



KARI E. GIBSON

Partner

Irvine

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Service Focus

- California Litigation and Appellate
- Class and Collective Actions
- Counseling and Advice
- Employee Leaves and Accommodations
- Employment Discrimination and Harassment
- Litigation and Trials
- Wage and Hour
- Workplace Investigations

OVERVIEW

Kari's diverse practice includes litigating cases involving discrimination, harassment, whistleblower retaliation, wrongful discharge, unfair business practices, and wage and hour claims. She represents employers within various industries including aerospace, manufacturing, hospitality, automotive dealerships, memory care and acute care facilities, and multi-family housing. Kari has a wide range of litigation

experience, focusing on single-plaintiff, PAGA, and class action litigation, and represents employers in both state and federal court as well as before state and federal agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the California Civil Rights Department (CRD), and the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC).

Kari's recent successes include:

- Winning complete defense summary judgment against FEHA claims brought against security services employer.
- Winning complete defense award after a two-week arbitration in a twelve-party breach of contract case.
- Winning complete defense award in arbitration defeating FEHA claims brought against a medical device employer.
- Winning motion to compel arbitration and dismissal of wage-and-hour class claims brought against assisted living employer (electronic signature).
- Winning motion to compel arbitration and dismissal of wage-and-hour class claims brought against property management employer.

In addition to litigation, Kari assists employers with complying with federal and state consumer/employee privacy requirements. Drawing on her experience as an owner of a fourth-generation family business, she advises clients on employment best practices and on drafting and implementing policies on issues such as leaves of absence, drug testing, confidentiality, anti-discrimination, and wage-and-hour compliance. Since 2023, Kari has taught an in-demand undergraduate course on Employment Law in the Business Administration department at Cal State Long Beach. Kari is an effective and animated speaker, conducting virtual and in-person trainings to client managers and HR professionals.

While in law school, Kari assisted a Los Angeles non-profit law firm with settling a class action national origin discrimination lawsuit by drafting the employer's language policy. She also served as a full-time extern to the Honorable Josephine Staton of the U.S. District Court, Central District of California, in Santa Ana.

Prior to entering the practice of law, Kari taught English at universities in California and Hawaii, with a research focus on workplace language policies. She also worked for several years in the entertainment industry, notably at a venerated music magazine and a multi-national film and television production studio.

Recent Experience

In addition to informally settling numerous pre-litigation matters and successfully mediating settlements before trial, Kari has:

- Won a complete defense award after a two-week arbitration in a twelve-party case. Contract service providers sued client alleging breach of contract and client countersued for fraud. Arbitrator found in favor of client on all claims, denying plaintiffs any of the claimed damages which were in excess of \$40 million.
- Won a complete defense verdict against a former employee who alleged retaliation and wrongful termination after complaining about workplace business practices. After winning an order dismissing a leading PEO company from the case, we prevailed at arbitration on behalf of its customer, potentially saving more than \$600,000 in damages and attorney's fees.
- Won complete defense award at summary judgment against FEHA claims brought against security services employer. Claimant's demand was \$1.2 million.
- Won numerous motions to compel arbitration and dismissal of wage-and-hour class claims, resulting in individual settlement at greatly reduced value.
- Argued issue of first impression before Orange County Superior Court Appellate Division panel and won case, setting legal precedent in county.
- Won remand from US District Court for client appealing decision of federal administrative agency.
- Litigated discharge of \$203,000 in federal student loans in bankruptcy adversary proceeding.

Credentials

Education

- University of Southern California, Gould School of Law, J.D., with honors, 2013
- University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, M.A., with honors, 2004
- University of Southern California, B.A., cum laude, 1992

Bar Admissions

- California
- Hawaii

Court Admissions

- 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 District of Hawaii
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Recognitions

- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch* (2022 - 2026)
 - Recognized in *Orange County Business Journal Leaders of Influence: Women in Law* (2025)
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Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Member, Professionals in Human Resources Association, North Orange County and Long Beach chapters
- Member, World Affairs Council of Orange County
- Member, Federal Bar Association
- Member, Orange County Bar Association
- Member, Orange County Women Lawyers Association

Community Activities

Kari annually presents at local schools for Constitution Day as part of the Constitutional Rights Foundation/Federal Bar Association.

She is especially proud to partner with Vitamin Angels, which provides dietary supplements to mothers and young children in impoverished communities around the world. She recently accompanied them to Peru, trekking into remote villages in the Andes to meet with women who had directly benefited from the in-kind donations made by her family company.

INSIGHTS

Event

Nov 20, 2025

Fisher Phillips 2026 California Legislative & Case Law Update: Irvine

News

Aug 28, 2025

Fisher Phillips Attorneys Recognized in the Orange County Business Journal's 2025 Leaders of Influence: Women in Law

News

Dec 18, 2024

Fisher Phillips Remains Steady With 25 Attorney Partnership Class

News

Dec 17, 2024

Fisher Phillips Elects 25 Attorneys to 2025 Partnership Class

Event

Sep 13, 2023

California Anti-Harassment Virtual Trainings Option 1 - AB 1825 Supervisor Anti-Harassment Training

Event

Tuesday, March 21, 2023 – Wednesday, March 22, 2023

California Anti-Harassment Virtual Trainings Option 2