddles Employee Status Debate](#)."

Generally, an independent contractor is someone who is free from direction and control of a company and doesn't have limits on how they work or what work they decide to take on. Reality television is a whole different concept, said Tracey Diamond, a partner with management-side firm Troutman Pepper Locke LLP.

"What goes on behind the scenes I think may tell a very different story," she said, "and this is a little bit of a peeling back of the curtain as to how much control the producers or the production really has over the individuals who are contestants."

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If the idea that certain reality TV contestants are employees catches on, it may have an impact on where production companies decide to film, Diamond said.

"They may want to avoid California, for example, which has stricter meal and rest break requirements and higher minimum wage laws than Georgia, which has much less in the way of restrictions," she said. "I think it could really overhaul the reality TV industry."

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