

Melissa J. Ackie

Associate

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Focus Areas

Leaves of Absence and Disability Accommodation
Investigations
Discrimination and Harassment
Litigation and Trials
Policies, Procedures and Handbooks
Workplace Policy Institute

Overview

Melissa Jeanine Ackie is a trusted legal adviser to business owners, in-house counsel, and human resources professionals on a broad range of HR and compliance workplace concerns, including leave and accommodation, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, terminations, and wage and hour issues. As a former secondee for a multinational publicly traded corporation, she leverages her experience and insight to help clients effectively navigate employment-related risk while balancing business realities in an ever-changing legal landscape. She partners with employers of all sizes, including both public and private, nonprofit, and public sector.

Melissa regularly conducts internal workplace investigations for higher education institutions (including Title IX), public sector employers, and private employers related to allegations of misconduct, including discrimination, sexual harassment, and retaliation.

She also maintains an active litigation practice, advocating and defending clients in arbitrations, federal courts, and state courts throughout Texas against discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wage and hour allegations in matters. Her recent representative experience includes:

- Obtaining complete defense findings in federal bench trial concerning allegations of FMLA retaliation

- Obtaining multiple summary judgments on behalf of nationwide companies sued in various employment actions under Title VII and the ADEA, including claims of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
- Obtaining multiple summary judgments for actions violating the statute of limitations
- Obtaining summary judgment on behalf of a nonprofit sued in a defamation action
- Obtaining sanctions against a plaintiff for filing a baseless action under Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 13. Ruling was affirmed on appeal by the Third Court of Appeals
- Obtaining dismissals in multiple Charges of Discrimination in state and federal agencies, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Texas Workforce Commission
- Negotiating favorable settlements through mediation and other informal methods on behalf of clients facing significant exposure

Melissa serves as a liaison for Littler's Workplace Policy Institute (WPI). She focuses on Texas state legislative and regulatory developments in employment and labor law, as well as municipal ordinances and regulation of the workplace. Melissa tracks relevant legislation, revises policies and protocols for compliance, and assists clients in understanding the potential impact of Texas legislation before and after it becomes law.

Before joining Littler, Melissa's practice primarily focused on representing individuals and companies in Texas state courts, federal courts, and arbitrations in a variety of civil litigation defense actions.

While in law school, Melissa served as a judicial intern for Federal Judge Melinda Harmon of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division, and represented the University of Texas School of Law at nationals in the Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition.

Melissa has been a certified mediator for the State of Texas since December 2011 and is a classically trained violist.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Pathfinder, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, 2018
- Board Member, Austin Diaper Bank
- Board Member, Plan II Board of Visitors
- Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation
- Member, Austin Young Chamber
- Member, Austin Young Lawyers Association Leadership Academy, Class of 2022
- Member, Austin Black Lawyers Association

Recognition

- Named, Ones to Watch, *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2022-2025

Education

J.D., University of Texas School of Law, 2013

B.A., University of Texas, Austin, 2010, *Phi Beta Kappa*

Bar Admissions

Texas

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit

U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas

U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas

Publications & Press

Texas District Court Declares State Preemption Law Unconstitutional. What Now?

Littler ASAP

September 1, 2023

Texas Governor Signs Preemption Bill, CROWN Act and Other Bills

SHRM Online

August 23, 2023

Texas Governor Signs Preemption Bill, CROWN Act, and Other Legislation into Law

Littler Insight

August 11, 2023

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

Littler Press Release

August 19, 2021

Federal Court Strikes Down Dallas Paid Sick Leave Ordinance

Littler ASAP

April 2, 2021

Court Finds Texas Minimum Wage Law Preempts San Antonio Paid Sick Leave Ordinance

Littler ASAP

March 11, 2021

The Uncertain Future of Texas Paid-Sick-Leave Ordinances

SHRM Online

June 23, 2020

Silence from on High: The Uncertain Future of Texas Paid Sick Leave Ordinances

Littler ASAP

June 16, 2020

Final Title IX Regulations Adopt Sweeping Changes for Handling Sexual Harassment Claims at Institutions of Higher Education

Littler Insight

May 8, 2020

The Open Texas Plan: A State and Local Update

Littler ASAP

May 1, 2020

Texas Stay Home Orders: A State and Local Update

Littler Insight

April 9, 2020

Dallas Paid Sick Leave Ordinance is Enjoined

Littler ASAP

March 31, 2020

Central Texas Counties and the Cities of Austin and San Antonio Ordered to Stay Safe at Home

Littler ASAP

March 25, 2020

Amendments to San Antonio's Paid Sick Leave Ordinance—and Related Developments Affecting the Lone Star State

Littler Insight

November 1, 2019

Littler Recognized by Leadership Council on Legal Diversity as a 2019 Top Performer and Selected for the 2019 Compass Award

Littler Press Release

November 1, 2019

Moving Targets: (Possible) Delays to Texas Paid Sick Leave Ordinances

Littler ASAP

July 25, 2019

Texas Paid Sick Leave Question of the Hour: What do Employers do Now?

Littler ASAP

June 14, 2019

Dallas Joins Austin and San Antonio in Mandating Paid Sick Leave in Texas

Littler Insight

April 29, 2019

Austin, Texas Earned Sick Time Ordinance on Life Support

Littler ASAP

November 19, 2018

New Workplace Battlefield: Paid Sick Leave

Houston Chronicle

October 10, 2018

The New Workplace Battleground: Paid Sick Leave in Texas

Texas Tribune TribTalk

October 5, 2018

Texas Two-Step: San Antonio Joins Austin in Mandating Paid Sick and Safe Leave; Then Court Enjoins Austin Law from Taking Effect During Appeal

Littler Insight

August 21, 2018

New Developments in Employment and Labor Law Under the Trump Administration, co-authored with Scott McDonald

July 2017

Speaking Engagements

Conducting Lawful Investigations

Client Training, Austin, TX

November 28, 2023

Workplace Investigations: The Dos, The Don'ts, and the What Have You Done

CenTexSHRM, Belton, TX

November 8, 2023

FMLA Workshop For HR Professionals

University of Texas at San Antonio Training, San Antonio, TX

September 11, 2023

Maintaining a Respectful Workplace

Client Training, Austin, TX

August 14, 2023

Title IX Training

University of Texas System Title IX Annual Training, Austin, TX

August 2-3, 2023

Littler Austin's 2022 Holiday Season Lunch and Learn

Austin, TX

December 9, 2022

Employment Law Update: Trends and Developments in Leave and Accommodation, Wage and Hour, and Texas State and Local Laws

2022 South Texas SHRM Annual Half Day Conference, Victoria, TX

December 8, 2022

A Leave and Benefits Medley: Dobbs, COVID, and Related Questions

Austin Bar Association, Labor & Employment Law Section CLE Presentation, Austin, TX

October 5, 2022

Innovative Talk About Wage and Hour Laws

2022 SHRM New Mexico State Conference, Albuquerque, NM

April 11, 2022

Littler Lawyers Answer Your Most Burning Labor and Employment Questions

The Houstonian, Houston, TX

February 17, 2022

Back to Work? How In-House Employment Counsel and Human Resources Professionals Can Help Organizations Assess Whether, When and How to Reopen for Business

April 27, 2020

Coming August 1, 2019: Preparing for the Texas Paid Sick Leave Wave

July 17, 2019

Employment Law Red Flags: How to Spot Them and How to Fix Them

Hispanic Bar Association of Austin CLE Presentation, Austin, TX

August 2018

CLI: Conducting Lawful Investigations

Client Training, San Antonio, TX

July 2018

Hospitality in the #MeToo Era: Shifting From Risk To Opportunity For A Better Work Environment

Texas Hotel & Lodging Association Conference, Lost Pines, TX

June 2018

Competency: Talent Management

Client Training, Austin, TX

May 2018

From Harvey Weinstein to... Who's Next? Preventing Harassment in the Workplace and What to Do When Claims are Made

Austin, TX

April 5, 2018

Respect in the Workplace

Client Training, Austin, TX

March 2018

Managing Within the Law

Client Training, Austin, TX

February 2018

Books & Book Chapters

- *Employment Discrimination Law Treatise*, Bloomberg BNA, Sixth Edition, Chapter Contributor, 2018