



TARA A. WALKER

Partner

Portland, ME

207.477.7005

Service Focus

- Counseling and Advice
- Employee Leaves and Accommodations
- Employment Discrimination and Harassment
- Labor Relations
- Litigation and Trials

Industry Focus

- Education
- Higher Education
- Hospitality
- K-12 Institutions

OVERVIEW

Tara Walker is a partner in the Portland, Maine office who focuses her practice in both labor and employment law and education law. Representing employers, independent schools, and higher educational institutions across Northern New England, Tara provides strategic legal counsel and litigation defense in complex and high-profile matters.

Labor and Employment Law

Tara defends employers in complex discrimination, harassment, and retaliation disputes, as well as handling labor law litigation and compliance. With more than 12

years of experience, Tara has spent more than a decade litigating in federal and state courts and before administrative agencies in cases involving Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), the Maine Human Rights Act (MHRA), and various civil rights matters.

A trusted advisor in labor relations, Tara has guided private sector clients through all aspects of union organization campaigns, including acting as lead counsel and advising senior leadership through several campaigns, conducting direct messaging, and training management and supervisors. For her clients, Tara has secured favorable decisions in campaigns from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and separately has served as lead negotiator, securing successful contracts.

Education Law

Tara also focuses her practice on counseling independent K-12 schools, special purpose private schools, and public and private institutions of higher education in a wide range of matters including student safety and institutional liability, policy development, governance, employment matters, student conduct and disciplinary matters, faculty relations, and crisis management. Tara regularly advises clients on the full spectrum of school community and employee issues, drafting and negotiating employment agreements for senior leadership, advising on reporting obligations, leading and overseeing misconduct investigations, and guiding educational institutions through responses to high-profile incidents. Tara also conducts on-campus trainings on a wide array of topics including professional boundaries for faculty and staff, mandatory reporting obligations, harassment and bullying prevention, school safety and risk mitigation, and maintaining student privacy and confidentiality, among others.

In addition, Tara represents educational institutions in litigation involving Title IX and related sexual misconduct claims by students and employees, injury cases by students, and issues relating to the regulation of independent schools under state and federal law. Through practical legal experience and deep industry insight, Tara helps employers, independent schools, and universities navigate complex challenges.

Prior to joining Fisher Phillips, Tara was a partner and member of the Labor and Employment Practice Group in the Portland office of a large diversified New England-based law firm. She also formerly served as Legal & Policy Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska, where she spearheaded strategic litigation and lobbying efforts. Earlier in her legal career, Tara served as law clerk to Justice Joseph M. Jabar of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. Prior to law school, Tara worked at a nonprofit supporting and advocating for free and fair elections in

Moscow, Russia, and served as a volunteer English teacher with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Budapest, Hungary. Tara is a Registered Maine Guide, and in her free time, Tara enjoys sea kayaking near her home on the coast of Maine, wildlife tracking, and working on her 1973 Volkswagen Westfalia camper van.

Credentials

Education

- Tulane University Law School, J.D., *cum laude*, 2012
- Central European University, LL.M.
- Georgetown University, B.A., *cum laude*, 2007

Bar Admissions

- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Alaska

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the District of Maine

Languages

- Hungarian
 - Russian
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Recognitions

- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America*, Labor and Employment Law – Management (2021-2025)

Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Association of Independent Schools in New England
- Maine State Bar Association, New Lawyers Section (former chair)
- American Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division (former Maine and Vermont Representative)

Community Activities

- LearningWorks (Board of Directors)
- Portland Community Squash (Social Services Committee)
- Welcoming the Stranger (Volunteer)

INSIGHTS

Event

Nov 12, 2025

Tapping Into Restricted or Endowed Funds: The Essentials Independent Schools Need to Know

Insights

Oct 7, 2025

White House Proposes Higher Ed Preferential Plan to Access Federal Grant Money: What Your Institution Should Consider

Insights

May 21, 2025

New Civil Rights Fraud Initiative Puts More Pressure on Higher Ed and K-12 Schools Receiving Federal Funding: What to Do in Response

Event**May 8, 2025**

The First 100 Days of the New Administration

Insights**Mar 13, 2025**

So You're Concerned About Losing Federal Funding: 3 Things Schools Should Do Right Now

News**Mar 11, 2025**

Maine Partner Discusses Legal Basis for Title IX Investigations