



CHRISTOPHER P. STIEF

Regional Managing Partner

Portland, ME / Philadelphia

207.477.7007

Service Focus

- Employee Defection and Trade Secrets
- International
- Litigation and Trials

Industry Focus

- Financial Services
- Sports

OVERVIEW

Chris Stief is Regional Managing Partner of the Portland, Maine office and a partner in the Philadelphia office. He is also a past co-chair and co-founder of the firm's Employee Defection and Trade Secrets Practice Group, and a core member of the International Practice Group and Financial Services Industry Team. Prior to moving to Portland, Chris was the founding Regional Managing Partner of the firm's Philadelphia office from 2007 through 2024. Chris represents employers in labor and employment matters, with a nationwide and international practice focusing on restrictive covenant and trade secrets issues. His practice includes litigating and advising companies on matters relating to covenants not to compete, non-solicitation and non-disclosure agreements, unfair competition, employee raiding and team moves, trade secrets, duty of loyalty, the U.S. Defend Trade Secrets Act (DTSA), the U.S. Computer Fraud & Abuse Act (CFAA), and various state trade secrets and unfair competition statutes. He has a particular focus on advising and providing representation on restrictive covenant issues for companies that have a

multi-state or multi-national workforce, and a consequent need to interpret and account for the varying laws of diverse jurisdictions. In addition to his advisory and litigation practice, Chris also offers his services as a mediator. He earned a Certificate in Professional Mediation with an employment law focus from the Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution at Cornell University's Industrial & Labor Relations (ILR) School. He is also a CEDR Accredited Mediator, having successfully completed the Mediator Skills Training Program of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) in London. There are five main segments to Chris's practice:

- 1. Drafting & Implementing Restrictive Covenants & Confidentiality Programs:** Chris drafts restrictive covenants and helps clients develop programs to protect their competitive assets against employee departures. He places particular emphasis on advising and creating such programs for businesses that operate on a multi-state or multi-national basis, helping employers develop and implement a consistent corporate approach across a broad range of sometimes conflicting jurisdictional law and workplace cultures. International and cross-border drafting and strategy is an area of increasing demand.
- 2. Employee Transitions -- Strategic Planning, Advice & Counseling:** Chris spends a good deal of time engaged in strategic planning with companies about potential recruits or upcoming employee transitions and onboarding. This includes risk assessment of prospective recruiting opportunities and developing strategic options to manage legal risks while preserving the business value of a hiring and expansion opportunity. Chris has provided counseling, advice and risk assessment relating to hundreds of employee transitions throughout the United States.
- 3. Restrictive Covenant, Trade Secrets and Employee Raiding/Team Move Litigation:** Chris has handled and led teams for litigation and other contentious non-compete, trade secrets, employee raiding and team-move disputes throughout the United States (at least 45 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico), as well as international matters arising out of Mexico and Canada, plus key jurisdictions in Asia, Europe, South America, and the Middle East. This includes both enforcement and defense, and often involves applications for temporary restraining orders or preliminary injunctions. Chris has led and advised litigation teams in cross-border restrictive covenant litigation, including prosecuting and resisting anti-suit injunction actions in both U.S. courts and the High Court Chancery Division in London, which involved application of the EU's Brussels Regulation (Recast) on Personal Jurisdiction.
- 4. Mergers & Acquisitions:** Chris's restrictive covenant practice frequently intersects with mergers and acquisitions. This includes: (a) drafting restrictive covenants to use in purchase and sale agreements, (b) developing restrictive covenant and retention agreements for key employees, (c) assessment of assignability and

successor enforcement rights for covenants previously signed by employees of target companies, (d) litigation to enforce sale-of-business covenants, (e) risk assessment and strategy formulation for third parties recruiting employees out of a competitor's pending acquisition target, (f) litigation relating to alleged employee "raids" of a recently acquired workforce, and (g) advising companies on implementation of effective restrictive covenant and asset protection programs to help position a company for potential acquisition, investment, or financing.

5. Alternative Dispute Resolution: Mediation, Arbitration Agreements, and Arbitrability Disputes: Chris earned a Certificate in Professional Mediation from Cornell's ILR School Scheinman Institute on Dispute Resolution, and also is a CEDR Accredited Mediator, having successfully completed the mediation skills program of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) in London. Chris also has litigated disputes about the interpretation and enforcement of arbitration agreements under the U.S. Federal Arbitration Act, the New York Arbitration Act CPLR Article 75, and other state arbitration statutes. Chris has extensive experience litigating and leading team strategy for the arbitration and/or mediation of disputes at FINRA Dispute Resolution, Inc. and its predecessor organizations at the NASD and NYSE, as well as AAA and JAMS in the U.S., and CEDR in London.

Prior to returning to Maine to help the firm launch its Portland office in 2025, Chris spent 30 years in Pennsylvania, including as the founding Regional Managing Partner of the Fisher Phillips Philadelphia office from 2007 through 2024, and founding Regional Managing Partner of the firm's Pittsburgh office from 2019-2021. Chris began his legal career in Portland in the 1990s with one of Maine's largest and oldest general practice firms.

Chris is a *Chambers USA* Ranked Lawyer for Pennsylvania Labor & Employment, is "AV" Peer Review Rated by *Martindale-Hubbell*, has been recognized by Benchmark Litigation, and has been selected for inclusion in *Who's Who Legal USA* – Management Labor & Employment and *Best Lawyers* for both Litigation-Labor & Employment Law and Trade Secrets Law. He also is a past Co-Chair of the Labor & Employment Law Committees of both the Philadelphia and the Delaware County (PA) Bar Associations.

Chris is a founder and co-leader of the Fisher Phillips Financial Services Recruitment Litigation Conference, which recently returned for its 14th iteration in October 2024 as a participatory conference focusing on issues relevant to restrictive covenant litigation among broker-dealers, private wealth management firms, Registered Investment Advisors (RIA), private banks and insurance carrier distribution networks and agencies. Conferences have been held since 2003, and topics addressed have ranged from employee raiding to FINRA and SEC regulations, and application of the Protocol for Broker Recruiting.

Credentials

Education

- Boston University School of Law, J.D., cum laude, 1991
- Dickinson College, B.A., 1985
- Cornell University School of Industrial & Labor Relations Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution, Certificate in Professional Mediation, 2025

Bar Admissions

- Maine
- Pennsylvania

Court Admissions

- Maine Supreme Judicial Court
- Pennsylvania Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the District of Maine
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

Recognitions

- *Chambers USA* Ranked Lawyer (Band 2), Labor & Employment (2015-Present)
- *Benchmark Litigation* 2023 – Labor & Employment Star
- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2021-2026)

- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Lawyer of the Year - Trade Secrets Law (2022)
 - Martindale-Hubbell "AV" Peer Review Rated
 - *Who's Who Legal USA*, Management Labour & Employment
 - *The Best Lawyers in America*, Litigation-Labor & Employment and Trade Secrets Law
 - *Pennsylvania Super Lawyers*
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Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Member, American Employment Law Council (AELC)
- Member, Maine State Bar Association, Labor & Employment and ADR Sections
- Member, Maine Association of Mediators
- Member, Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR), Greater Philadelphia Chapter
- Member, Pennsylvania Council of Mediators (PCM)
- Associate (Overseas) Member, Employment Lawyers Association (UK) and Listed in ELA Register of Mediators
- Member, Securities Industry & Financial Markets Association Compliance & Legal Society
- Member, American Bar Association Labor & Employment, International, and Dispute Resolution Sections
- Member and Past Co-Chair, Philadelphia Bar Association Labor & Employment Law Committee

INSIGHTS

News

Nov 10, 2025

Fisher Phillips Expands Immigration Practice with Addition of Russell Ford as Partner in Portland, Maine

News

Jun 24, 2025

Fisher Phillips Continues Growth in Portland, ME with Mariana Baron

News

Jun 5, 2025

Fisher Phillips Earns Top Rankings in 2025 Edition of Chambers USA

News

Mar 10, 2025

Fisher Phillips Continues Growth Momentum in Portland, Maine

Insights

Mar 5, 2025

FTC's New Task Force to Target Noncompetes: 5 Top Answers for Employers

News

Mar 5, 2025

Republished Insight: FTC's New Task Force to Target Noncompetes: 5 Top Answers for Employers