Sara C. Longtain

Partner

Houston

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OVERVIEW

Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Sara provides employers strategic, business-focused advice and legal representation in a full spectrum of employee-related matters. She has experience with employee disputes at all stages, including pre-suit demands, administrative proceedings, and lawsuits involving wages/hours (FLSA), harassment, discrimination, retaliation (Title VII, ADEA), and contract disputes. Sara works with clients on personnel training, workplace investigations, and related policies. Her experience also includes executive compensation, employment, and restrictive covenant agreements; employee and contractor classification, pay practices (overtime, travel time); and performance management, effective discipline, and employment separations (cause terminations).

Sara works with clients in layoffs, furloughs, voluntary separation/early retirement programs (VERP), and associated matters (WARN), as well as leave management, including disability accommodation (interactive process/ADA), military leave (USERRA), and the FMLA. She also provides employment-related due diligence, reps, and warranties in mergers and acquisitions.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Other Employment-Related Disputes

- Defended a Houston manufacturing company against claims asserted under the FMLA in the Southern District of Texas.
- Obtained a 12(b)(6) dismissal with prejudice of race discrimination and sexual harassment claims under Title VII and disability discrimination claim under the ADA on behalf of a national retailer.
- Represented a manufacturing company in the defense of sex, age, and associative disability discrimination, and retaliation claims before the EEOC.
- Represented a corporate securities firm in the defense against FMLA claims and ultimately convinced the plaintiff to dismiss the lawsuit based on the threshold issue of statutory coverage.
- Conducted pre-suit investigations, prepared position statements in response to charges of discrimination filed with the EEOC/TWC, and navigated all aspects of the administrative process, including mediation and conciliation, for clients in all industries.

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OSHA Matters

- Negotiated significant reductions to OSHA penalties and elimination of citation items related to employee fatality (electrocution) for an oilfield equipment client.
- Represented a sheet metal fabricator during multiple on-site inspections by OSHA and negotiated the reduction of a citation classification and associated penalties for alleged violations relating to machine guarding.
- Represented a client in contest of OSHA citations and proposed penalties related to an employee fatality, including alleged violations of confined space entry and fall hazard regulations.

Employment Agreements/Contract Disputes

- Negotiated and drafted numerous executive and other employment agreements, and separation and release agreements, for companies involved in various industries, including energy, oilfield services, manufacturing, real estate, restaurant, and hospitality.
- Represented multiple clients in response to pre-suit demands made by former executives asserting breach of contract relating to their termination “for cause” under an employment agreement.
- Drafted and/or revised hundreds of restrictive covenant agreements, including non-disclosure, non-competition, and non-solicitation agreements, in connection with equity and asset transactions, and independently for employers as part of their onboarding documentation.

Layoffs/Restructuring/Separation Programs

- Assisted a materials company in a wind down and relocation of its corporate office, including preparation of employee notices, separation and release agreements, retention agreements and relocation expense reimbursement agreements, and advice and counsel regarding WARN compliance.
- Supported several oilfield services clients through all aspects of a VERP, including identifying the appropriate scope of the program and details of the package offered, preparation of program documents, and advice and counsel relating to issue management.
- Provided legal compliance advice to numerous clients conducting voluntary separation programs and other company reorganization/restructuring programs resulting in group layoffs.

Transactional Matters

- Assisted employers to develop tailored employment policies and procedures, ranging from drafting or reviewing full-scale employment handbooks to piecemeal employment policies, including content related to workplace violence, leaves of absence, vacation/sick leave, employee privacy, internet/social media use, drug testing, protection of confidential and trade secret information, and so forth.
- Assisted numerous clients to navigate employment-related due diligence matters, both on the buy and sell side of equity and asset transactions.

AWARDS

- ACG Houston, Deal of the Year (2023)
- ACG Houston, E & P Upstream Deal of the Year (2023)
- *Houstonia Magazine*, Top Lawyer, Labor and Employment (2022-2023)
- *Super Lawyers*® Texas Rising Star, Employment & Labor (2014-2021)
- Corporate Growth Houston, Midstream Transaction of the Year (2020)
- Corporate Growth Houston, Oil and Gas Deal of the Year (2018)

- Texas Diversity Counsel, Houston Top 50 Women Lawyers (2017)

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Labor + Employment

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Accessible Facilities and Services (ADA Titles II and III)
- Employment Counseling
- Environmental, Social + Governance (ESG)
- Labor + Employment
- Labor + Employment Litigation + Dispute Resolution
- Litigation + Trial
- Noncompete + Trade Secrets
- OSHA + Workplace Safety
- Wage + Hour Matters

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, State Bar of Texas
- Member, Houston Bar Association
- Co-chair, LegalLine Committee (2008-2014)
- Member, IDEA Committee (2012-2013); co-chair (2013-2014)

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- University of Houston Law Center, J.D., *cum laude*, 2007, notes and comments editor, *Houston Law Review*; Order of the Barons
- The University of Texas at Austin, B.A., *with honors*, 2004

CERTIFICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- Board Certified, Labor and Employment Law, Texas Board of Legal Specialization (2012-present)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Texas

COURT ADMISSIONS

- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas

- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, “The Top Ten List: Things Employers Need to Know,” Locke Lord, February 15, 2023.
- Speaker, “Employment Issues for a Post-Pandemic Workforce: What Are the Next Steps?” Locke Lord, October 22, 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, “Travel Time for FMLA Medical Appointments and Telework Accommodations for Disabilities: Two 2026 Developments Employers Shouldn’t Ignore,” *Troutman Pepper Locke*, April 22, 2026.
- Podcast, “Harassment in the Celebrity Workplace: Insights From *It Ends With Us*,” *Hiring to Firing* Podcast, February 25, 2025.
- Author, “Return to Work Considerations,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, July 31, 2020.
- Author, “OSHA Ends COVID-19 Recordkeeping Reprieve,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, May 22, 2020.
- Co-author, “Return to Work Considerations,” Locke Lord QuickStudy, July 31, 2020.