

William E. Altman
Regional Managing Partner

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Service Focus

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Employee Benefits and Tax
- Employee Defection and Trade Secrets
- Employment Discrimination and Harassment
- Litigation and Trials

Industry Focus

- Automotive Dealership
- Manufacturing
- Energy

Overview

For more than 25 years, Bill Altman has defended employers before local, state, and federal agencies and in state and federal courts in anti-discrimination, whistle-blower, retaliation, contract, non-competition, trade secrets, fiduciary duties, class-action, ERISA, and other disputes. With broad experience spanning Michigan's core industries – manufacturing, auto dealerships, healthcare, energy, finance, retail, and others – he has particular strengths advising the automotive industry that he gained from serving as national benefit litigation counsel for a Detroit automaker.

Bill's approach to defending clients is built on proactively helping them resolve disputes as efficiently as possible. Sometimes, he does that outside the courtroom, where he draws upon his extensive expertise to find resolution and closure using predictive case assessment, innovative resolution strategies, and refined negotiation skills that allow clients to avoid the burdens and uncertainties – mainly time and cost – of litigation. Other times, when litigation is unavoidable, Bill staunchly defends the rights and interests of his clients to achieve the results they seek. He is an ardent litigator who has successfully represented clients in enumerable cases, many of which have

been officially reported, set legal precedence, and redefined the rights and obligations of employers and pension and other benefit plans.

In all cases, Bill works closely with clients to position them for success before disputes arise. He helps them meet obligations under local, state, and federal employment laws. He guides them through the full spectrum of employment issues, including hiring contracts and separation agreements, workplace policies, internal investigations, and compliance with anti-discrimination, wage and hour, and benefits laws.

And he leverages his experience to act as a mediator and guide opposing parties through meaningful dialogue and collaborative problem-solving to sustainable solutions that help them retain control and certainty, find closure, and manage costs. Bill understands the uniqueness of each party's objectives – economic, strategic, reputational, and more – and takes great pride in fostering positive and empowering experiences where opposing parties reach favorable self-determined outcomes to their disputes.

Bill is a member of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, the American Employment Lawyers Association, the Labor and Employment Law Sections of the State Bar of Michigan and the American Bar Association, and the Federal Bar Association. He served as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Robert E. DeMascio of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Recent Experience

Experience

- *Avery v Sedgwick Claims Management Services*, 6th Cir. Case NO. 22-1960 (July 2023) (Successfully defended employer sponsored benefit claim in trial court and court of appeals against claim for long term disability benefits)
- *Pledger v. FCA US LLC – UAW Pension Agreement*, (E.D. Mich. October 28, 2020, 2020 WL 6305075) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for pension eligibility and lifetime benefit)
- *Confidential Arbitration proceeding involving national express delivery client*, (May 20, 2020) (Successfully defended company against preliminary injunction to maintain independent service provider agreement)
- *Gordon v. Chrysler Group LLC*, (E.D. Mich. Feb.2, 2018) (Successfully defended company and pension plan against claim for spousal pension benefit)
- *Patterson v. Chrysler Group LLC*, 845 F.3d 756 (6th Cir. 2017) (In a case of first impression in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, successfully defended company and pension plan against claim to enforce divorce judgment after the death of a participant)

- *Butler v. FCA US LLC*, 6th Cir. Case No. 16-2726 (2017) (Successfully defended company against claims for group accident insurance benefits)
- *Kern v. Chrysler UAW Pension*, __ Fed. Appx. __, 2013 U.S. App. LEXIS 10596 (6th Cir.2013) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for widow/widower benefits)
- *Hawk v. Chrysler Group LLC*, 2013 WL 149597 (E.D. Mich. 2013) (Successfully defended pension against claim for permanent and total disability benefits)
- *Becker v. Chrysler LLC Healthcare Plan*, 691 F.3d 879 (7th Cir. 2012), 2011 WL 2601254 (E.D. Wis. 2011) (Successfully defended welfare plan against claim for healthcare benefits)
- *Pearce v. Chrysler LLC Pension Plan*, 2012 WL 750097 (E.D. Mich. 2012) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for pension benefits)
- *Brooks v. Chrysler Group LLC – UAW Pension Plan*, 2012 WL 95267 (E.D. Mich. 2012) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for pension benefits)
- *Dean v. DaimlerChrysler Life, Disability and Health Care Benefits Program*, 439 Fed. Appx. 265 (4th Cir. 2011) (Successfully defended benefits plan in claim for long term disability benefits)
- *Beauchamp v. DaimlerChrysler Corp.*, 2011 WL 34897980 (E.D. Mich. 2011) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for pension benefits)
- *Lilley v. DaimlerChrysler Corporation-UAW Pension Plan*, 2010 WL 380833 (S.D. Ill. 2010) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for pension benefits)
- *Garrett v. Hewitt Associates*, 2010 WL 2342496 (N.D. Ohio 2010) (Successfully defended pension plan against claim for survivor spouse pension benefits)
- *Meyer v. DaimlerChrysler Corp.*, 2009 WL 702817 (E.D. Mo. 2009) (Successfully defended employer against claim for disability benefits)
- *Mitchell v. Oakwood Healthcare*, 2009 WL 2602439 (E.D. Mich. 2009) (Successfully defended employer against claim for disability benefits)
- *Crawford v. TRW Automotive U.S. LLC*, 560 F.3d 607 (6th Cir. 2009) (E.D. Mich. 2007) (Successfully defended employer in class action pension discrimination case under arising out of a plant closure)
- *Hendricks v. Home Depot, Inc.*, 2006 WL 3422695 (S.D. Ohio 2006) (Successfully defended employer in putative class action involving ERISA claims arising out of workers compensation leaves)
- *In re U.S. Truck Company Holdings, Inc.*, 341 B.R. 596 (E.D. Mich. 2006) (Successfully represented multi-employer pension plan and trust in case involving “trucking industry” exception to withdrawal liability)
- *Meier v. Green*, No. 07-11410, 2007 WL 2909418, 2007 WL 1868999 (E.D. Mich. 2007); *Meier v. Detroit Diesel Corporation*, 2006 WL 2089208 (Mich. Ct. App. 2006) (Successfully defended employer in multiple-count, multiple action litigation by former employee alleging numerous discrimination and other claims.)

- *Detroit Newspaper Agency v. N.L.R.B.*, 435 F.3d 302 (D.C. Cir. 2006) (Obtained Court of Appeals holding that NLRB's order was not supported by substantial evidence where it determined that employee was discharged due to union activity; the NLRB subsequently dismissed the case)
- *Henry v. Northwest Airlines, Inc.*, 148 Fed.Appx. 410 (6th Cir. 2005) (Obtained summary judgment for employer in race discrimination claim brought by long term employee)
- *Detroit Newspaper Agency v. Schaub*, 108 F. Supp. 2d 729 (E.D. Mich. 2000) (Obtained injunctive relief restraining the NLRB from prosecuting unfair labor practice charges against the employer)
- *Hogan v. Petitpren, Inc. Employee Profit Sharing and Pension Plan*, 92 F. Supp. 2d 612 (E.D. Mich. 2000) (Successfully defended employer in case alleging violations of ERISA procedure and failure to provide benefits)
- *NLRB v. Detroit Newspaper Agency*, 185 F.3d 602 (6th Cir. 1999) (Obtained first impression ruling that privilege reviews regarding agency subpoenas are the province of the courts, rather than the agencies)

Credentials

Education

- J.D., 1995, *summa cum laude*, first in class, Michigan State University College of Law
- B.S., 1991, University of South Carolina

Bar Admissions

- Michigan

Recognitions

- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2021 - 2024)
- *Chambers USA*, Labor & Employment (2021 - 2023)
- Selected by his peers from across the United States as a Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers (2016)
- Michigan Super Lawyers (since 2011)
- Top Lawyers in Metro Detroit, dbusiness Top Lawyers as published in dbusiness magazine
- Leading Lawyers for Employment Law: Management (since 2014)

Affiliations

Professional Activities

- American Employment Law Council
- State Bar of Michigan (Member, Labor & Employment Law Section)

- American Bar Association (Member, Labor & Employment Law Section)
- Federal Bar Association (Member)
- Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers (Inducted 2016)

Insights

INSIGHTS

08/31/23

FP Snapshot on Manufacturing Industry: Your Handbook Might Need Immediate Changes

William E. Altman, Benjamin Dudek

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NEWS

06/06/23

Fisher Phillips Once Again Recognized as a Top Labor and Employment Law Firm by Chambers USA

Edwin G. Foulke Jr., Andrew J. Sommer, Travis Vance, Kristin R.B. White, Danielle Hultenius Moore, Jocelyn Campanaro, Micah Dawson, Todd A. Fredrickson, Angelica M. Ochoa, Steven M. Bernstein, Suzanne K. Bogdan, Charles S. Caulkins, Christine E. Howard, Jeffrey E. Mandel, Cathy M. Stutin, Shanon R. Stevenson, Laurel K. Cornell, Raymond C. Haley III, Emily N. Litzinger, Todd B. Logsdon, Craig P. Siegenthaler, Megan Reese U'Sellis, Michelle I. Anderson, Edward F. Harold, Timothy H. Scott, David W. Erb, Daniel E. Farrington, Joseph W. Ambash, William E. Altman, Gregory V. Murray, Steven R. Cupp, Gregory D. Ballew, J. Randall Coffey, James R. Holland II, Brian J. Finucane, David B. Dornak, Scott M. Mahoney, Mark J. Ricciardi, Kathleen McLeod Caminiti, Rosemary S. Gousman, Michael R. Marra, Richard A. Millisor, Clarence M. Belnavis, Todd A. Lyon, Nan Sato, Christopher P. Stief, William D. Wright, Michael D. Carrouth, C. F. W. Manning II, Stephen C. Mitchell, J. Hagood Tighe, David S. Jones, Jeff Weintraub, Arthur V. Lambert, Stephen J. Roppolo, Teresa Valderrama, Theresa M. Connolly, Davis C. Bae, Ralph Hua, Radhika Mehta, Suzanne Kelly Michael, Barbara Jean D'Aquila

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05/08/23

3 Reminders for Employers Mitigating the Risk of Trade Secret Misappropriation in the Face of Mounting Layoffs

William E. Altman, Greg Grisham

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03/31/23

Top Workplace Law Stories You May Have Missed from March 2023

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Logsdon, Todd A. Lyon, Steve A. Miller, Danielle Hultenius Moore, Brett P. Owens, John M. Polson, Abby H. Putzulu, Alden J. Parker, Kristin L. Smith, J. Hagood Tighe, A. Kevin Troutman, Danielle S. Urban, Travis Vance, Spencer W. Waldron, Alexander A. Wheatley, Kristin R.B. White, Sheila M. Abron

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03/29/23

Detroit Regional Managing Partner Discusses Repeal of Michigan's "Right to Work"

William E. Altman

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03/16/23

Michigan "Right to Work" Law Soon to Be Repealed: What Should Employers Do?

William E. Altman, Stephen R. Gee

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03/02/23

Michigan Lawmakers Seek to Expand Workplace Protections for LGBTQ Workers

William E. Altman

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02/03/23

Top Workplace Law Stories You May Have Missed from January 2023

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01/27/23

Michigan Employers Avoid Strict Paid Sick Leave Law and Minimum Wage Hike – For Now: 2 Steps Employers Should Take

William E. Altman, Stephen R. Gee

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06/01/22

Fisher Phillips Recognized Again as a Top Labor and Employment Law Firm by Chambers USA

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