

## William O. Stein

### *Partner*

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### ***Service Focus***

- Counseling and Advice
- Employee Defection and Trade Secrets
- Litigation and Trials

### ***Industry Focus***

- Energy

### ***Overview***

Bill Stein defends businesses in high-stakes employment lawsuits including those involving wrongful termination, harassment, disability, and trade secret claims. An accomplished trial lawyer who has led more than 40 jury trials, bench trials, and arbitrations, Bill has an impressive track record of victories for clients in numerous industries across all California jurisdictions. He is a strong advocate who continuously *listens* to clients' business goals. When a settlement is more advantageous, he deftly negotiates to secure key objectives. When nothing short of winning will do, he prepares to fight as hard as possible at trial – seeking to prevail so thoroughly that opposing counsel won't challenge his clients again.

Bill's many long-time retail, healthcare, and manufacturing clients know their best interests are his top priority and value his approachability and candid assessments of their circumstances. When tensions run high, Bill's extensive trial experience and steady hand help keep a focus on the big picture, affording clients the clarity they need to make decisions necessary to a successful defense. And, just as importantly, his wealth of knowledge enables him to advise and counsel clients in making day-to-day employment decisions that help avoid litigation.

After law school, Bill clerked for the Honorable Robert J. Kelleher in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. He also served as counsel to the Webster Commission, which

investigated the Los Angeles Police Department's response to the city's riots in 1992.

## ***Recent Experience***

### **Experience**

- Secured a complete defense victory in an arbitration in New York City for a start-up on claims of retaliation and disability discrimination. Claimant's employment was terminated because his behavior was not in line with the company's stated values and principles. The Claimant alleged that he was only disciplined and then terminated after he disclosed that he had anxiety and depression. The Arbitrator found that Bill's cross-examination proved the Claimant was not truthful, and that Claimant's answers and demeanor on cross-examination showed that his behavior at work was not in line with the company's values and principles, justifying his termination.
- Successfully defended a car dealership in arbitration on claims of disability discrimination, failure to accommodate, and failure to accommodate. The Claimant contended that he was terminated because he went on medical leave for cancer. The arbitrator found that Bill's cross-examination proved that the Claimant did not have cancer, that he was untruthful to his employer, that he provided false testimony during his direct examination, and our client had a legitimate reason to terminate his employment.
- Successfully defended a car dealership in arbitration on claims for failure to provide meal breaks and penalties under the Labor Code. The arbitrator found that our client did not prevent the Claimant from taking his meal breaks, provided him every opportunity to take his breaks, and the Claimant did, in fact, take his meal breaks.
- Secured a complete defense verdict on behalf of a public utility company in a 2 month jury trial in New Jersey state court. The plaintiff claimed that he was terminated because of his religion and because he was a whistleblower. Bill and a team from Fisher Phillips' New Jersey office were able to convince the jury that the plaintiff's employment was terminated because he violated company policies and compromised public safety. The jury returned a unanimous verdict in less than an hour.
- Secured a complete defense verdict at trial for a financial institution client on claims of disability discrimination, failure to accommodate, and failure to engage in the interactive process. Bill substituted into the case a few months before trial and was able to convince the jury that the plaintiff was not disabled, and his refusal to come back from stress leave was job abandonment.
- Secured a defense verdict for a car dealership at arbitration on claims of wrongful termination. Claimant contended he was a whistleblower, but the arbitrator found that he was terminated because he had sexually harassed co-workers.
- Secured a defense verdict for a private boarding school on claims of pregnancy, disability, and gender discrimination as well as interference with CFRA. The arbitrator found that Bill's cross-examination of Claimant showed that she was not credible and proved that her contract was not renewed because of long-standing performance issues that she refused to correct.

- Secured a defense verdict for a waste management company at arbitration on claims of disability and age discrimination and harassment. The arbitrator found that Bill's cross examination showed that the Claimant lacked credibility and could not establish that he was either discriminated against or harassed.
- Secured a defense verdict in arbitration for a placement agency on claims of disability discrimination and failure to accommodate by showing that the client had taken all steps to accommodate the employee and did not engage in any discriminatory conduct.
- Obtained a defense verdict for a retail home furnishing company on whistleblower and disability discrimination claims, in a rare in-person civil jury trial in California during the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenged to argue his case in an employee-friendly county, Bill convinced the jury to find for his client by proving that the plaintiffs, human resources representatives, were terminated because they did not promote the company's employee-friendly culture.
- Secured a defense verdict for a nonprofit that provides gang-prevention, drug counseling, and care for the elderly in impoverished areas of Los Angeles. Facing accusations of racial discrimination, harassment, and inaccurate record keeping that threatened the organization's funding from the city, the organization turned to Bill, who fiercely argued before a jury to achieve a full victory.
- Secured a trial victory for the Administrator General of the State of Israel to recover a charitable gift from a decedent's estate. When the donor's adult sons tried to claim the gift should be deemed part of their inheritance, Bill shielded the administrator from attempts to force a release of the funds to an unidentified bank account. He sued the account, located its identity, and took the case to trial to prove the gift was intended for charitable causes in Israel.
- Obtained a trial victory for a transportation company sued by airport shuttle van drivers seeking to be classified as employees instead of independent contractors. Bill secured plaintiff testimony demonstrating that the drivers fit the definition of an independent contractor and argued that any other model would put all shuttle van companies out of business. Bill's successful verdict allowed his client to keep its business model.
- Secured a trial victory for major commercial real estate owner in a dispute over a leasing representative's commissions. After proving the plaintiff misinterpreted her offer letter and commission agreement and that she was paid fairly, Bill recovered more than \$400,000 attorneys' fees for his client.
- Achieved a trial verdict for a staffing agency, and one of its clients, in a disability discrimination case. Bill showed that the plaintiff could not perform his essential functions of his job while handling heavy machinery because he was on pain medication, which could have made him drowsy and caused harm to others. Though Bill's clients had been sued multiple times by the plaintiff's law firm, Bill's trial success in this matter ceased all future lawsuits by that firm.
- Secured a defense verdict for a health care organization at arbitration on claims of disability discrimination and harassment, retaliation, and slander. After a prolonged arbitration, Bill was

able to convince the arbitrator that the case was brought in bad faith and obtained an award of costs of more than \$125,000.

## ***Credentials***

### **Education**

- J.D., 1990, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola Law School
- B.A., 1987, University of California, Los Angeles

### **Bar Admissions**

- California

### **Court Admissions**

- California Supreme Court
- California Superior Court
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado

## ***Recognitions***

- Selected as one of the top labor and employment lawyers in California by the *Daily Journal* (2024)
- *Southern California Super Lawyers*, Employment & Labor and Business Litigation (2009, 2010, 2013, 2014)

## ***Affiliations***

### **Community Activities**

Bill chairs the Board of Directors of Greenway Arts Alliance, a nonprofit organization providing Los Angeles high school students with arts education programs funded in part by the Melrose Trading

Post.

## ***Insights***

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08/07/24

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William O. Stein

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NEWS

5/24/22

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William O. Stein

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NEWS

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William O. Stein

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