

employment intelligence

MIDWEST REGIONAL EMPLOYER | Minneapolis, MN | November 13, 2025

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Registration and Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION

The Littler Report

We live in a constant crush of information, and Littler knows that employers today need more than just more. This year's Littler Report is all about employment intelligence, not just information. Employment Intelligence (EI) means shining light on uncertainty and clearing paths with purpose – from confidence in compliance to the pursuit of opportunity. This year has brought not just a new administration but, with it, an unprecedented expansion in the field of potential implications. In this year's Littler Report, we provide the insider's update on what we know now, what we can expect, and how employers can respond when it comes to changes in labor, immigration and federal enforcement of employment laws. Looking ahead means anticipating what may come. Done well, it also means keeping an unwavering eye on where you want to be. From AI to a flexible focus on inclusion, we will translate legal complexity into practical steps on the way to vision realized. The workforce and the workplace change over time in knowable and consequential ways. We will cover not just how the workforce and work world are changing, but also what employers can do to foster sustained organizational and individual growth amidst those changes. Join us as we continue a more than 40-year tradition of strategic partnership and shared insight. Attendees will leave with an enhanced EI, prepared to identify high-stakes labor and employment issues and guide their organizations as they rise to every challenge.

Speakers:

[Marko J. Mrkonich](#) and featured panelists.

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Break

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

SESSION 2A

2025 Minnesota Update: What's New and What's Coming! (Paid Family Leave; Meal and Rest Breaks; Drug and Alcohol Testing; Minneapolis Ordinance Amendments)

All good things come in threes. For the third year in a row, join Littler for an informative discussion on continuing Minnesota legal changes and what it all means for your employment practices and operations.

Presenters will review the laws implemented in 2025-2026 and the continuing changes regarding:

- Paid Family Medical Leave – the latest legislative updates
- Earned Safe and Sick Time (ESST) – expanded coverage, calculating the proper rate for ESST and other provisions you need to know
- Meal and Rest Breaks – changes that require review of your policies

- Drug and alcohol testing – revised regulations on testing procedures and policies
- Medical marijuana protections – enhanced workplace protections for registered patients and other developments
- Independent contractors – increased penalties for misclassification, greater enforcement authority and a new independent contractor test for construction contractors
- Minneapolis Ordinance Amendments – including dealing with employee applicants’ criminal convictions
- Pay transparency obligations – requirements for job postings
- Minnesota Human Rights Act amendments – impact of significant changes to available remedies

Speakers:

[Kurt J. Erickson](#), [Thomas R. Revnew](#) and [Claire Welch](#)

SESSION 2B

AI and U: The Gameshow Where Digital Dilemmas and Practical Advice Intersect

AI is revolutionizing the modern workplace, with fresh and innovative applications being unveiled each day. For in-house counsel and other corporate leaders, gaining a deeper grasp of the risks and opportunities embedded in this transformative technology is critical. That's where our dynamic, high-octane gameshow comes in! Join us as our engaging hosts lead you through a riveting array of AI topics, covering the basics and diving into legal nuances to ensure that you leave with insight into new and evolving AI challenges. You need only to don your thinking cap, select your answers, and then listen as experienced attorneys from across the Littler-verse concisely explain the key concepts and considerations at play. Armed with this knowledge, you'll be better equipped to guide business leaders and stakeholders as your organization embarks on its AI journey. So come test your mettle with a series of progressively challenging questions and see if you have what it takes to be crowned AI Expert ... because the future of the workplace is AI and U.

Speakers:

[Marko J. Mrkonich](#), [Niloy Ray](#) and [Develyn J. Mistriotti](#)

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

SESSION 3A

New and Exciting Wage and Hour Law Developments

Find out what you need to know about employer plans for yearly incentive compensation as year-end approaches, as well as a primer on new Minnesota laws on meals and rest breaks. We will also discuss recent and potentially helpful changes at the U.S. Department of Labor, including the announcement that the DOL will no longer seek liquidated damages and the return of the “PAID” program, which allows employers to ask to be audited in exchange for limited penalties and employees releasing FLSA claims. Attendees also will gain insight and information about how to improve wage and hour compliance.

Speakers:

[Claire B. Deason](#), [John H. Lassetter](#) and [Brendan Johnson](#)

SESSION 3B

Labor Wheels Keep Turning: Labor Updates, Trends and Practical Considerations

Join us for a lively discussion about the state of labor law in the second Trump Administration, including the implications of the unprecedented termination of Board Member Gwynne Wilcox, constitutional challenges to the Board’s structure, changes in prosecutorial priorities, the major issues awaiting a Board quorum, trends in union organizing, and tips to navigate this uncertain time and prepare for what’s next.

Speakers:

[Noah G. Lipschultz](#), [Alice D. Kirkland](#) and [Jeffrey E. Dilger](#)

12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Lunch Break

The lunch buffet will be available in the foyer. Guests are invited to help themselves and proceed to the general session room to be seated before the Lunch Hour Roundtable begins.

12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

GENERAL SESSION

IE&D Roundtable: Why We Need to Start Thinking Differently About ‘Diversity of Thought’

As corporate IE&D initiatives continue to face legislative, judicial and political attacks due to a rapidly evolving socio-cultural landscape, companies are rebranding, repositioning and reimagining their efforts in this space, and dimensions like experiential diversity and “diversity of thought” are gaining more attention. By combining authoritative insights, multimedia tools and participant engagement, this lunch session will equip attendees with the information and legally sound strategies to enable practical solutions for turbocharging organizations' IE&D efforts in 2025 and beyond.

Join us for this lively and interactive discussion as we: (1) Explore the ways in which cognitive diversity can curb bias, unleash innovation and cultivate competitive edge; (2) Collaborate on real-world scenarios to address relevant challenges in the workplace; (3) Enhance understanding of the intersection between difference, organizational culture and relevant employment laws; and (4) Rethink what concepts like “diversity,” “equity” and “belonging” can meaningfully and lawfully include as the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2023 Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard decision – and its potential impact for providing greater leeway to employers for relevant “preferences” beyond Title VII dimensions – continues to reverberate for business leaders.

Speakers:

[Kathryn Mrkonich Wilson](#) and [Cindy-Ann L. Thomas](#)

1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Break

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

SESSION 5A

Whistleblowing: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

A well-intended whistleblower willing to work with an employer to genuinely identify wrongdoing can save a company money, its reputation and maybe even the company altogether. But a disgruntled employee pursuing unfounded allegations can cost a company money, create low employee morale and high turnover, disrupt the business, and generate adverse publicity. Reports of actual, and unfounded, whistleblowers are increasing as coverage of these activities spreads in the news, social media and popular culture.

If navigating a whistleblower complaint is not tricky enough, state and federal agencies are increasingly intolerant of confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements and have levied significant fines on employers in connection with whistleblowing. The Trump administration has also made enforcement of False Claims Act (FCA) claims a priority by instituting the Civil Rights Fraud Initiative targeting recipients of federal funds that allegedly violate federal civil rights laws through unlawful diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs. The FCA bears significant monetary penalties, including triple damage awards, statutory mandatory penalties and attorneys’ fees.

This panel of Littler attorneys will look at examples of whistleblowers and what their stories can teach us about how to implement an effective whistleblowing response. They will provide practical approaches for managing reports and investigating allegations and discuss how to effectively listen to and work with employees to mitigate risk and learn to distinguish the real from the frivolous without inviting a retaliation claim. They will also explore the best ways to mitigate the risks of successful FCA/DEI claims.

Speakers:

[Holly M. Robbins](#), [Jacqueline A. Mrachek](#) and [Carroll T. Wright](#)

SESSION 5B

The World Turned Upside Down: Dealing with Difficult Workplace Issues in Chaotic Times

With President Trump seeking to exercise unprecedented authority over a host of workplace-related issues, the courts no longer deferring to existing regulations, each state or local government pursuing its own agenda, and the federal government threatening to punish employers that fail to comply with the administration's policies, legal compliance has never been more fraught.

In this session, David Goldstein and Lehoan (Hahn) Pham will address some of the issues of greatest current concern to employers, including challenges to DEI, transgender rights, freedom of religion, and the enforcement of immigration laws. We will explain the Trump administration's positions, the current state of the law, the ways in which the administration is seeking to compel compliance with its positions, the risks that employers face, and strategies for mitigating those risks while still serving the needs of the business.

Speakers:

[David J. Goldstein](#) and [Lehoan \(Hahn\) Pham](#)

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Break

3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

SESSION 6A

Navigating Extended Leaves and Disability Accommodations: Practical Strategies for Employers

While the pandemic temporarily shifted leave patterns, recent trends show a resurgence in medical leave accommodation requests, particularly as employers increasingly require in-office presence. Extended leave requests can be especially challenging for employers. Common questions include: Why does the leave keep getting extended? Can we backfill the role? What's a reasonable duration for the leave? Will this ever be resolved?

This session will offer a practical framework for addressing these complex issues. We will provide actionable insights on how to engage in the interactive process effectively, evaluate whether an employee on extended leave remains qualified for their role, and manage open-ended leave situations with confidence.

Join us for a candid, solutions-focused discussion designed to help Upper Midwest employers meet their legal obligations while maintaining operational clarity.

Speakers:

[Susan K. Fitzke](#), [Emily A. McNee](#) and [Taylor R. McKenny](#)

SESSION 6B

Ethics Roundtable: A Discussion of Important Ethics Issues for In-House Counsel

Please join Littler's General Counsel as he discusses the important ethics issues facing in-house counsel with a panel of general counsels from across the country and various industries. The panel will discuss practical ways of assuring compliance with lawyers' ethical obligations in an in-house setting.

Speakers:

[George R. Wood](#) and featured panelists.

4:15 p.m.

Cocktail Hour