

## Lisa M. Kathumbi

Office Managing Shareholder

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## Focus Areas

Discrimination and Harassment  
Leaves of Absence and Disability Accommodation  
Hiring, Performance Management and Termination  
ERISA and Benefit Plan Litigation  
Investigations

## Overview

Lisa M. Kathumbi represents and counsels employers, ranging from small businesses to Fortune 100 companies, across jurisdictions in a broad range of labor and employment matters arising under federal and state law. She routinely defends employers before state and federal courts and administrative agencies against allegations of discrimination and harassment, accommodation and leave violations, breach of or enforcement of restrictive covenants, wrongful termination public policy claims, and whistleblower violations, among other matters. With extensive experience in employee benefits litigation, Lisa has also represented clients across the country in dozens of denial of benefits claims arising under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

"Lisa Kathumbi 'is a top notch labor and employment, commercial and ERISA business attorney and litigator. '" Client quote, *Best Lawyers of America*®, 2021.

In addition to her litigation practice, Lisa provides training and advice to employers on a wide range of employment issues and conducts high-stakes workplace investigations. She has worked with clients to evaluate and address allegations involving C-Suite leaders, media cases, pattern and practice claims, and other sensitive matters and served as a strategy partner to improve organizational culture.

Select examples of Lisa's experience include the following:

- Obtained summary judgment in the Southern District of Ohio in disability discrimination and failure to accommodate case on behalf of Fortune 100 Company
- Secured judgment in the Eastern District of California enforcing forum selection clause in ERISA governed benefits plan and obtained judgment on the merits in the Southern District of Ohio following transfer
- Successfully defended university in labor arbitration involving claims of harassment and age discrimination brought by thirty year employee discharged for multiple safety violations
- Secured summary judgment on behalf of global manufacturing client in age discrimination lawsuit, affirmed by the Tenth District Court of Appeals of Ohio
- Successfully litigated motion to dismiss based upon Plaintiffs' failure to follow ERISA statutory notice requirements when requesting Plan documents, resulting in dismissal of all claims against national banking client
- Conducted numerous privileged investigations on behalf of retail, manufacturing and healthcare clients into allegations of workplace bullying, discrimination, harassment and ethics and code of conduct violations
- Delivered training on effective workplace investigations to in-house counsel, HR leaders and compliance officers at small and multistate companies

An active member of her community and within the legal profession, Lisa has served on the board of several nonprofits and bar associations, including the Ohio Women's Bar Association to which she was elected and served as President from 2016-2017.

*\* Not licensed to practice law in Kentucky. Acting only in the capacity of a management role.*

## Professional and Community Affiliations

- President, Ohio Women's Bar Association, 2016-2017
- Vice President, Ohio Women's Bar Association, 2014-2015
- Member, Board of Trustees, Ohio Women's Bar Association, 2011-present
- Member, Board of Directors, Ruling Our Experiences (ROX), 2010-2013
- Member, Editorial Board, Better Lawyers, Columbus Bar Association Quarterly, 2007-2012
- Member, Executive Board, John Mercer Langston Bar Association, 2009-2012
- Member, Board of Directors, Red Cross of Greater Columbus, 2008-2010
- Member, Board of Directors, City Year Columbus, 2007-2010
- Chair, Young Women's Initiative, Women's Fund of Central Ohio, 2006-2008
- Alumni, Public Allies Chicago, 2002 and 2003

## Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America®, 2022-2024
- Named, Columbus Lawyer of the Year, Employment Law, *Best Lawyers in America*®, 2021
- Named, Client Service All-Star, *BTI Consulting Group*, 2020, 2024
- Recipient, Barrister's Salute Award, *John Mercer Langston Bar Association*, 2018

- Named, Central Ohio Women Welding the Way (WELD), 2017
- Recipient, OWBA's President's Choice Award, *Ohio Women's Bar Association*, 2015
- Named, Rising Star, Ohio, *Super Lawyers*, 2014 and 2015
- Recipient, President's Choice Award, *Ohio Women's Bar Association*, 2014
- Fellow, African American Leadership Academy, 2010
- Named, Rising Star, *National Urban League*, 2007
- Dean's List, *University of Cincinnati College of Law*, 2003-2006
- Recipient, C-Ring Award, *University of Cincinnati*, 2001

## Education

J.D., University of Cincinnati College of Law, 2006

M.A., University of Chicago, 2003

B.A., University of Cincinnati, 2001, *cum laude*

## Bar Admissions

Ohio

## Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 6th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio

## Publications & Press

**Do Columbus' top companies still value racial equity post affirmative action decision?**

*The Columbus Dispatch*

March 19, 2024

**How I Made Office Managing Partner: 'Trust the Journey,' Says Lisa Kathumbi of Littler Mendelson**

*Law.com*

September 13, 2023

**2023 Workforce Planning Amidst Economic Uncertainty**

*Legal Connections*

August 8, 2023

**Littler's Lisa Kathumbi Appointed as Office Managing Shareholder for Columbus and Lexington**

*Littler Press Release*

April 3, 2023

**Embracing Change: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse, Multigenerational Workforce**

*CBA Legal Connections*

November 25, 2022

**A New Normal: Survey of Local and National Employers**

*Columbus Bar Association Legal Connections*

July 5, 2022

**Conversations with Women: Perspectives from Littler Boomerangs**

*Littler Podcast*

March 28, 2022

**Addressing Workforce Diversity**

*Today's General Counsel*

December 3, 2021

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

*Littler Press Release*

August 19, 2021

**Littler Joins Expansion of Summer Work Experience in Law Program to Support Next Generation of Diverse Talent**

*Littler Press Release*

August 5, 2021

**Shareholder Lisa Kathumbi Rejoins Littler in Columbus**

*Littler Press Release*

April 12, 2021

**Reopening business amidst COVID-19: No one-size-fits-all approach for managing employment law risks**

May 5, 2020

**EEOC provides COVID-19 return to work guidance for high risk workers as Ohio governor urges they stay home**

April 30, 2020

**COVID-19 and ERISA disability claim reviews: No automatic extensions issued**

April 10, 2020

**Federal judge reinstates collection of gender and race pay data on EEO-1 forms**

March 15, 2019

**Companies using independent contractors score big following NLRB ruling**

February 14, 2019

**“Me Too” Movement requires changes in sexual harassment policies**

*Channel 10 News*

March 21, 2018

**Equal treatment for dads: EEOC settles first of its kinds parental leave case**

March 12, 2018

**Labor & Employment Issues Facing the Healthcare Industry**

*Littler Report*

April 12, 2016

**Failing to manage harassment of workers can lead to litigation**

*McKnight's Long Term Care News*

May 4, 2015

## **Speaking Engagements**

**2023 Ohio Regional Employer Conference**

Cleveland, OH

October 5, 2023

**Effective Workplace Investigations: Strategies for Creating a Speak-up and Accountability Culture**

May 11, 2023

**2022 Ohio Regional Employer Conference**

Cleveland, OH

October 6, 2022

**Retaliation: Preventing and Responding to Claims**

Advanced Employment Law Seminar, Ohio State Bar Association

May 25, 2022

**“Free Speech” and Employment Law in the Era of Political Polarization, Plenary Speaker**

Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association Conference

February 8, 2022

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

October 1, 2021

**Hot Topics in Employment Law**

Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), Columbus Labor and Employment Committee  
2020

**Me Too and Times Up: Conducting Effective Workplace Investigations, Addressing Pay Equity & Creating Cultures of Inclusion**

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)  
2019

**Responding to and Investigating Sexual Harassment Claims**

Ohio Hospital Association  
2018

**The Ten Commandments of Effective Workplace Investigations**

Client Seminar  
2018

**Election Results are in, What's Next for Employers?**

Client Seminar  
2016

**Healthcare Business Transactions and Employment Law Pitfalls**

American Health Lawyers Association Webinar  
January 13, 2016

**Working from Home in All Its Dimensions**

Human Resources Association of Central Ohio  
July 16, 2015

**Report on the EEOC: Regulatory Updates, the EEOC Strategic Enforcement Plan and What to Watch for in 2015**

Human Resources Law Institute - Ohio State Bar Association  
May 12, 2015