

Firm News | September 10, 2025

Troutman Pepper Locke Bolsters Tax and Benefits Practice With Addition of Heather Heath Ryan

New Partner Enhances Firm's Support for Complex Employee Benefits and M&A Matters

CHARLOTTE – [Heather Heath Ryan](#) has joined Troutman Pepper Locke's Tax and Benefits Practice Group as a partner in the Charlotte office. Ryan brings a decade of unique experience as in-house employee benefits and executive compensation counsel and in total rewards business roles, equipping her to understand the needs and expectations of clients in a distinctive way.

"Heather's extensive experience in employee benefits and executive compensation, including guiding large, sophisticated employers in designing and administering health and welfare plans, retirement plans, and executive compensation arrangements, will be invaluable in enhancing our practice and meeting our clients' diverse needs," said [Jim Earle](#), leader of Troutman Pepper Locke's Tax and Benefits Practice Group. "We are thrilled to welcome someone of her caliber to our firm."

Ryan provides comprehensive, practical, and action-oriented advice on all facets of employee benefits, including 401(k), pension, cafeteria, and health and welfare plans. She has successfully handled many Department of Labor and IRS audits and correction submissions for clients and counsels clients on a wide array of matters, such as fiduciary governance structures and processes, regulatory compliance, benefit vendor contracts, employer stock best practices, and COBRA and wellness plans.

"Heather's deep knowledge and experience handling complex employee benefits and executive compensation issues will greatly enhance our ability to serve clients in the region, particularly navigating intricate compliance and transactional matters. She will be a great addition to the Charlotte office, and we're excited to welcome her to the team," said [Jason Evans](#), Charlotte office managing partner.

Ryan advises companies with employee benefit and executive compensation issues that arise in corporate transactions, including equity compensation, change-in-control arrangements, severance, and deferred compensation. She regularly assists clients with executive employment agreements, short-term and long-term incentive compensation, and executive terminations. Additionally, Ryan contributes to the development and drafting of compensation committee materials for the board and provides guidance on governance matters impacting these committees.

"My transition to Troutman Pepper Locke aligns perfectly with the firm's benefits practice," Ryan said. "My in-house experience uniquely positions me to offer business-oriented and proactive advice that truly resonates with our clients' perspectives. I am eager to work on retirement and health benefit plans, executive compensation, and M&A transactions, while enhancing our focus on benefits compliance and fiduciary governance for our employer clients."

Troutman Pepper Locke's nationally recognized Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation Team, consisting of 25 attorneys across nine offices, creates solutions for employee benefits and executive compensation issues that help mitigate risk and advance clients' goals. Clients work with the firm on every aspect of their compensation, benefits, and compliance needs — from designing, drafting, and implementing plans and agreements to counseling on compliance, fiduciary duties, and plan administration. Through client work in all major sectors, including energy, insurance, health care, financial services, private equity, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and technology, Troutman Pepper Locke attorneys offer industry-specific insights and perspectives.

Troutman Pepper Locke

Troutman Pepper Locke helps clients solve complex legal challenges and achieve their business goals in an ever-changing global economy. With more than 1,600 attorneys in 30+ offices, the firm serves clients in all major industry sectors, with particular depth in energy, financial services, health care and life sciences, insurance and reinsurance, private equity, and real estate. Learn more at troutman.com.

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