



Lavanga V. Wijekoon

Shareholder

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Focus Areas

Business and Human Rights
International Employment Law
Discrimination and Harassment
Litigation and Trials
Inclusion, Equity and Diversity

Overview

Lavanga V. Wijekoon has experience representing employers in a wide range of labor and employment class action and single-plaintiff matters, involving such as issues as:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Retaliation
- Wage and hour
- Misclassification
- Employment contracts
- Independent contractors
- Wage garnishments

Lavanga handles district and appellate level actions in state and federal courts and before agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR), and the Illinois Human Rights Commission (IHRC).

Lavanga also provides strategic advice and counsel to multinational employers on a wide range of international employment and compliance matters, including such areas as:

- Global mobility programs and expatriate workforces
- The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- Labor obligations under free trade agreements
- Multi-country and international surveys on employment laws and practices
- Global codes of conduct and international policies
- Global independent contractors
- The employment cycle including applications, interviewing, hiring, discipline, promotions, demotions, recordkeeping and terminations

Lavanga also has an active pro bono practice in which he represents clients in asylum petitions before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and immigration courts. He has also represented numerous “Dreamer” clients in Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals petitions.

Prior to joining Littler, Lavanga was an associate at an international law firm in Chicago. He also served as a law clerk to Hon. Marywave Van Deren of the Washington State Court of Appeals and as an extern to Hon. Marsha J. Pechman of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington.

While in law school, he served as an editor for the *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal* and as a member of the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot Court team. He was awarded grants to conduct field research on human trafficking in India and Nepal.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Illinois State Bar Association
- Member, American Bar Association
- Member, Junior Leadership Board, National Immigrant Justice Center, 2012-present
- Member, Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- Member, Professional Board, PAWS Chicago

Recognition

- Named, Ones to Watch, *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2022
- Named, Rising Star, *National Immigrant Justice Center*, 2013
- Recipient, John H. & George V. Powell Endowed Award for Human Rights, *University of Washington School of Law*, 2006 and 2008
- Recipient, Takuji Yamashita Endowed Memorial Scholarship for Human Rights, *University of Washington School of Law*, 2008

Education

J.D., University of Washington School of Law, 2009

M.A., Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, 2009

B.A., Illinois Wesleyan University, 2004, *magna cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Illinois

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois

U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Iowa

Languages

Sinhalese

Publications & Press

The Ukraine/Russia Conflict & Related Sanctions: 7 Pressing Questions Employers Are Asking

Littler Insight

March 15, 2022

Impact of the Ukraine Conflict and Related Sanctions on Global Workforces

SHRM Online

March 3, 2022

The Ukraine Conflict & Related Sanctions: What Is the Impact on Global Workforces?

Littler Insight

March 1, 2022

The Fashion Industry Meets Human Rights Due Diligence: New York's Proposed "Fashion Sustainability and Social Accountability Act"

Littler Insight

February 14, 2022

Littler Elevates 33 Attorneys to Shareholder

Littler Press Release

January 6, 2022

U.S. Enacts Law Barring Products Made With Forced Labor in China

Littler Insight

January 3, 2022

Europe and Canada Seek to Mandate Human Rights Due Diligence and Transparency Obligations on Companies and Their Global Partners

Littler Insight

October 28, 2021

Pro Bono Week Podcast – National Immigrant Justice Center: Representing Asylum Seekers

Littler Podcast

October 28, 2021

Best Lawyers in America® 2022 Edition Honors More Than 240 Littler Lawyers

Littler Press Release

August 19, 2021

What is your name? A Conversation with Littler’s Immigrant Attorneys

Littler Podcast

May 24, 2021

India Enacts Major Employment Law Reforms

Littler Insight

October 20, 2020

INDIA: COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – Employer FAQs

Littler Insight

March 22, 2020

Littler Lightbulb: Highlighting Recent Developments in the Asia Pacific Region

Littler Insight

December 4, 2019

United Nations Takes Another Step in Developing a Treaty on Business and Human Rights

Littler Insight

November 5, 2019

Littler Lightbulb: Highlighting Global Human Rights Topics

Littler Insight

October 15, 2019

Germany Seeks to Mandate Human Rights Due Diligence for Companies and Their Global Partners

Littler Insight

April 25, 2019

Australia Passes Law Requiring Large Companies to Report on Modern Slavery

Littler Insight

December 4, 2018

United Nations Further Deliberates a Treaty Seeking to Impose Corporate Liability for Human Rights Violations

Littler Insight

November 7, 2018

California Enacts Two Laws to Combat Human Trafficking

SHRM Online

October 9, 2018

India: Recent Developments Will Affect Diversity in the Workplace

SHRM Online

October 5, 2018

California Enacts Two Laws Aimed At Combating Human Trafficking

Littler ASAP

October 2, 2018

Key Recent Developments in Indian Employment Law Impacting Diversity in the Workplace

Littler Insight

September 24, 2018

Littler Global Guide - Hong Kong - Q2 2018

Littler Global Guide Quarterly

July 20, 2018

Australia: New South Wales Introduces Law Requiring Companies to Report on Modern Slavery

Littler Insight

July 13, 2018

U.S. Supreme Court Forecloses Liability of Foreign Corporations Under the Alien Tort Statute

Littler Insight

May 10, 2018

Hong Kong Considers Draft Law Requiring Companies to Report on Modern Slavery

Littler Insight

April 16, 2018

Canada Announces Two New Initiatives To Hold Companies Accountable For Human Rights Violations Abroad

Littler Insight

February 13, 2018

Proposed Act Seeks to Require Large Companies Operating in Australia to Report on Modern Slavery

Littler Insight

February 6, 2018

United Nations Continues its Development of a Treaty Imposing Liability on Companies for Human Rights Abuses

Littler Insight

November 9, 2017

European Court Clarifies Legality of Banning Islamic Headscarves in the Workplace

TLNT Talent Management and HR

April 11, 2017

European Court Clarifies Legality of Banning Islamic Headscarves in the Workplace

Littler Insight

March 20, 2017

Dutch and French Legislatures Introduce New Human Rights Due Diligence Reporting Requirements

Littler Insight

March 13, 2017

New Mandatory Gender Pay Gap Disclosures Will Soon Take Effect for Large Employers in Great Britain

Littler Insight

March 13, 2017

Advancing Human Rights Claims Based on Global Supply Chain Activities: Recent Developments in California and Canada

Littler Insight

February 15, 2017

The U.S. Issues a National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct

Littler Insight

January 17, 2017

Proposed French Law Would Impose New Due Diligence Obligations on Certain Employers and Their Supply Chains

Littler ASAP

December 12, 2016

Union Petition Under US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Highlights Labor Violations in Oil and Sugar Industries in Colombia

ACC Docket

July/August 2016

U.S. Strengthens Law Prohibiting Importation of Goods Derived from Forced Labor

American Bar Association International Labor & Employment Law Committee Newsletter

July 1, 2016

The Corporate Human Rights Benchmark Ranks Large Companies' Human Rights Performance

Littler Insight

April 4, 2016

Certain Illinois Employers Now Required to Post Human Trafficking Helpline

Littler ASAP

February 8, 2016

Potential Impact of Trans-Pacific Partnership on Employment

New York Law Journal

February 5, 2016

Annual Report on EEOC Developments – Fiscal Year 2015

Littler Report

January 12, 2016

California Consumer Protection Suits Raise Labor Violations in Global Supply Chains

American Bar Association International Labor & Employment Law Committee Newsletter

January 1, 2016

Newly Released Text of Trans-Pacific Partnership Sheds Light on Potential Labor Law Requirements

American Bar Association International Labor & Employment Law Committee Newsletter

November 1, 2015

California Laws Are Being Used to Advance Human Rights Claims Based on Global Supply Chain Activities

Littler Insight

October 14, 2015

In Canada, Foreign Workers Seek to Use International Norms as the Standard of Care in Negligence Claims Against Multinationals Operating Overseas

Littler Insight

September 16, 2015

Foreign Workers Seek to Use International Norms as the Standard of Care in Negligence Claims Against Multinationals Operating Overseas

ABA International Employment Law Newsletter

August 1, 2015

Annual Report on EEOC Developments - Fiscal Year 2014

Littler Report

January 5, 2015

More CNIL Guidance for Multinationals Seeking to Comply with SOX & Dodd-Frank

Littler Insight

March 4, 2014

Litigating Labor Rights Across a Demilitarized Zone: the South Korean Constitutional Court as a Forum to Address Labor Violations in North Korea's Kaesong Special Economic Zone

17 Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal 265

January 2008

Speaking Engagements

So, You Think You Are Ready for Global Inclusion, Equity and Diversity. What Now?

February 17, 2022

So, You Think You Are Ready for Global Inclusion, Equity and Diversity. What Now?

February 16, 2022

FAQs: COVID-19 Vaccinations in the APAC Region

November 23, 2021

Reducing Human Trafficking in the Supply Chain

Lorman Education Services Webinar

June 22, 2021

Spotlight on India: The Employer's Top 3 Concerns in 2021

April 29, 2021

Spotlight on India: The Employer's Top 3 Concerns in 2021

April 28, 2021

COVID-19 in the Workplace: Recent Developments and Compliance Challenges - Session 13

April 2, 2021

Return to Work in a COVID-19 World: U.S. and Global Perspectives

January 21, 2021

The Global Return to Work: How Multinational Employers Can Reintegrate Employees During COVID-19

Clear Law Institute Webinar

September 9, 2020

Back at Work Around the World: Cross-Border Strategies for Multinationals Returning Staff to Workplaces in the Shadow of Coronavirus

Public Law Institute Briefing Webinar

May 28, 2020

Back at Work Around the World: Cross-Border Strategies for Multinationals Returning Staff to Workplaces in the Shadow of Coronavirus

Public Law Institute Briefing Webinar

May 28, 2020

Returning to Work: Strategies and Tools for Reintegrating Employees Worldwide

May 20, 2020

COVID-19 and Cross-Border Workforce Cutbacks: Options and Strategies for the Retrenching Multinational

Public Law Institute Briefing

April 27, 2020

International Cutbacks and Reductions-in-Force in the Global Pandemic

April 16, 2020

Panelist, Proposed United Nations Business & Human Rights Treaty

U.N. Human Rights Council, Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group On Transnational Corporations & Other Business Enterprises With Respect To Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

October 14-18, 2019

Employment Law Considerations That May Impact Your Immigration Program

Webinar hosted by Envoy Global

February 19, 2019

Panelist on Jurisdiction of Proposed United Nations Business & Human Rights Treaty

U.N. Human Rights Council, Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group On Transnational Corporations & Other Business Enterprises With Respect To Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

October 15-19, 2018

Talking Politics in the Workplace – What Can an Employer Do?

BB&T Webinar

April 24, 2018

Update on the Proposed United Nations Treaty on Business & Human Rights – Webinar for Members of Global Industrial Relations Network

International Organisation of Employers Webinar

December 6, 2017

Panelist on Jurisdiction of Proposed United Nations Business & Human Rights Treaty

U.N. Human Rights Council, Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group On Transnational Corporations & Other Business Enterprises With Respect To Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

October 23-27, 2017

Terminating the Employee on Leave or Returning From Leave: Challenges and Best Practices

BB&T Webinar

May 25, 2017

Preparing for Change: DOL's Final Rule on Overtime

Asian American Hotel Owners Association, Inc., Upper Midwest Regional Conference & Trade Show, Elmhurst, IL

September 22, 2016

The Corporate Human Rights Benchmark Ranks Large Companies' Human Rights Performance

Littler webinar

May 12, 2016

Workplace Nightmares...The Employee Who Haunts Your Dreams

Chicago, IL

October 23, 2014

Investigating Cross-Border Whistleblower Claims: A Challenge for Multinational Employers

July 31, 2013

Books & Book Chapters

- Sections of Chapter 21: International Labor and Employment Law, *International Corporate Practice: A Practitioner's Guide to Global Success*, Practising Law Institute, chapter co-authors: Philip Berkowitz and Trent Sutton, February 2021
- 2019 Employment Law Update, *Misplaced Efforts: The United Nations' Proposed Treaty Imposing Corporate Liability for Human Rights Violations*, Chapter 11, Wolters Kluwer, chapter co-author Michael G. Congiu, 2019
- Sri Lanka, *The Littler Mendelson Guide to Employment & Labor Law (6th Ed.)*, Chapter editor, 2019
- 2017 Employment Law Update, *Imposing Liability on Employers Under the Shadow of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights*, Chapter 4, Wolters Kluwer, chapter co-author Michael G. Congiu, 2017
- *Littler on Multinational Employers*, co-author Philip Berkowitz, 2016
- International Whistleblowing Issues, *Whistleblowing & Retaliation: A Guide for Human Resources Professionals & Counsel*, Chapter 10 author, LexisNexis, 4th Ed., 2014
- 2014 Employment Law Update, *Leveling the Playing Field: Examining Firestone Deference in Delinquent Contribution Lawsuits*, Chapter 2, Wolters Kluwer, chapter co-authors Michael G. Congiu and Stefanie H. Kastrinsky, 2014