

## Carlos J. Villafaña-Real

Senior Counsel, Tax Practice Group

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Co-Leader, Employee Benefits Practice Team

### PRACTICES

Employee Benefits

Government Affairs & Public Policy

Sales & Use Tax

Tax

### BAR ADMISSIONS

- Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

### EDUCATION

B.S., *Magna Cum Laude*, State University in New York, 1988

J.D., *Cum Laude*, University of Puerto Rico, 1991

LLM, Georgetown University, 1993

- Major: Taxation

### CERTIFIED LEGAL SPECIALTY

- Civil Law Notary

### MEMBERSHIPS

- Puerto Rico Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Puerto Rico Society of Certified Public Accountants

He focuses his practice on the qualification and administration of Puerto Rico qualified retirement plans and counsels management in a variety of employee benefit related matters. He represents clients before the U. S. Department of Labor, the IRS and the Puerto Rico Department of the Treasury.

With over 30 years of experience, he has significant experience and expertise in structuring and implementing employee benefit programs, advising on a variety of Puerto Rico and federal tax issues affecting employee benefit plans and ERISA issues, establishing and qualifying both Puerto Rico and U. S. retirement plans including issues related to the underlying trusts and annuities and handling employee benefit matters in the mergers and acquisitions' context.

He has extensive experience lobbying, as well as drafting laws and regulations, including the retirement plan provisions of the Puerto Rico Internal Revenue Code of 2011. His practice also includes advising on a variety of employment tax matters, including advising on the taxation and reporting of severance and settlement payments.

Mr. Villafaña is regarded as one of the Island's top employee benefits attorneys and as such, he is frequently invited to participate as speaker regarding employee benefits topics. He also provides custom-tailored seminars to his clients on a variety of employee benefit plan issues. Mr. Villafaña has been recognized various times by the *Best Lawyers® in Puerto Rico* guide in the Tax and Employee Benefits fields and has been named Lawyer of the Year in 2021 and 2024.