

Lani Blake

Associate

Houston

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Lani advises employers, business owners, and HR professionals on every aspect of the employment relationship. Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, she provides practical, business-focused counsel throughout the employment life cycle, helping clients navigate complex workplace issues, mitigate risk, and manage their workforce.

OVERVIEW

Lani counsels clients on a broad range of employment issues they face. She advises on hiring and onboarding, employee and supervisor training, leave and disability management, performance management and discipline, and layoffs and terminations. Lani regularly drafts and negotiates key agreements and materials for employers, including employment agreements, offer letters, restrictive covenants, handbooks and policies, and separation and severance agreements. She also advises clients on employment issues arising in mergers, acquisitions, and other corporate transactions. Her work experience spans multiple industries, including life sciences, energy, manufacturing, hospitality, private equity, and professional services.

In addition to her counseling practice, Lani represents employers in state and federal courts and before administrative agencies in disputes involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, wage and hour compliance, restrictive covenants, trade secrets, and other employment-related claims. She has experience defending both individual and class actions, and she regularly assists employers in protecting confidential business information, customer relationships, and other business interests.

A recognized legal writer and oral advocate, Lani has nearly a decade of experience helping employers navigate workplace challenges.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Employment Advice

Lani regularly provides strategic advice to employers on matters relating to:

- Leave management, including the interactive process and employee requests for reasonable accommodations under the ADA as well as leave issues arising under the FMLA and other associated laws.
- Individual terminations and group layoffs, reductions in workforce, and furloughs.

- Performance issues and employee discipline.
- Specific policies and full employment handbooks for local, national, and global companies across various industries.
- The enforceability of restrictive covenants, including non-competition, non-solicitation, and non-disclosure agreements under various state laws.
- Proper pay practices and employee classification under the FLSA and state law equivalents.
- Sexual harassment prevention, investigation, and response.

Employment Litigation

Lani combines her extensive knowledge of employment law with proven advocacy and legal writing skills to defend employers before administrative agencies and in state and federal courts. Her experience includes representing employers in numerous matters involving:

- Claims of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation under state and federal law (e.g., age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, disability, race, national origin, and color).
- Allegations of pay inequity, including claims asserted under the Equal Pay Act, Title VII, and Lilly Ledbetter.
- Complex sexual harassment matters, hostile work environment allegations, supervisor-misconduct claims, and related retaliation theories.
- Wage and hour litigation, including numerous individual, class, and collective actions involving allegations of unpaid overtime, employee misclassification, and other pay-practice challenges under the FLSA and comparable state law.
- Trade secret, confidential information, and restrictive covenant disputes (e.g., non-competes, non-solicitation restrictions, etc.), including numerous successful actions to obtain temporary and permanent injunctive relief.
- Employment-related contract litigation, including severance and separation agreement disputes, reimbursement and claw back claims, and other post-employment disputes.
- Agency proceedings before the EEOC, state employment agencies, and other administrative bodies.
- Procedural and statutory defenses, including Anti-SLAPP challenges and threshold motions.
- Robust motion practice and briefing, including complex dispositive motions.

AWARDS

- *Texas Board of Legal Specialization*, Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law (2026)
- *Best Lawyers in America®*: Ones to Watch, Labor and Employment Law – Management (2023-2027); Litigation – Labor and Employment (2026-2027)
- *Super Lawyers®* Texas Rising Star, Employment and Labor (2020-2026)
- *Houstonia Magazine*, Top Lawyer, Labor and Employment (2019-2020, 2022-2023)
- American Society of Legal Writers, SCRIBES Award for Excellence in Legal Writing (2017-2018)

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Employment Counseling
- Labor + Employment

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Class Action

- Employment Counseling
- Independent Contractor Misclassification + Compliance
- Labor + Employment
- Labor + Employment Litigation + Dispute Resolution
- Noncompete + Trade Secrets
- Wage + Hour Matters

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, State Bar of Texas, Labor and Employment Section
- Member, Houston Bar Association, Labor and Employment Section
- Board member, South Texas College of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors
- Board member, Make-A-Wish Foundation Young Leaders Board
- Member, Houston Young Lawyers Association

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- South Texas College of Law Houston, J.D., *summa cum laude*, 2017, Dean's Outstanding Advocate; moot court national champion; Order of the Barristers; Order of the Scribes; assistant editor-in-chief, *South Texas Law Review*
- Clarkson University, B.S., *with distinction*, 2014, Presidential Scholar; captain and two-time All-American, Clarkson volleyball

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. District Court, District of Colorado
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, "Strategies for Avoiding and Managing Employment Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Claims," Locke Lord, April 16, 2024.
- Speaker, "Non-Compete and Employment Law Update for Corporate Attorneys," Locke Lord, February 28, 2024.
- Speaker, "Legal Issues Employers Face in 2024: What You Need to Know," Locke Lord, February 21, 2024.
- Speaker, "What Employers Need to Know in 2020: Legal Issues Employers Face in the New Year," Locke Lord, February 27, 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- Author, “EEOC’s Pregnancy Priority: The Commission Sues Three Employers in Lawsuits Alleging Violations of the Pregnant Workers’ Fairness Act,” Locke Lord, October 2024.
- Author, “DOJ Weighs in on Transgender Employment Rights: Gender Dysphoria Can Be Covered by the ADA,” Locke Lord, February 2024.
- Author, “NLRB’s Top Attorney Says College Athletes Are Employees: Here’s What That Means,” Locke Lord, October 2021.
- Author, “PNW Heat Wave Leads to Emergency Regulations for Employee Safety,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, July 15, 2021.
- Author, “How to Keep a Trade Secret: Texas Supreme Court Weighs in on TUTSA and Sealing of Court Records,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, May 25, 2021.
- Author, “COVID Stimulus Guide: Overview of Key Unemployment Provisions Update,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, December 31, 2020.
- Author, “Key Questions for Employers Facing COVID-19 (FAQ),” Locke Lord QuickStudy, July 20, 2020.