



Fisher Phillips Continues Momentum with Coast-to-Coast Additions of New Partners

News

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Firm Welcomes:

*Jennifer Fornetti in Las Vegas;
Laura Heckathorn in Boston/Los Angeles;
Michelle LeBeau in Detroit; and
Justin McConnell in Orlando*

Fisher Phillips, an international labor and employment law firm representing employers, is pleased to announce the arrival of four new Partners across the U.S.: **Jennifer Fornetti** in Las Vegas; **Laura Heckathorn** in Boston and Los Angeles; **Michelle LeBeau** in Detroit; and **Justin McConnell** in Orlando. Their arrivals continue the firm's growth momentum after adding nearly 50 attorneys in September, bringing Fisher Phillips' global headcount to well over 700 lawyers.

"We are still riding the excitement of joining forces with Elarbee Thompson in which we added a 22-attorney team to expand our reach and capabilities across the Southeast and nationwide," said **John Polson**, Chairman and Managing Partner of Fisher Phillips. "Adding experienced partners like Jennifer, Laura, Michelle and Justin to our individual offices from coast-to-coast, reinforces our firm's commitment to strategic growth and meeting clients where they are to provide even more comprehensive legal solutions in a variety of key markets."

This is a period of substantial growth for Fisher Phillips, as the firm has significantly expanded its footprint both within the U.S. and globally. Domestically, the firm's most recent openings were in Birmingham, Alabama and Portland, Maine, enhancing its ability to serve clients across key geographic markets. Internationally, Fisher Phillips has established a new presence in Tokyo and fortified its North American capabilities with three offices in Mexico, with plans to add more international offices in the near future.

"We are thrilled to welcome this team to our growing ranks, and we look forward to supporting them with our dynamic international platform upon which they can do their best work and deliver results," added Polson.

Jennifer Fornetti, Partner in Las Vegas

Jennifer is a first chair trial lawyer licensed to practice in Nevada, Missouri, Arizona, Colorado, and Montana. She is known for managing all phases of complex multi-party litigation with a proven ability to see cases through every step of the process from the initial strategy sessions to the inside of a courtroom, and everything in between.

She started her legal career as an associate at a multi-jurisdictional litigation firm where she focused on defending a wide variety of clients from private individuals to *Fortune 500* companies. Jennifer was most recently at a regional firm where she largely focused on general liability litigation and managed a portfolio of matters involving labor and employment, personal injury, construction defect, and real estate. In that capacity she handled matters in state and federal courts across the country and managed cases from inception through discovery and throughout all stages of trial proceedings.

Jennifer earned her J.D. from Saint Louis University School of Law where she was an Articles Editor of the *Saint Louis University Public Law Review*.

Laura Heckathorn, Partner in Boston and Los Angeles

With more than 24 years of combined legal and HR experience, Laura brings a results-driven employment law approach to clients from coast to coast. Drawing on over two decades of experience at *Am Law 100* firms, as an in-house employment counsel and in human resources, Laura's counseling and advice practice provides practical, business-focused guidance to employers across industries to create better workplaces.

Laura helps companies anticipate and mitigate risk through proactive compliance and thoughtful workplace design developed through years of working from within the corporate world. She advises and trains employers on internal investigations, employment law compliance across jurisdictions (including an emphasis on wage and hour compliance), RIF's, leave and accommodation management, harassment prevention, compensation, AI governance, due diligence during mergers and acquisitions, contingent workforce issues, pay equity/transparency, personnel policies and procedures, employment agreements, privacy laws affecting the workplace, restrictive covenants and noncompete agreements, service and/or services agreements for contingent workforces, employee classification, state and federal safety and health laws as they affect the workplace, and employee relations strategies. Her clients span staffing, startups, retail, manufacturing, transportation, hospitality, entertainment and media, and technology sectors.

Before joining Fisher Phillips, Laura served as general counsel for a nationwide executive financial recruiting and staffing company, where she led the Legal and Employee Relations team and advised the C-suite on risk mitigation, litigation management, inclusion initiatives, and workforce planning.

Laura spent a large part of her legal career in California where she gained extensive first-chair employment litigation experience defending companies against state and federal lawsuits, including discrimination, harassment, retaliation, ADA Title III, and wage/hour claims in single-

plaintiff, PAGA class-action matters. She remains an active member of the California Bar and will continue to offer nationwide employers comprehensive advice and counseling on complex California-related issues.

Laura earned her J.D. from UCLA School of Law, Los Angeles where she was elected to the *Order of the Coif*, and was Chief Departmental Editor, Recent Developments of the *Women's Law Journal*. Laura is also SHRM-SCP and CSP certified, reflecting her ability to blend legal acumen with real-world HR insight to help employers create compliant and sustainable workplaces.

Michelle LeBeau, Partner in Detroit

With more than 25 years of experience in-house and at leading labor and employment law firms, Michelle brings a sophisticated corporate perspective to all aspects of compliance, employment law, and human resources restructuring. She is a first chair litigator known for defending employers in a wide-variety of complex employment disputes in federal and state courts throughout the country with an emphasis on providing strategic counsel in wage and hour-related collective and class actions.

A large part of Michelle's practice is also providing practical solutions, strategic advice, and compliance counseling as proactive ways to help employers mitigate and/or manage risk with advice and counsel to help avoid costly litigation. In this capacity, she partners with clients to design, implement, and conduct in-house training and consulting programming with an eye toward compliance and organizational structure to help companies avoid employment-related liability and control costs. She is also known for her professional and discreet handling of investigations involving high-level company executives as well as other sensitive matters including company reorganizations and necessary workforce reductions.

Michelle was most recently Of Counsel at one of the big four labor and employment law firms after spending several years in-house with an international staffing agency and as general counsel for a technology company. Before that, she was a shareholder and member of the management committee at another of the big four labor and employment law firms where she was lead strategic counsel on a wide variety of cases including class and collective actions in Michigan and across the nation.

Michelle earned her J.D., *magna cum laude*, from Michigan State University School of Law where she was Managing Editor of *Detroit College of Law Journal of international Law & Practice* and Executive Director of the school's renowned Moot Court.

Justin McConnell, Partner in Orlando

Justin rejoins Fisher Phillips from a national labor and employment firm. For over a decade, he has defended companies across Florida before state and federal courts, administrative agencies, and in arbitrations. As a litigator, Justin has a keen understanding that every litigation involves unique and

dynamic challenges and carefully tailors his approach to meet each client's specific objectives. In addition to his litigation practice, Justin focuses on helping management solve their most complex employment challenges by providing proactive counseling, compliance strategies, and risk management solutions that help minimize disputes and support positive workplaces.

Justin is a frequent speaker to community and professional organizations regarding employment law matters. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Greater Orlando Society for Human Resource Management and is a member of the Academy of Florida Management Attorneys.

Justin earned his J.D. from the University of Florida Levin College of Law where he was a leading member of Trial Team and the Phillip C. Jessup International Moot Court Team and earned Book Awards in Trial Team and Trial Practice and won the inaugural 1L Closing Argument Competition.

About Fisher Phillips (www.fisherphillips.com)

With over 700 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.

Please reach out to our [Media team](#) for any news inquiries.

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