



## George E. O'Brien Jr.

Shareholder

One Century Tower  
265 Church Street, Suite 300  
New Haven, CT 06510  
main: (203) 974-8700  
direct: (203) 974-8702  
fax: (203) 974-8799  
gobrien@littler.com



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### Focus Areas

Labor Management Relations  
Litigation and Trials  
Healthcare  
Higher Education  
Alternative Dispute Resolution

### Overview

George O'Brien represents and counsels employers on a wide variety of labor matters, including:

- Collective bargaining
- Unfair labor practice proceedings
- Labor representation cases and elections
- Grievances
- Injunction proceedings
- Arbitrations
- Mediation
- Union relationships
- Wrongful discharge
- Breach of contract
- Discrimination claims
- Jury trials

He appears in state and federal courts and represents management before the National Labor Relations Board and other administrative agencies, including the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Connecticut

State Board of Labor Relations, and the Connecticut Board of Mediation and Arbitration. He has handled claims arising under:

- The National Labor Relations Act
- The Connecticut Municipal Employee Relations Act
- State and Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws
- State and Federal Wage & Hour Laws

In 2015, George obtained an important decision from the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia that strengthened the rights of employers to regulate employee attire and conduct that may be offensive to customers. The decision overturned a controversial ruling of the National Labor Relations Board.

George tried the first federal court case in Connecticut involving a claim of sexual orientation discrimination, obtaining a defense judgment for a major insurance company. He helped a large Connecticut municipality privatize the town golf course, defeating union attempts to enjoin the transaction. He obtained a precedent-setting decision by the National Labor Relations Board defeating a union's successorship claim against a regional transportation company, and on behalf of an acute care hospital in New York he obtained multi-million dollar contract concessions from a registered nurses' union.

He won a defense verdict for a Connecticut acute care hospital in a jury trial involving discrimination and retaliation claims based on race and national origin. He has negotiated severance agreements with departing officers of numerous Connecticut employers, and represented a Massachusetts acute care hospital in an NLRB representation case and election in which the union was soundly defeated.

George's clients include:

- Hospitals
- Manufacturers
- Physician Practices
- Colleges and Universities

A founding member of Littler's New Haven office, George served for nine years as the office's first managing shareholder and continues as a core team member of the firm's Health Care Industry Practice Group. Prior to working at Littler, he was a partner in a major Connecticut general practice firm, where he chaired its labor and employment practice. He was the editor-in-chief of the *Connecticut Law Review* while in law school, and afterward served as the law clerk for Chief Judge T. Emmet Clarie of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

## Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Executive Committee, Labor and Employment Section, Connecticut Bar Association
- Member, Executive Committee, Federal Practice Section, Connecticut Bar Association, 2005-2011
- Former Chair, Annual Meeting Program, Connecticut Bar Association

- Former Chair, Human Rights and Opportunities Committee, Connecticut Bar Association
- Former Chair, NLRB Liaison Committee, Connecticut Bar Association
- Member, Board of Directors, Long Wharf Theatre, 2005-2011
- Secretary, Board of Trustees, Long Wharf Theatre, 2009-2011
- Member, Board of Directors, Friends of New Haven Legal Services, 2006-present
- Member, New Haven Inn of Court
- Former Co-Chair, Special Masters Panel, United States District Court, District of Connecticut
- Former President, Alumni Association, University of Connecticut School of Law
- Former Member, Board of Directors, Whitney Center
- Former Member, Board of Directors, Gateway Community College Foundation
- Former Chair, Board of Directors, St. Mary's High School
- Former Member, Strategic Planning Committee, St. Thomas More Chapel

## Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America<sup>®</sup>\*, 2001-2021
- Named, Lawyer of the Year\*, Employment Law - Management, *The Best Lawyers in America*<sup>®</sup>, 2013-2019, 2021
- Named, America's Leading Lawyers for Business, *Chambers USA*, 2003-2020
- Named, Super Lawyer<sup>®</sup>\*\*, Connecticut, *Super Lawyers*, 2006-2019
- Awarded, AV<sup>®</sup> Peer Review Rating - Healthcare, *Martindale-Hubbell*
- Named, Recommended Lawyer, Workplace and Employment Counseling, *Legal 500 United States*, 2016

\* For information about the standards for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in America*, please see <http://www.bestlawyers.com/about/MethodologyCT.aspx>.

\*\* For information about the standards for inclusion in *Connecticut Super Lawyers*, please see [http://www.superlawyers.com/connecticut/selection\\_details.html](http://www.superlawyers.com/connecticut/selection_details.html).

## Education

J.D., University of Connecticut School of Law, *With Honors*

B.A., Princeton University, *cum laude*

## Bar Admissions

Connecticut

## Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit

Connecticut Supreme Court

U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut

## **Publications & Press**

### **Best Lawyers in America© 2021 Edition Honors More Than 250 Littler Lawyers**

*Littler Press Release*

August 20, 2020

### **Essential Employers: What Does Connecticut's Reopening Plan Mean for You?**

*Littler Insight*

May 15, 2020

### **Connecticut's New Restaurant Wage Law Codifies "80/20 Rule" for Tipped Employees**

*Littler Insight*

January 15, 2020

### **Best Lawyers in America© 2020 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers; 14 Named Lawyer of the Year**

*Littler Press Release*

August 15, 2019

### **Littler Ranked in 2019 Chambers USA Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

April 25, 2019

### **Best Lawyers in America© 2019 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers**

*Littler Press Release*

August 15, 2018

### **Littler Ranked in 2018 Chambers USA Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

May 15, 2018

### **Best Lawyers in America© 2018 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers**

*Littler Press Release*

August 17, 2017

### **Littler and Its Attorneys Receive Top Rankings in 2017 Chambers USA Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

May 26, 2017

### **The Best Lawyers in America© Honors More Than 180 Littler Lawyers in Its 2017 Edition**

*Littler Press Release*

August 16, 2016

**Littler Ranks in The Legal 500 United States Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

June 20, 2016

**Chambers USA Recognizes Littler and Attorneys in 2016 Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

May 27, 2016

**Employment Bar Divided Over Bill Barring Criminal Record Queries on Job Applications**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

May 13, 2016

**Littler Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America© 2016 Edition**

*Littler Press Release*

August 18, 2015

**D.C. Circuit Declares AT&T Had Right to Ban "Prisoner" T-Shirts**

*Littler ASAP*

July 13, 2015

**Connecticut Restricts Employer Access to Personal Social Media, E-mail and Online Retail Accounts of Employees and Applicants**

*Littler Insight*

May 27, 2015

**Chambers USA Recognizes Littler and Its Attorneys**

*Littler Press Release*

May 20, 2015

**Laid-Off Labor Relations Official Considers Legal Action**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

December 5, 2014

**Connecticut Amends Paid Sick Leave Statute to Provide Some Employer-Friendly Changes**

*Littler Insight*

June 17, 2014

**Nurse's Vaccination Refusal on Secular Grounds Not Misconduct, New Jersey Court Rules**

*Littler ASAP*

June 10, 2014

**Littler and Its Attorneys Ranked In 2014 Chambers USA Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

May 23, 2014

**Clerical and Administrative Roles in Firms Are Changing**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

February 21, 2014

**Is Sick Leave Law Having Ill Effect On Businesses?**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

January 24, 2014

**Hospital Settles Religious Bias Claim With Vegan**

*Littler ASAP*

October 9, 2013

**Veto Halts Law Change For Non-Compete Agreements**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

July 26, 2013

**Trib 20: New Practices Help National Firms Make Mark In State**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

June 25, 2013

**Connecticut Adds Burdensome Requirements to Personnel File Statutes**

*Littler Insight*

June 22, 2013

**Littler Mendelson Named in the 2013 Chambers USA Guide**

*Littler Press Release*

May 24, 2013

**Pharmaceutical Reps Found Exempt From OT Rules**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

July 18, 2012

**Acting General Counsel Comments on Hot NLRB Topics**

*Littler ASAP*

June 18, 2012

**Tenet Reaches Agreement with CNA/NNU on Nurses Contract at Six California Hospitals**

*Littler ASAP*

March 16, 2012

**New Connecticut Law Targets Workplace Violence Risk to Healthcare Employers**

*Littler ASAP*

October 5, 2011

**Anti-Bias Agency Feels Sting of State Budget Crisis**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

July 11, 2011

**Connecticut Becomes First State to Require Paid Sick Leave**

*Corporate Counsel*

July 8, 2011

**Chambers USA Honors Littler And Its Attorneys**

*Littler Press Release*

June 27, 2011

**Health Care Practitioner Dress Code Bill Proposed in New York**

*Littler ASAP*

June 15, 2011

**Physician-Owned Hospitals Continue Fight Against PPACA Restrictions**

*Littler ASAP*

June 8, 2011

**Federal Bill Would Establish Minimum Nurse/Patient Ratios, Provide Whistleblower Protections**

*Littler ASAP*

May 31, 2011

**HHS Issues Final Rule on Insurer Disclosure and Reporting of Unreasonable Rate Increases**

*Littler ASAP*

May 19, 2011

**House Passes Bills Repealing State Funding for Health Exchanges, Restricting Funding for Abortions**

*Littler ASAP*

May 5, 2011

**Agencies Seek Input on Affordable Care Act's Employer Responsibility Provisions**

*Littler ASAP*

May 4, 2011

**Nurse Staffing Bill Reintroduced in the House**

*Littler ASAP*

March 11, 2011

**Hospital Staffing Legislation Introduced in Congress Again This Term**

*Littler ASAP*

February 3, 2011

**State Supreme Court Decision Bars Hospitals from Considering Economic Factors in Deciding Physician Staff Privileges**

*Littler ASAP*

December 6, 2010

**Final Rules Issued Requiring Equal Visitation Rights for All Hospital Patients**

*Littler ASAP*

November 19, 2010

**California Expands List of Criminal Convictions Barring In-Home Caregivers**

*Littler ASAP*

October 21, 2010

**Healthcare Workers Again Challenge Mandatory Flu Vaccinations**

*Littler ASAP*

October 13, 2010

**Littler Attorneys Honored by Chambers USA**

*Littler Press Release*

June 21, 2010

**Hospital Nurse Staffing Level Bill Proposed in Congress**

*Littler ASAP*

June 17, 2010

**Hospitals Fall Short Serving LGBT Patients, Says 2010 Healthcare Equality Index**

*Littler ASAP*

June 16, 2010



**Federal HHS Agency Touts Nurse-Patient Ratio Study**

*Littler ASAP*

June 7, 2010

**Exodus of General Internists Adds to Primary Care Shortage**

*Littler ASAP*

May 12, 2010

**Expansion of Hospital Visitation and Decision-Making Rights for Gay and Lesbian Partners**

*Littler ASAP*

April 26, 2010

**Mayo Clinic Case Difficult to Diagnose**

*Connecticut Law Tribune*

April 26, 2010

**Unfair Competition and Trade Secrets Dispute Over Medical Record Computer Software**

*Littler ASAP*

April 7, 2010

**DOL Targets FLSA Compliance in New York's Healthcare Industry**

*Littler ASAP*

March 30, 2010

**Connecticut Employees Can Keep Unearned Commissions Unless Employment Agreement Expressly Requires Repayment of Advances**

*Littler Insight*

May 6, 2008

**Speaking Engagements**

**NLRB Focus on Non-Union Workplaces**

New Haven, CT

June 9, 2016

**NLRB Focus on Non-Union Workplaces**

New Haven, CT

May 10, 2016

**2015 Tri-State Employer Conference**

New York, NY

November 5, 2015

**Paid Sick Leave: What Employers Need to Know and Do by January 1, 2012**

New Haven, CT

October 6, 2011