

People



## Emily T. Patajo

Partner, Labor and Employment

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vCard

Emily Patajo focuses her practice on employment litigation matters in state and federal courts and in binding arbitration. Emily represents employers in various industries, including grocery, retail, technology, and healthcare, among others. She is routinely involved in the risk assessment and defense of matters concerning claims of wrongful termination and unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in violation of California law. Clients also turn to Emily to advise them on wage and hour class action cases.

In addition to her litigation practice, Emily regularly handles administrative matters, counseling employers on charges and complaints pending before state agencies, including the California Civil Rights Department and the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. She also provides strategic advice to human resources and employee relations regarding personnel management, including issues related to conducting investigations, and evaluating requests for reasonable accommodations. Clients also frequently seek Emily's counsel and analysis regarding their arbitration agreements.

### Notable Work

**Discrimination Claims:** Obtained a California appellate court opinion affirming an employer's motion for summary judgment on national origin and age discrimination claims under FEHA.

**Binding Arbitration:** Successfully persuaded the California Court of Appeal to reverse a trial court's order denying an employer's motion to compel binding arbitration, a reversal that resulted in a published opinion that informs the interpretation of arbitration terms in employment agreements.

**Global Biotech Firm:** Served on a secondment to a global biotech firm, where she advised and consulted on various management and human resources issues, including disciplinary actions, terminations, and workplace investigations.

### Areas of Experience

Labor and Employment  
Employment Litigation  
Employment Training and Compliance  
Employment Administrative Claims Defense  
Staffing Law  
Wage and Hour

### Education

J.D., University of San Diego School of Law, 2006, *San Diego International Law Journal*, Order of Barristers  
B.A., University of California, Los Angeles, 1999

### Admissions

#### Bars

California

#### Courts

U.S. District Court, Central District of California  
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California  
U.S. District Court, Southern District of California  
U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

### Languages

Tagalog

### Related Content

Kanika Corley and Emily Patajo Named LA Leaders of Influence  
January 28, 2025

Emily Patajo to Speak on AI and the Legal Profession  
July 19, 2024

*The Legal 500* Ranks Akerman Among Top National Firms  
June 14, 2024

## Related Professional Experience

- Judicial Law Clerk to the Honorable Louisa S. Porter, U.S. District Court, Southern District of California, San Diego, CA, 2006-2008

## Published Work and Lectures

- California Lawyers Association's Labor and Employment Law Section 14th Annual Advanced Wage and Hour Conference, Speaker, "AI's Role in Modern Legal Practice," July 19, 2024
- Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA), Speaker, "Preparing Your Case to Settle at an Employment Mediation," May 14, 2024
- New Employment Practitioner Conference, Speaker, "Wage and Hour Basics," January 19, 2024
- *Daily Journal*, Author, "Review Agreements as Ban on Some Mandatory Arbitrations Looms," February 24, 2023
- California Lawyers Association, Speaker, "Retaliation Claims and Defenses," January 20, 2023
- *Business Insurance*, Quoted, "Arbitration Ban Expected to Increase Harassment Dispute Costs," March 1, 2022
- California Lawyers Association, Speaker, "Employment 101," January 20, 2022
- 2022 National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Convention, Speaker, "On the (Job) Hunt: Do's, Don'ts, and Practical Tips for Your 'Paper' & In-Person Presence," November 4, 2022
- California Lawyers Association, Speaker, "Employment 101," January 20, 2021
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Convention, Speaker, "Beyond #MeToo," November 10, 2018
- BB&T, Speaker, "Marijuana and Prescription Drug Issues in the Workplace," November 7, 2018
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Convention, Speaker, "High Times: Can Employers Say 'No' to Legal Marijuana and What If They Don't?" November 4, 2017
- American Association of Affirmative Action, Speaker, "EEO/Affirmative Action Law Training," December 9, 2013

## Affiliations

- California Lawyers Association, Labor and Employment Law Section, Executive Committee Member

## Honors and Distinctions

- *The Legal 500*, 2024, Recommended for Labor and Employment – Labor and Employment Disputes
- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2025, "Leaders of Influence: Minority Attorneys," Honoree
- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2024, "Leaders of Influence: Labor & Employment Attorneys," Honoree
- *Super Lawyers* Magazine, 2015-2017, Listed in California as a "Rising Star" for Employment & Labor: Employer