



James C. Crowley

Shareholder

815 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006
main: +1 (202) 842-3400
direct: (202) 772-2509
fax: +1 (202) 842-0011
jccrowley@littler.com

Practice Areas

Litigation and Trials
Appellate
Labor Management Relations
Arbitration
Unfair Competition and Trade Secrets
Business Restructuring and M&A
Employee Benefits
Sports
Hospitality
Financial Services

Overview

James Crowley brings extensive experience in complex labor and employment litigation and regulatory challenges. He has successfully handled cases in federal and state appellate and district courts, administrative agencies, and arbitrations. James played a crucial role in several high-profile labor and employment cases in recent years. Notably, he achieved a well-publicized success in challenging the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) joint-employer rule, represented clients in the widely watched NLRB case regarding the employment status of student-athletes, successfully defended professional sports leagues against tort claims preempted by federal labor law, and secured an important victory overturning a labor arbitration award under one of the most deferential standards of review in law.

In addition to his litigation practice, James helps clients navigate strategic labor and employment questions that arise from collective bargaining and union organizing, pending legislation, government investigations, corporate transactions, restrictive covenants, executive agreements, reductions in force, antidiscrimination laws, and employee retirement and health plans.

Before joining the firm, James was an attorney at another international law firm and clerked for Chief Judge Jerome A. Holmes of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit and Chief Justice Peter J. Maassen of the Alaska Supreme Court.

Selected Matters

- Defeated the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) attempt to expand joint employment liability through its 2023 rulemaking, 88 Fed. Reg. 73,946.
- Successfully represented companies in all manner of labor disputes arising under the NLRA, the LMRA, other federal labor statutes and collective bargaining agreements.
- Obtained reversals of several precedents at the NLRB, including the rule that employees were presumptively entitled to use their employer's email system to engage in concerted activity.
- Defended major collegiate athletic conference against claim that student-athletes its players were employees.
- Successfully defended a professional sports league against tort claims preempted by the LMRA.
- Successfully defended major gaming company against NLRB charges limiting its ability to operate the casino floor.
- Obtained reversal of labor arbitrations for a chemical manufacturing company under a collective bargaining agreement.
- Successfully represented major hospitality company in secondary boycott claims under the LMRA.
- Represented professional sports leagues, hotels, financial services providers and real estate developers in negotiating collective bargaining agreements.
- Successfully defended professional sports league and employee benefits plan against ERISA claims.
- Defeated petitions for a temporary restraining order and a permanent injunction to prevent an executive at a major energy company from working for a competitor based on noncompetition covenants.
- Successfully represented a major energy company in defending against a collective action under the Fair Labor Standards Act and state wage and hour laws.
- Successfully defended a financial services firm against whistleblower claims under the SOX Act and the Dodd-Frank Act.
- Successfully defended a major gaming company against class action under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.
- Successfully defended construction and energy companies in occupational safety and health regulatory investigations and citation actions.
- Successfully defended insurance company against class action claims under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.
- Defeated emergency claims against hedge fund by quantitative modeler seeking to establish competing fund.
- Successfully defended entertainment and gaming companies against withdrawal liability claims under ERISA.

Recognition

- Named, Litigator of the Week, *The American Lawyer*
- Named, Legal Lion, *Law360*
- Named, Labor and Employment Practice Group of the Year, *Law360*
- Named, Sports Practice Group of the Year, *Law360*
- Named, The Best Lawyers in America®, Labor and Employment
- Recipient, Pro Bono Counsel of the Year Award

Education

J.D., Northwestern University School of Law,
A.B., Georgetown University,

Bar Admissions

District of Columbia
Illinois

Publications & Press

Littler Continues D.C. Office Growth with Addition of Shareholder James Crowley

Press Release

April 16, 2025