



→ Matthew M. Sonne

Partner

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Matt Sonne is a partner in the Labor and Employment Practice Group in the firm's Orange County office and the immediate past president of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers ("ABTL"). In addition to being one of the state's leading authorities in defending employers against Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA") and class actions, he is an accomplished litigator and trial attorney. Matt is also fluent in Spanish and frequently advises employers on Spanish-speaking workforce issues. Prior to becoming an attorney, Matt worked in the west wing of the White House as a writer for the President. He is a frequent writer and commentator, most recently having appeared on Fox 11's *Good Day LA* as a legal expert on Covid-19 workplace issues.

Areas of Practice

Matthew concentrates his practice on labor and employment law representing employers. He litigates in multiple areas of employment law and defends against individual and class action lawsuits alleging violations of wage and hour laws, discrimination, wrongful termination, harassment, breach of contract, labor code section 132a claims, and other related matters. Matthew represents employers in state and federal courts, as well as before the DLSE, EDD, and other administrative bodies. He also advises employers on handbook preparation, employment contracts and applications, and personnel policies. Matthew also has experience with the National Labor Relations Board and has represented employers in related investigations. He has experience in civil appeal practice, including briefing and oral argument before the California Court of Appeal and briefing to the California Supreme Court.

(For more information about Matthew's experience, including his published articles, court decisions, and speeches, please click on the appropriate boxes above).

Honors

Labor and Employment, *Legal 500*, 2015

Southern California Rising Star, *Super Lawyers*, 2009-2016

Experience

Published Decisions

Gau et al. v. Hillstone Restaurant Group, Inc., Case No. 20-CV-08250 (N.D. Cal. 2022)(court denies class certification in its entirety in favor of restaurant employer).

Amaro et al. v. Anaheim Arena Management, LLC, 69 Cal.App.5th 521 (2021)(PAGA settlement may extinguish claims from outside the limitations period).

Townley v. BJ's Restaurants, Inc., 37 Cal.App.5th 179 (2019) (Employer completely prevails on summary judgment in PAGA case alleging unreimbursed business expenses for slip-resistant shoes).

Morgan v. Wet Seal, Inc., 210 Cal.App.4th 1341 (2012) (Court of Appeal affirms denial of class certification in its entirety in reimbursement claim brought against retail client).

Chaaban v. Wet Seal, Inc., 203 Cal.App.4th 49 (2012) (After prevailing in a three-week jury trial in a wrongful termination case, retail employer prevails in seeking to recover its expert witness costs/fees from plaintiff. In parallel case, employer also defeated class certification in its entirety).

Madrigal v. Tommy Bahama Group, Inc., 2011 WL 10511339 (C.D. Cal. 2011) (court denies class certification in its entirety in wage-hour case against retail/restaurant employer).

Corder v. Houston's Restaurants, Inc., 424 F. Supp. 2d 1205 (C.D. Cal. 2006) (held meal and rest periods violations were penalties subject to a one-year, rather than a four-year, statute of limitations).

Recent Victories

Achieved a complete dismissal of "suitable seating" claims under PAGA against a retail client in Santa Clara Superior Court.

Defeated class certification for a manufacturing company on all counts in a wage and hour class action before the Orange County Superior Court.

Successfully defended a national clothing retailer in a jury trial before Orange County Superior Court. The Plaintiff alleged wrongful termination and retaliation in violation of public policy. Won a complete defense verdict.

Achieved what may be the first trial court ruling in California enforcing a class action waiver after the California Supreme Court's *Gentry* decision made such waivers difficult to enforce.

Defeated class certification for a retail service company on all counts in a wage and hour class action before the Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Articles

- 21 Tips for Lawyers to Make Better 2nd Drafts
Daily Journal, 02.21.2018
- The Pros and Cons of Employment Arbitration Agreements
Orange County Business Journal, 08.18.2014
- Towards a "Manageability" Standard in PAGA Discovery
ABTL Report, Summer 2014
- Mr. Sonne is a member of the Editorial Board of the California Labor & Employment Alert (Castle Publications Ltd.)

Labor and Employment Law Blog Posts

- "New Labor Obligations Contained In USMCA Present Risks for Covered Employers," April 28, 2021
- "Upcoming Deadline for California Employers to Report Employee Pay and Hours Worked Data to the DFEH," February 11, 2021

- "California's Deadline is Fast Approaching: Employers Must Complete Harassment Prevention Training for English and Spanish-Speaking Workforces by Year's End," November 10, 2020
- "U.S. Supreme Court Requires Litigants To Prove "But-For Causation" In Workplace Retaliation Lawsuits," June 27, 2013
- "Title VII's Anti-Retaliation Provisions Protect Employee's Answers To Sexual Harassment Investigator's Questions," February 3, 2009
- "Case Reminds California Employers That Handbook Language Cannot Compensate For A Missing Signature On An Employment Arbitration Agreement," December 21, 2007
- "Ninth Circuit Recognizes Claim for Reverse Religious Discrimination and Highlights Pitfall of 'Consensus of Management' Employment Actions," May 30, 2007

Media Mentions

New American Workplace

Fox 11's Good Day LA, 05.21.2020

Hold Managers Accountable for California Meal-Break Compliance

Society for Human Resource Management, 06.22.2018

Case to Watch: California Supreme Court weighs employment arbitration

Thomson Reuters, 06.11.2013

Defense Wants More Class-y PAGA Suits

The Recorder, 08.15.2007

Speaking Engagements

Mr. Sonne was the keynote speaker on "Case Law Updates" at the Employers Group's Workplace and Employment Law Update in Orange County.

Mr. Sonne lectured managers and owners in the food service/restaurant industry in a presentation entitled "Wage & Hour Crisis In The Food Service Industry."

Mr. Sonne was a presenter at a recent "Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer" series.

Mr. Sonne delivered a lecture in Spanish to managers at a major construction and design firm in southern California entitled "How to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation in the Workplace."

Mr. Sonne lectures for Castle Publications, Ltd. on Wage and Hour Laws.

Mr. Sonne has presented lectures for employer's organizations such as Professionals in Human Resources Association (PIHRA).

Mr. Sonne frequently conducts seminars in sexual harassment prevention/training to supervisors and employees, in both English and Spanish. He also lectures at corporate retreats and annual meetings on employment law issues.

Events

Labor & Employment Law Update and Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2023
Avenue of the Arts, 10.12.2023

Labor & Employment Law Update and Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2022
Avenue of the Arts Hotel, 10.18.2022

California Labor & Employment Law Update
Webinar, 10.13.2021

Class Action and PAGA Cases in a Covid-19 World: A Practical Discussion
California Lawyers Association 10th Annual Advanced Wage and Hour Virtual Conference
09.10.2020

Webinar With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2020 Seminar Series
Webinar, 04.28.2020

POSTPONED: 2020 Wage And Hour Laws
Winter 2020

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2019
Avenue of the Arts Hotel, 10.29.2019

2019 Wage And Hour Laws
Summer 2019

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2019 Seminar Series
04.24.2019

2019 Wage And Hour Laws
Winter 2019

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2018 Seminar Series
10.24.2018

2018 Wage and Hour Laws
Summer 2018

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2018 Seminar Series
04.18.2018

2018 Wage And Hour Laws
Winter 2018

Pay Equity: Latest Views on Legislative and Case Law and Employer Progress & Challenges
Newport Beach, 01.25.2018

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2017 Seminar Series
10.17.2017

2017 Wage and Hour Laws
Summer 2017

Key Developments in Wage and Hour Laws and PAGA
Orange County Bar Association
Radisson Hotel, Newport Beach, 08.14.2017

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2017 Seminar Series
04.27.2017

2017 Wage and Hour Laws
Winter 2017

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2016 Seminar Series
10.26.2016

2016 Wage and Hour Laws
Castle Publications, Ltd. Labor & Employment Seminars
Fall 2016

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2016 Seminar Series
05.04.2016

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2015 Seminar Series
09.16.2015

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2015 Seminar Series
05.20.2015

2015 Wage and Hour Laws
Castle Publications, Ltd. Labor & Employment Seminars
Winter 2015

Wage & Hour Claims and Class Actions
American Conference Institute's 22nd National Forum
The Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites, Los Angeles, 09.30.2014

2014 Wage and Hour Laws
Summer 2014: August 12 and 20

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2014 Seminar Series
04.09.2014

2014 Wage and Hour Laws
Winter 2014: February 19, March 4 and 20

Labor and Employment Law Update and Happy Hour - Orange County
Fall 2013 Seminar Series
Westin South Coast Plaza, 10.08.2013

2013 Employment Discrimination and Personnel Relations Laws - Pasadena Area and Orange County
Summer 2013: July 31, August 15

2013 Wage and Hour Laws - Pasadena Area, Los Angeles, and Orange County
Summer 2013: July 30, August 7, August 14

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Spring 2013 Seminar Series
Westin South Coast Plaza, Orange County, 03.27.2013

Labor and Employment Law Update & Happy Hour Fall 2012 - Orange County
Westin South Coast Plaza, 10.10.2012

Meal Periods, Rest Periods and Labor Code Class Actions After *Brinker*
WebEx, 04.18.2012

Labor and Employment Law Update & Happy Hour Spring 2012 - Orange County
Westin South Coast Plaza, 03.28.2012

2012 Wage and Hour Laws - San Francisco, Orange County, Pasadena and Los Angeles
Winter 2012: February 6, February 15, February 22 and February 29

BRACE Program Quarterly Event
Cypress Community Center, 02.23.2012

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
Labor & Employment Law Update Fall 2011
Westin South Coast Plaza, 10.05.2011

The Aftermath of AT&T Mobility v. Concepcion
Labor & Employment Law Webinar
WebEx, 05.26.2011

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Westin South Coast Plaza - Orange County, 03.10.2011

2011 Wage and Hour Laws - San Francisco, Orange County, Pasadena and Los Angeles
Winter 2011: February 7, February 15, February 23, and March 2

Labor & Employment Law Update & Happy Hour - Orange County
Our New, Improved, and FREE Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer (in the Evening!)
Westin South Coast Plaza - Costa Mesa, 09.14.2010

2010 Wage and Hour Laws Series - Los Angeles, Orange County, San Francisco and Pasadena

Labor and Employment Law: Mid-Year Update 2009 - Costa Mesa
Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer
Westin South Coast Plaza, 09.23.2009

2009 Wage and Hour Laws Series - Los Angeles, Orange County, San Francisco and Pasadena

New Labor & Employment Laws for 2009 - Orange County
Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer
Westin South Coast Plaza, 02.12.2009

Labor and Employment Law: Mid-Year Update 2008 - Orange County
Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer
Westin South Coast Plaza, 09.10.2008

Breakfast With Your Labor Lawyer - Orange County
The Westin South Coast Plaza, 02.05.2008

Memberships

Member, Orange County Bar Association, Labor and Employment Section

Member, American Bar Association

Practices

Labor and Employment

Labor and Employment Counseling

Employee Hiring/Discipline/Termination

Employment Agreements

Handbooks and Personnel Policies

Harassment Investigation and Training

Unfair Competition and Trade Secrets

Wage and Hour Regulations

Workplace Violence
Labor and Employment Litigation
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
Wage and Hour Class Actions
Wrongful Termination
International Reach
Latin America
Public Policy and Government Affairs

Industries

Construction
Entertainment, Technology and Advertising
Financial Services
Food and Beverage
Healthcare
Hospitality
Insurance
Mortgage Banking
Retail, Fashion & Beauty

Education

J.D., University of Virginia, 2005
B.A., Claremont McKenna College, 2000, *magna cum laude*, *Phi Beta Kappa*

Admissions

California
U.S. District Court for the Northern, Central, and Southern Districts of California
United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Languages

Spanish