



## Fisher Phillips Launches in Birmingham, Alabama

News

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Fisher Phillips, an international labor and employment law firm representing employers, is expanding its national footprint with the launch of its new office in Birmingham, Alabama. Six Birmingham-based Fisher Phillips attorneys are opening the new office, including partner Catherine “Ree” Harper and of counsel Raymond “Ray” Perez. They are joined by experienced litigators, Morgan Chappell, Christopher Deering, Marion Walker and Kimberly Ward.

“Alabama has been an important place for us for some time. Many of our clients have substantial operations in the state, and Birmingham’s business-friendly climate is leading to new opportunities as current and prospective clients move into the region,” said John Polson, firm Chairman and Managing Partner. “It’s important for us to have a physical location to support our Birmingham lawyers and clients, and we are fortunate to have a strong group of seasoned Alabama lawyers who can show up in-person and provide local operations with the labor and employment law counsel they need to address workplace issues and compete in today’s global economy. We are proud of our history servicing clients based in the state, and we are equally proud to have Alabamians representing our clients in Alabama.”

The new office is on the eighth floor of the Financial Center building (505 20th Street North) in the heart of downtown Birmingham. Located near the Theatre District, the space is walkable to key Birmingham businesses as well as a variety of entertainment venues, restaurants, shopping, and attractions such as the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum and Birmingham Museum of Art. The office is also conveniently located near City Hall, the Hugo Black Federal Courthouse, the Jefferson County Courthouse, and is only a ten-minute drive to the Birmingham Shuttlesworth International Airport.

### Catherine “Ree” Harper

Ree is a Birmingham native who joined Fisher Phillips as a partner and key member of the firm’s national Professional Employer Organization (“PEO”) and Staffing practice in May 2024. With over 25 years of experience working at the intersection of employment law, human resources, and accounting, Ree assists PEOs and other clients nationwide with their most pressing workplace law, business, and compliance needs. She was previously general counsel and senior vice president of human resources for a national, certified PEO where she had a proven record for leading complex legal and business initiatives both internally and client-focused. At Fisher Phillips, Ree leverages her direct knowledge of the PEO industry to help clients navigate state and federal compliance, risk

her direct knowledge of the FEO industry to help clients navigate state and federal compliance, risk management, and industry best practices. She is an active member of NAPEO, the National Association of Professional Employer Organizations, where she previously served on the Board of Directors and chaired the Healthcare Committee.

Ree's practice extends to other industries, including the automotive retail dealership business. She grew up in the car business with her father owning a dealership for more than 40 years in the Birmingham area. With the business in her family history, and a firm understanding of the labor and employment laws impacting dealerships, Ree brings a business-focused approach to assisting the firm's auto industry clients.

Ree's education is all local to Alabama. She earned her J.D., with honors, from Birmingham School of Law and her B.S. in Accounting from Auburn University.

### **Raymond "Ray" Perez**

Ray joined Fisher Phillips five years ago and quickly became Chair of the firm's Corporate Compliance and Governance Practice Group as well as Co-Chair of the firm's Workplace Investigations Practice Group. A large part of his practice focuses on advising clients regarding all varieties of workplace investigations, particularly investigations involving executives and significant reputational risks. He also advises employers on developing and implementing compliance and ethics programs, codes of conduct, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Like Ree, Ray has connections to the automotive industry in Alabama, as well as manufacturing. Prior to joining the firm, Ray spent three decades working in various in-house legal and audit capacities for American Honda Motor Company. And, in his capacity as General Counsel & Division Manager of Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, he spent nearly 15 years in Birmingham where he was responsible for all legal matters associated with establishing and operating the company's first light truck manufacturing plant in the United States. The Alabama plant became one of the company's major manufacturing facilities, and once fully operational, Ray also took on the Corporate Communications and Facilities functions for the 5,000+ employee operation.

During this time, Ray was embedded in the local market and became a fixture in the Birmingham and Alabama business communities where he was appointed by the Governor to serve on the first State-wide Workforce Development Council, served as President of the Alabama chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, and was awarded the Business Council of Alabama's Distinguished Leader Award in 2015. Ray was also active in the Birmingham community where he served on the Board of the United Way of Central Alabama, was a Board Member & Chairman of the Birmingham Zoo, Inc., and a graduate of both Leadership Birmingham and Leadership Alabama. Ray is glad to be back in Birmingham to rejoin the Alabama community.

Ray earned his law degree from the Ohio State University College of Law, and after law school he was an Associate at a large Ohio-based national law firm where he defended employers in a wide

range of labor and employment matters including, but not limited to, Title VII, wage and hour, workplace safety, workers' compensation, and wrongful termination.

**About Fisher Phillips** ([www.fisherphillips.com](http://www.fisherphillips.com))

With over 675 attorneys across the United States, Mexico and Japan, and a vast network of attorneys in jurisdictions around the globe, Fisher Phillips advises and advocates for employers on an international scale. Through our technology-driven approach, we partner with companies to achieve their business objectives, anticipate potential disruption, and provide the legal guidance to navigate and resolve the workplace matters critical to their success.

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