



Littler

Powering the Future Workplace

The 2026 Regional Employer Conference

MIDWEST REGIONAL EMPLOYER | MINNEAPOLIS | NOVEMBER 12, 2026

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Registration and Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Session 1

The Littler Report

The timeline for change in the workplace continues to accelerate, changing the entire definition of work and the role of humans in the production process. We are witnesses to generational change, seemingly in mere moments. In this year's Littler Report, we offer a fast-paced and engaging look at where employers stand today and the path to being well-positioned tomorrow.

This session addresses how employers are leading the way in harnessing the power of AI and its capacity for faster and deeper insight advances, while preserving a workplace that remains fundamentally driven by human activity and interactions. Employers have the ability to reach new heights of productivity and prosperity and simultaneously improve safety, compliance, and engagement. Employers who implement flexible, modern labor strategies have the capacity to offer an environment that resonates with a multi-generational workforce. And just as importantly, employers can manage the complexity of an ever-changing workforce with unique needs and challenges.

Join us as we continue a more than 40-year tradition of strategic partnership and shared insight. Attendees will leave with an enhanced Employment Intelligence, 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. – 10:05 a.m.

Break

10:05 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.

Session 2A

2026 Minnesota Update: Keeping Pace with Change (Minnesota Paid Leave; ESST Compliance; Break-Time Requirements; Drug Testing)

Minnesota employers continue to adapt to one of the most significant periods of workplace law change in the state's history. As new leave and workplace protections move from implementation to enforcement, employers are facing practical questions about administration, compliance,



employee relations, and risk management. Join Littler's Minnesota attorneys for a practical discussion of the latest developments affecting employers and the lessons learned during the first six months of Minnesota Paid Leave. Our presenters will address common employer challenges, recent agency guidance, emerging enforcement trends, and the policy updates organizations should be considering now.

Topics will include:

- Minnesota Paid Leave – lessons learned during the first year of administration, common employer pitfalls, and emerging compliance issues
- Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) – recent rulemaking, enforcement trends, documentation requirements, and administration challenges
- Meal and Rest Break Requirements – practical compliance considerations and frequently asked employer questions regarding Minnesota's expanded break-time requirements
- Pay Transparency – compliance considerations and developing areas of risk for employers
- Drug and Alcohol Testing and Cannabis Issues – continuing developments impacting workplace policies and testing programs
- Minnesota Human Rights Act and Employment Litigation Trends – notable developments affecting accommodation, discrimination, and retaliation claims
- Handbook and Policy Updates – key policies Minnesota employers should review and update to address the state's evolving legal landscape

What you'll gain:

- Practical guidance based on employers' real-world experiences navigating Minnesota's new employment laws
- Best practices for updating policies, training managers, and reducing compliance risk
- Actionable takeaways you can implement immediately within your organization

Speakers:

[Kurt J. Erickson](#), [Grant Goerke](#) and [Claire E. Wilson](#)

Session 2B

Mental Health Crises in the Workplace: Presenting Scenarios and Proven Strategies for Managing Employees Exhibiting Suicidal Ideations or Severe Mental Distress

As workplace mental health concerns continue to rise, employers are increasingly confronted with difficult situations involving employees in severe psychological distress or expressing suicidal ideation. These situations often present urgent and challenging legal questions, while demanding immediate action.

This session will offer a practical framework for addressing these complex issues. We will review real-life scenarios and provide actionable guidance to help our Midwest-based employers recognize the warning signs of an employee in crisis, implement response protocols that are compliant under both state and federal law. This will enable you to confidentially navigate the intersection of employee well-being, workplace safety, and legal risk while also supporting employees in crisis, and fostering a psychologically safe workplace.

Speakers:

[Susan K. Fitzke](#) and [Emily A. McNee](#)

11:05 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

Break

11:25 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.

Breakout 3A

Welcome to the Twilight Zone: Where Wage and Hour Law Meets the Unknown

Imagine a world in which the rules you thought were carved in stone begin to shift beneath your feet. Where decades-old precedent—once the bedrock of wage and hour law—starts to crack and crumble. Where the meaning of “work” itself is questioned, where rounding practices once deemed compliant now spark litigation, and where the line between compensable time and personal time blurs in the glow of a remote workforce.



In this world, courts revisit long-standing doctrines, agencies reinterpret regulations with the stroke of a pen, and employers find themselves navigating a legal landscape that feels increasingly unfamiliar. What was once predictable is now uncertain. What was once routine is now risky. And what you thought you knew may no longer apply.

You are about to enter a realm where legal clarity gives way to ambiguity, and where the future of wage and hour law is anyone's guess. Your next stop is the Wage and Hour Twilight Zone.

Speakers:

[John H. Lassetter](#), [Claire B. Deason](#) and [Grant Goerke](#)

Breakout 3B

The NLRB Under Trump 2.0: Reading the Tea Leaves on Labor Law's Future

The labor law landscape is shifting again. While many expected the NLRB to move quickly to reverse Biden-era policies, procedural hurdles and agency disruptions delayed major action. Behind the scenes, however, the Board and General Counsel have been laying the groundwork for potentially significant changes. Now, with a Republican-appointed majority and renewed momentum at the agency, employers may soon see long-anticipated challenges to key labor law precedents.

This session will explore where the NLRB is headed, which Biden-era decisions are most vulnerable, how enforcement priorities are changing, and what employers should be watching as labor policy evolves in 2027 and beyond.

Speakers:

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

12:25 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.

Lunch Buffet Break

Please make your way through the buffet in the foyer and find a seat in the general session room for our lunch hour programming (Universe).

12:55 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.

Session 4 | Lunch Hour Program

In the Room Where It Happens: Mediation Role Play, from Risk Assessment to Resolution

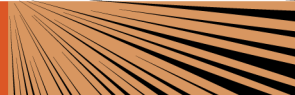
Mediation is a common step in employment disputes, yet even a “successful” mediation can leave an employer questioning whether they truly achieved the best possible outcome. In this interactive session, we will explore the key factors that drive resolution of workplace disputes, from early case evaluation and litigation cost analysis to settlement authority and negotiation tactics. Through audience benchmarking, practical guidance, and a mock mediation involving discrimination and harassment claims, attendees will gain insight into how plaintiffs, defendants, and mediators assess risk, value cases, and navigate difficult settlement discussions. Participants will leave with actionable strategies for preparing for mediation, evaluating exposure, managing business considerations, and improving outcomes in employment litigation matters.

Speakers:

[Kathryn Mrkonich Wilson](#) and [Holly M. Robbins](#)
with featured panelist [Antone Melton-Meaux from Work Resolve Mediation](#)

1:55 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.

Break



2:10 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Breakout 5A

The Business Wants AI. Now. What Do I Do?

The Employment AI Journey from Proposal to Deployment.

The business decision has been made. Learn how to:

- Understand and evaluate use cases;
- Navigate the world of vendors;
- Approach regulatory compliance in an ever-shifting landscape; and
- Manage the legal workflow from ideation to implementation.

Speakers:

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

Breakout 5B

The Washington Forecast: Labor, Employment, and Political Change Ahead

The political tides in Washington are rising. The administration and Congress will be in full swing after this year's mid-term elections. Legislators are already responding to major court rulings with the broadest array of labor-law reforms in a generation, while federal agencies are advancing regulations on workplace safety, overtime, worker classification, and more. This year promises to be a busy—and potentially tumultuous—time for employers.

Join Alex MacDonald, co-chair of Littler's Workplace Policy Institute, and Lehoan (Hahn) Pham as we navigate these waves. Alex and Hahn will preview key developments in Congress, the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

You'll gain insights into:

1. Agency leadership initiatives and regulatory activities at the DOL, EEOC, and NLRB
2. Understand labor and employment reform proposals in the U.S. House and Senate and what they mean for employers
3. Get a snapshot of the pending mid-term elections and how potential shifts in congressional power could impact legislative priorities
4. Learn practical strategies for engaging with policymakers to influence policy and mitigate risk

In a policy storm, every employer needs a compass—find yours here.

Speakers:

[Alexander T. MacDonald](#) and [Lehoan \(Hahn\) Pham](#)

3:10 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Break

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Breakout 6A

The Pro Se Advocate in the Age of AI: Dealing with angry applicants, demanding employees, pro se litigants and the technologies that they use and abuse.

Individuals seeking to aggressively vindicate perceived legal rights without the assistance of legal counsel have always presented special challenges to employers. Resolving disputes when one side does not have a realistic understanding of the law or precedent and is not subject to standards of professional responsibility can be very challenging. Such challenges may arise in connection with the hiring process, requests for reasonable accommodations or leaves of absence, disciplinary action, and, of course, in litigation. In this session, we will discuss how the internet and AI have empowered individuals to pursue their perceived rights on their own more aggressively than ever, creating complications



and new risks for employers. As part of our discussion, we will cover recent developments, ways to avoid disputes, how to handle disputes when they arise, and ethical aspects of dealing with pro se adversaries.

Speakers:

[David J. Goldstein](#)

Breakout 6B

Employee Raiding, Trade Secrets, and Protecting Your Business Beyond the Non-Compete Agreement

As employee mobility increases and employers face more uncertainty due to increasing judicial hostility toward restrictive covenant enforcement, employers must find new ways to protect their workforce, customer relationships, and trade secrets and confidential information. This session explores employee raiding, trade secret misappropriation, and other competitive threats, while providing proactive and practical strategies for protecting trade secrets and confidential information and preventing, identifying, and responding to coordinated departures and the associated threat to an organization's most valuable and proprietary information. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to protect their businesses before disputes arise.

Speakers:

[Jeremy Sosna](#)

4:30 p.m.

Cocktail Reception