



W. KeAupuni Akina

Associate

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Practice Areas

Discrimination and Harassment
Litigation and Trials
Investigations

Overview

KeAupuni Akina is a seasoned trial attorney who defends employers against claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other workplace disputes. With more than a decade of courtroom experience, he has tried cases to verdict as lead counsel and has argued before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. KeAupuni navigates every stage of litigation including pleadings, discovery, hearings, motion practice, mediation, trial, and appeal.

Before joining Littler, KeAupuni served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Hawaii, where he investigated and prosecuted employment fraud, union embezzlement, benefits fraud, regulatory violations, and financial and violent crimes. He was trial counsel in high-profile cases such as the longest federal trial in Hawaii's history, which involved RICO, fraud, and murder charges. As a federal prosecutor, he also advised federal law enforcement and military partners on enforcement strategies—experience that now informs his practical, disciplined approach to representing and advising employers.

Earlier in his career, KeAupuni defended the City of New York and its officials in civil rights matters as a Senior Counsel in the Special Federal Litigation Division of the New York City Law Department. There, he handled lawsuits alleging racial and religious discrimination, First Amendment retaliation, and other constitutional violations. He has worked on complex cases including a putative class action challenging the NYPD's alleged use of digital stop and frisk. Prior to that, he was a prosecutor in the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office, one of the nation's busiest, gaining extensive trial experience.

KeAupuni clerked for U.S. District Judge Dora L. Irizarry in the Eastern District of New York. During law school, he was an executive articles editor for the *Brooklyn Journal of Corporate, Financial & Commercial Law*.

Born and raised in Hawaii, KeAupuni is a proud graduate of Kamehameha Schools.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Lawyer Delegate, U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii Judicial Conference, 2025-present

- Member, American Bar Association

Recognition

- Recipient, Top Cop Hawaii Award, *Law Enforcement and Security Coalition of Hawaii*, 2024
- Member, Brooklyn Law School, *Moot Court Honor Society*

Education

J.D., Brooklyn Law School, 2013

B.A., University of Southern California, 2009, *magna cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Hawaii

New York

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

U.S. District Court, District of Hawaii

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York

U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York