

Lonnie D. Giamela

Partner

Los Angeles/Irvine

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Email



Service Focus

- California Litigation and Appellate
- Class and Collective Actions
- Counseling and Advice
- Employee Leaves and Accommodations
- Litigation and Trials
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Pay Equity
- Reductions in Force (RIFs)
- Wage and Hour

Industry Focus

- Automotive Dealership
- Financial Services
- Hospitality
- Retail
- Transportation and Supply Chain

Languages

- Armenian
- Spanish

Overview

Lonnie Giamela is a partner in both the Los Angeles and Irvine offices. He represents a broad range of clients, from small businesses to national companies, in all sectors of manufacturing, retail, wholesale distribution, hospitality, education and the automotive industries.

Lonnie has handled a full range of labor and employment matters, from single-plaintiff to multi-plaintiff, in both federal and state courts in California, the California Court of Appeals, the California Supreme Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Lonnie has also handled arbitrations venued at the National Labor Relations Board, payroll tax audits before the Employment Development Department, unemployment insurance eligibility claims in the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, administrative hearings before the Fair Employment and Housing Commission and multiple hearings at the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement.

Lonnie also has extensive experience representing local, regional and national clients in class action wage-hour lawsuits as well as representative lawsuits brought under California's Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA), having handled more than 150 such matters across the country. Lonnie also has experience as lead counsel in two wage-hour class actions that have gone to trial.

Additionally, Lonnie counsels employers on preventative measures to prevent litigation from arising on various issues including wage and hour compliance, independent contractor classification, mass layoff strategy, and management training. He has assisted in the preparation of more than 500 handbooks for clients and has developed policies and procedures manuals for both small businesses and national companies with multi-state operations.

Utilizing experiences from his family's restaurants in the San Fernando Valley, Lonnie prides himself on providing advice to the companies he represents. His prior business experience enables him to find practical, compliant legal solutions to clients' everyday employee relations issues.

Lonnie is a frequent lecturer on employment law topics and has presented over 350 seminars to management, executives, human resources professionals and employer groups on topics including fair employment, medical leaves, mass layoffs, FMLA/CFRA compliance, independent contractor classification matters, preparation of handbooks, emerging legal issues and wage and hour compliance.

Lonnie has an "AV" Peer Review Rating by Martindale-Hubbell, which is their highest peer review survey rating for legal abilities and ethical standards. He was acclaimed by peers as a "Labor & Employment Star" in *Benchmark Litigation* (2023), recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2022 and was named a Super Lawyer from 2021-2023. Lonnie was nominated by the *Los Angeles Business Journal* for the "Leaders in Law" awards in 2019. He has also been named as one of the Top 100 Up and Coming lawyers in Southern California by *Super Lawyers* in 2015 and 2016. He was also selected as a Client Service All-Star for 2016, an elite group of attorneys nominated by in-house counsel for their outstanding client service. BTI Consulting Group conducted the survey.

In 2022, Lonnie completed the Mediating the Litigated Case Program at Pepperdine University's Straus Institute of Dispute Resolution.

Recent Experience

Experience

- Obtained unanimous jury verdict, in favor of hospitality client, following two-week disability discrimination/whistleblower retaliation case in Riverside Superior Court.
- Defeated class certification in a wage and hour case for a Fortune 500 manufacturer of apparel and footwear. Plaintiffs sought more than \$20 million, alleging they were entitled to additional compensation for time spend undergoing bag security checks, as well as meal and rest periods and overtime, among other claims.
- Defeated class certification in wage and hour case where employees sought millions of dollars in damages for a security company's alleged failure to compensate for all hours worked, including overtime and vested vacation time; to grant rest and meal breaks; and to provide accurate wage statements.
- Defeated class certification motion filed in Fair Credit Report Act national class-action lawsuit.
- Defeated class certification motion filed in wage-hour class action lawsuit brought against security company.
- Defeated class certification motion filed in wage-hour class action lawsuit brought against apparel company.
- Lead trial attorney in two wage-hour class action matters that went to trial.
- Full defense arbitration award in disability discrimination/unpaid wages suit brought against dealership.
- Full defense arbitration award in single plaintiff disability discrimination suit brought against collision center.
- Full defense arbitration award in sexual orientation discrimination and breach of contract case brought by a plaintiff seeking in excess of \$10,000,000 in damages.
- Full Defense Verdict in Dealership Breach of Contract Case
- Successful defense of client at trial in case involving claims of retaliation, constructive discharge, failure to accommodate and failure to engage in the interactive process.
- Obtained favorable decisions in California Court of Appeal and United States District Court matters involving the enforceability of pre-dispute arbitration agreements.
- Handling of matters before National Labor Relations Board and 9th Circuit involving legality of class action waiver in pre-dispute arbitration agreements.
- Representation of clients before governmental agencies including, but not limited to, California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, California Employment Development Department and United States Department of Labor Wage-Hour and VETS division.
- Representation of clients before superior court, California Courts of Appeal, California Supreme Court, various federal district courts and 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

- Representation of clients in payroll tax audits conducted by California Employment Development Department.
- Representation of clients in payroll audits conducted by City of San Francisco.

Credentials

Education

- J.D., 2003, Georgetown University
- B.A., 1999, magna cum laude, George Washington University

Bar Admissions

- California

Court Admissions

- California Courts of Appeal
- California Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- 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

Recognitions

- Listed in *Lawdragon's 500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers* (2024)
- Recognized as *Los Angeles Business Journal's* "Leaders in Law" (2022)
- *Benchmark Litigation* - Labor & Employment Star (2023-2024)
- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2022-2024)
- Named a Super Lawyer (Employment Litigation) - (2021-2023)
- *Los Angeles Business Journal's* "Leaders in Law" Award Nominee (2019)
- Named "Client Service All-Star" by BTI Consulting Group - 2016
- Named Up and Coming Top 100 Southern California Rising Stars by Los Angeles Magazine - (2015-2016)
- Named Super Lawyer- Rising Star by *Los Angeles Magazine* - (2013-2016)
- Rated AV by Martindale Hubbell

Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Children's Hospital of Orange County, Littlest Angel Guild
- Member, Orange County Bar Association
- Member, Los Angeles Bar Association
- Member, Armenian Bar Association
- Member, Burbank Chamber of Commerce
- Panel Mediator, Central District of California
- Panel Mediator, Los Angeles Superior Court Resolve LA MSC Program

Community Activities

- National Italian American Foundation
- San Gennaro Foundation
- Burbank Chamber of Commerce

Insights

INSIGHTS

01/02/24

Workplace Law Update: 10 Essential Items on Your New Year To-Do List

Raeann Burgo, Melissa (Osipoff) Camire, Benjamin M. Ebbink, Lonnie D. Giamela, Jang Hyuk Im, Anthony Isola, Corina Johnson, Joshua Klein, Sean Kingston, Alexandra LaCombe, David Lerner, Courtney Leyes, Emily N. Litzinger, Richard R. Meneghello, Alexandra H. Mills, Kate Mize, Samantha J. Monsees, Joshua D. Nadreau, Monica Snyder Perl, Lisa Nagele-Piazza, John M. Polson, Ashton M. Riley, Katie Reynolds, Jennifer B. Sandberg, Andrew J. Sommer, Spencer W. Waldron, Sarah Wieselthier

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INSIGHTS

09/01/23

Workplace Law Update: 10 Essential Items on Your September To-Do List

Alba V. Aviles, Brian Balonick, Steven M. Bernstein, Raeann Burgo, Kathleen McLeod Caminiti, Michael D. Carrouth, Charles S. Caulkins, Jessica D. Causgrove, Steven R. Cupp, Patrick M. Dalin, J. Micah Dickie, Joseph W. Gagnon, Lonnie D. Giamela, Marty Heller, Brett Holubeck, Wendy Hughes, Corina Johnson, Jennifer S. Kiesewetter, Emily N. Litzinger, Todd B. Logsdon, Todd A. Lyon, Eleanor F. Miller, Andreas Mosby, George A. Reeves III, Deniz Uzel Reilly, J. Hagood Tighe, Travis Vance, Melanie L. Webber, Sheila M. Abron

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INSIGHTS

08/14/23

California's Minimum Wage To Increase Again In January 2024: 5 Things Employers Need to Know

Corina Johnson, Lonnie D. Giamela

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INSIGHTS

08/04/23

Workplace Law Update: 22 Essential Items on Your August To-Do List

Emily Alvarez, David E. Amaya, Michelle I. Anderson, Amanda M. Blair, Ted Boehm, Suzanne K. Bogdan, Jennifer B. Carroll, J. Micah Dickie, Anet Drapalski, Benjamin M. Ebbink, Jason A. Fischbein, Ilanit Fischler, Lonnie D. Giamela, Rosemary S. Gousman, Darcey M. Groden, Marty Heller, Melissa Huether, Jang Hyuk Im, Megan L. Janes, Usama Kahf, Nicole Kamm, Anne Yarovoy Khan, Sarah Leon, Courtney Leyes, Emily N. Litzinger, Todd A. Lyon, Richard R. Meneghello, R. Henry Moore, Joshua D. Nadreau, Alden J. Parker, Christopher G. Peterson, Erin Price, Monica Snyder Perl, Nan Sato, Landon R. Schwob, Evan Shenkman, Shanon R. Stevenson, Sharon Suh, Hannah Sweiss, Spencer W. Waldron, David J. Walton, Sheila M. Abron, Arthur M. Wolfson, Annie Ziesing

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INSIGHTS

07/18/23

California Supreme Court Boosts PAGA Claimants' Rights in Highly Anticipated Decision: 5-Step Action Plan for Employers

Anet Drapalski, Benjamin M. Ebbink, Lonnie D. Giamela, Alden J. Parker, Erin Price, Hannah Sweiss

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EVENT

04/11/23

Money Matters: Deadline Looming for Many California Employers to “Show Me The Money”

Cheryl L. Behymer, Lonnie D. Giamela, Sheila M. Abron

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NEWS

10/24/22

Fisher Phillips Partners Recognized in the Los Angeles Business Journal's 2022 Leaders of Influence: Labor and Employment Attorneys

Lonnie D. Giamela, Hannah Sweiss

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NEWS

10/03/22

Fisher Phillips Recognized by Benchmark Litigation 2023

Barbara Jean D'Aquila, Joseph W. Ambash, Steven M. Bernstein, Todd A. Fredrickson, Lonnie D. Giamela, Rosemary S. Gousman, Karl R. Lindegren, Kathleen McLeod Caminiti, Stephen C. Mitchell, Sarah Moffett, Kristen J. Nesbit, Regina A. Petty, Timothy H. Scott, Christopher P. Stief, James Sullivan, J. Hagood Tighe, Teresa Valderrama

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NEWS

07/13/22

Lonnie Giamela Provides Tips for California Employers on State-Specific Wage and Hour Issues

Lonnie D. Giamela

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NEWS

02/02/22

Lonnie Giamela Advises California Employers to Remain Vigilant Following Supreme Court Decision on Vaccine Mandates

Lonnie D. Giamela

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