

Gabriel Maldonado-González

Special Counsel, Labor & Employment Law Practice Group

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PRACTICES

Federal Funding Programs
Government Affairs & Public Policy
Labor & Employment
Labor Litigation
Labor Relations
Wage & Hour Regulation

BAR ADMISSIONS

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

EDUCATION

B.A., University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus

- Major: Labor Relations

J.D., *Cum Laude*, University of Puerto Rico School of Law

MEMBERSHIPS

- Federal Bar Association
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- Puerto Rico Manufacturers Association, Human Resources Committee

Mr. Maldonado-González concentrates his practice on labor and employment law, providing preventive counseling and representing employers before federal and state courts and administrative forums. He also leverages his robust public sector background to advise on government affairs and public policy matters.

Prior to joining McV, he served as Secretary of the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources (PRDOL). During his tenure, our jurisdiction reached the lowest unemployment rate in history, while the labor force participation rate, total workforce and total employment numbers increased to their highest level in over a decade. In recognition of his work as Secretary of Labor, he was awarded the Mercury Award for Entrepreneurial Innovation and Transformation by the United Retailers Association (Centro Unido de Detallistas), Puerto Rico's oldest and largest business association representing small and medium businesses across the island. He was also recognized as a Man Who Leads 2024 by the organization Women Who Lead, due to his support towards equal employment, equal pay, and leadership opportunities for women.

As Secretary of Labor, he focused on the modernization and digitalization of the agency with innovative projects such as a novel AI-powered workforce exchange that seeks to connect employers with jobseekers, and a new unemployment insurance platform. He also promoted public policy that encouraged the creation of jobs and increasing the workforce by impacting key demographic groups, including people with disabilities, women, older adults, justice involved individuals, our younger population, and welfare program participants.

Furthermore, he was instrumental in the drafting and enactment of Act No. 27-2024, paving the way for more remote work opportunities for current and future island residents, as well as allowing airline operations and crew bases to establish and create hundreds of jobs.

While at the PRDOL, he published several opinions and guidance documents, including the Guidelines for Interpreting Laws Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace, a comprehensive document encompassing all workplace discrimination laws applicable in Puerto Rico; a model protocol for managing and investigating sexual harassment claims in the workplace; and the first gender wage gap report under Act No. 16-2017, known as the “Puerto Rico Equal Pay Act”. He was also a frequent speaker and collaborator for several private sector employer organizations on labor and employment law, human resources, and labor market topics.

Mr. Maldonado-González provided counsel to the Governor of Puerto Rico on labor and employment law matters and was a member of the State Workforce Development Board and the board of directors of the State Insurance Fund Corporation. He also liaised with the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Executive Office of the President in relation to labor and workforce development matters.

He presided the Minimum Wage Commission created under Act No. 47-2021, known as the “Puerto Rico Minimum Wage Act”, tasked with reviewing the need for and issuing regulations related to minimum wage, overtime exemptions, and tipped employees. He was further entrusted with negotiating a model collective bargaining agreement with several unions in the construction industry on behalf of several government entities. As part of his duties, he intervened as a mediator and was successful in helping resolve several high-profile labor-management conflicts in industries such as healthcare, education, and agriculture.

His public service career includes serving as Chief of Staff at the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency of Puerto Rico (COR3), and as General Counsel, Corporate Secretary and Advisor for Legislative Affairs at the Department of Economic Development and Commerce (DDEC), the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company (PRIDCO), and the Puerto Rico Trade and Export Company (CCE). During this time, he played an important role in various real estate, tax and economic incentives transactions for the establishment and expansion of businesses across several industries, and the development of major economic policy initiatives, including Act No. 60-2019, known as the “Puerto Rico Incentives Code”, the reorganization and merger of several economic development entities within the DDEC, and the creation and initial startup processes of Invest Puerto Rico and Discover Puerto Rico.

Prior to these experiences in the Government of Puerto Rico, he worked at a San Juan law firm specializing in labor and employment law counseling and litigation. Earlier in his career, he served as judicial law clerk to the honorable Mildred G. Pabón Charneco, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, and to the honorable Grace M. Grana Martínez, Appellate Judge of the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals. He also worked as legal advisor for programmatic affairs and special projects at the Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico.