



Laura B. Friedel

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Laura Friedel is a partner in the firm's Labor and Employment Practice Group. Laura provides business-focused, practical advice across a full spectrum of labor and employment issues - including union/management relations, reductions in force, wage and hour compliance, whistleblower issues, discrimination, employment-related agreements, restrictive covenants and temporary-staffing relationships. Laura works with clients to develop and implement employment policies and practices in order to avoid disputes, and represents companies before state and federal courts and government agencies. Her work with clients generally falls within the following three situations:

Counseling and other day-to-day representation: The best way to avoid litigation (or be in the best position should it arise) is to develop and implement strong employment practices. Best practices, however, are not one size fits all. Laura works with companies of all sizes to develop employment policies and practices and respond to particular questions and situations, all with an eye toward improving employee relations, minimizing risk, and effectively operating the business. She also assists companies in drafting and negotiating employment and severance agreements, agreements with temporary staffing agencies, confidentiality agreements, and non-solicitation and non-competition agreements. Representative experiences include:

- Serving as outside general counsel to a Chicago-based temporary staffing firm. As a part of the business team, Laura advises this company regarding employment practices, joint employer issues, contracts, and compliance with employment law requirements.
- Guiding a company through its layoff of nearly half of its workforce -- minimizing the company's risk, the disruption of its business, and the negative impact on employee morale.
- Advising a client through the labor and employment aspects of its purchase of a service provider, including valuing existing potential liabilities and their impact on purchase price, developing a plan for dealing with the union after closing, ensuring compliance with immigration law requirements, and drafting restrictive covenants to secure the client's investment.

Traditional Labor / Union Relations: Laura has extensive experience assisting companies in dealing with



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unions - from initial organization attempts to arbitrations, proceedings before the National Labor Relations Board and appeals to the federal courts. Representative matters include:

- Winning the right to consolidate two operations that were represented by different unions into a single bargaining unit, despite objections from both unions and the multiple proceedings that they initiated to block the combination.
- Overcoming the strong presumption in favor of single-site bargaining units and successfully arguing that the proper bargaining unit for a client's driver operations should include multiple locations. Because union support was centralized in a single location, expanding the bargaining unit to include multiple locations resulted in the employees voting against union representation.

Employment Litigation: Sometimes, despite the best practices, employees, former employees and government agencies file claims against employers. Laura represents companies in all types of employment litigation - including employment discrimination litigation, wage and hour and wage payment claims, whistleblower complaints, and restrictive covenant disputes. She recognizes that not all cases should be litigated in the same manner and works with her clients to determine how to best reach their goals. Representative matters include:

- Securing no-merit findings from the Department of Labor on whistleblower claims brought by two individuals who claimed that they were terminated for raising security and regulatory concerns.
- Defending and counseling a manufacturing company through an OSHA investigation, determination and remediation following workplace fatality, avoiding both significant penalties and a willfulness finding.
- Successfully resolving a putative wage and hour class and collective action at outset of case, avoiding notice to class, attorneys' fees and additional claims.

Ms. Friedel serves on the Editorial Board of the ABA Journal of Labor and Employment Law and is an active member of the American Bar Association's Federal Labor Standards Legislation Committee. In addition, as an active member of the Federal Labor Standards Legislation Committee. Ms. Friedel chaired the Equal Pay Act subcommittee, co-authored the Illinois chapter of the State by State Survey of Wage and Hour Law (2004, 2011, and 2006 -2010 Supplements), and has been a contributing and chapter editor to the annual Cumulative Supplements to the American Bar Association's Fair Labor Standards Act treatise.

Laura was named as one of the "[40 Attorneys Under 40](#)" by the Illinois Law Bulletin in 2011. [Click here](#) to read the related press release.



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Bar Admissions

Illinois, 1998
District of Columbia, 1999

Court Admissions

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois,
Trial Bar
U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Indiana
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan
U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit

Memberships

Member of the Editorial Board of the ABA Journal of Labor and
Employment Law
Director, Girls on the Run Chicago
Vice President, Am Yisrael Conservative Congregation of the
North Shore

Honors & Awards

Named as one of ?40 Illinois Attorneys Under 40 to Watch? by the
Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, 2011
Illinois Super Lawyer- 2012

Education

University of Chicago Law School, J.D., 1998
Washington University in St. Louis, A.B.,
1995, magna cum laude