

Christopher Ward

Partner

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Christopher Ward is a trial lawyer and labor and employment attorney representing employers throughout the country. Christopher focuses on wage and hour and privacy-related class action litigation, high-stakes jury and bench trials, labor relations counseling, litigation, arbitration, and collective bargaining. He has extensive experience representing employers in the aviation, transportation, manufacturing, hospitality, and health care industries. He is a partner in the firm's Labor & Employment Practice.

Christopher has a wealth of first-chair trial and appellate counsel experience and has tried multiple employment cases to full defense verdicts in the California state and federal courts. As a class action lawyer, he has extensive experience defending "bet the company" matters and has designed and implemented complex and aggressive strategies that resulted in successful outcomes at class certification and on-the-merits judgments for the employer against novel theories of law. Christopher is also a leading attorney in the design, implementation, and usage of arbitration agreements with class action waivers, and has successfully enforced dozens of such agreements against efforts to resist them in California class action litigation.

He regularly handles wage and hour matters under both the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the provisions of the California Labor Code and Business & Professions Code. Christopher also routinely counsels clients on wage and hour compliance matters, including compliance with municipal wage orders, particularly those governing wage and hour matters at airports throughout the country. A leading strategist and thought leader, he regularly contributes to conversations around the rapidly evolving and complex landscape of the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA), and frequently works on defending and resolving BIPA class action matters.

Christopher has substantial experience in traditional labor matters, with a significant emphasis on labor relations in the commercial aviation industry under the Railway Labor Act. He has litigated multiple "test case" matters addressing the evolution of the Railway Labor Act versus National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) jurisdiction over airline service providers and secured critical precedent-setting decisions for such clients.

Christopher's work in the labor relations arena also includes representing employers in administrative matters and litigation before the National Mediation Board, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and the United States Courts of Appeals.

Christopher also has experience advising clients on public accommodations laws and litigating public accommodations matters, including successfully securing summary judgment for a major stadium operator and stadium owner defeating a novel theory of law seeking to create liability arising from unpopular verbal fan expression during a large-scale sporting event that occurred between two national teams during a major international soccer tournament held in the US.

Awards and Recognition

- Stand-out Lawyer, *Thomson Reuters* (2025)
- Recognized as a 2022 "Employment Law Trailblazer" by the National Law Journal for his pioneering work in the area of law firm mental health and wellness, such as founding Foley's "Best Self" and leading the firm's intentional effort to change conversations about mental health and wellness and increase their focus as part of organizational culture
- Named to the list of *Illinois Super Lawyers–Rising Stars* (2012-2019) – The Rising Stars® list represents the top 2.5% of lawyers under 40 years old in Illinois based upon a survey of his peers*
- Named the 2012-2013 recipient of the Foley & Lardner LLP Larry Arnold Award, recognizing the attributes of Determination, Toughness, Creativity, and Strong Work Ethic
- Selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® in the field of Employment Law – Management (2024)

Community Involvement

Christopher is the frontman and plays guitar in the all-Foley attorney band "Fauxly," which has performed in "battle of the band" fundraisers in multiple cities across the country as part of Foley's nationwide partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Playing iconic music venues like the Whisky a Go Go on the Sunset Strip and the Chicago House of Blues, Christopher and the band have raised over \$60,000 for local Boys & Girls Clubs chapters in the cities they have performed.

Pro bono service makes up an important part of Christopher's practice, and he frequently counsels not-for-profit employers on employment-related matters and has represented them in employment-related litigation. He has also repeatedly acted as pro bono defense counsel in both the United States District Courts and the United States Courts of Appeals, and through such work he established, through multiple published opinions, important standards requiring uniformity in criminal sentencing and ensuring that criminal sentences have a legitimate factual and evidentiary basis. Christopher has also served on the board of directors of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

Presentations and Publications

Christopher is a regular presenter at employment law conferences and national webinars and was the chief architect of the mold-shattering format for Foley's HR/Labor & Employment Summit hosted at the Chicago House of Blues, combining practical insight with a casual, engaging format. He has contributed to the employment law treatise, *The Law Guide — Employee Relations Law* for Illinois Employers, published by MRA — The Management Association, Inc. Christopher has served as the editor of *Labor & Employment Law Perspectives* (LaborEmploymentPerspectives.com), the Foley Labor & Employment Practice's weekly blog, providing timely insight on emerging legal and business developments. He continues to be a regular contributor to the blog. Christopher also is a member in the by-invitation-only American Employment Law Council and the Labor and Employment section of the American Bar Association.

Languages

- Spanish (fluent)

Sectors

- Cannabis
- Energy & Infrastructure
- Hospitality & Leisure
- Hospitality Litigation
- Oil & Gas
- Power & Renewables
- Racial Justice & Equity

Practice Areas

- ADA & FMLA Compliance
- Commercial Litigation
- Discrimination, Harassment & Retaliation
- Labor & Employment
- Labor & Employment Class Actions
- Litigation
- Union/Employer Matters

Education

- University of Illinois College of Law (J.D., magna cum laude)
- Northwestern University (B.A., cum laude)
 - Phi Beta Kappa

Admissions

- United States Supreme Court
- Seventh, Ninth, and D.C. Circuit Courts of Appeal

- Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Central Districts of California, the Northern, Central, and Southern Districts of Illinois
- California
- Illinois

* The Illinois Supreme Court does not recognize certifications of specialties in the practice of law and no certificate, award, or recognition is a requirement to practice law in Illinois.