

NEWS RELEASES

PUBLISHED: JULY 5, 2022

Service

Labor & Employment

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Husch Blackwell Bolsters California Employment Law Practice

FIRM RAPIDLY EXPANDS CALIFORNIA-BASED EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION AND COUNSELING CAPABILITIES THROUGHOUT THE FIRST HALF OF 2022

Husch Blackwell experienced rapid growth in its California-based labor and employment practice group during the first half of 2022, adding four lawyers who concentrate on employment law counseling and litigation.

The group is highlighted by the arrival of Tyler Paetkau, who joins as a partner. He is based in The Link, Husch Blackwell's virtual office, and is affiliated with firm's Oakland office. Joining Paetkau among the new arrivals are senior counsel Olga Savage, senior associate Allison Scott, and associate Michael Matta. Savage is based in the firm's Oakland office; Scott and Matta have joined the Los Angeles office.

"When we opened our new offices last year in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, our intention was to build upon those initial efforts by adding capabilities that correspond with client demand," said Catherine Hanaway, Husch Blackwell's Chair. "Labor and employment law was at the top of our list, and I'm very pleased that we have been able to put together such a strong team in short order."

"California labor and employment law is complex, and the state's economy is immense. To have a truly national labor and employment law group, you have to be able to counsel clients with respect to all the challenges California law presents," said Erik Eisenmann, the head of Husch Blackwell's labor and employment practice. "Our new colleagues accomplish that for us, and we'll look to add talented practitioners to the team as the opportunities arise."

Paetkau joined the firm in May 2022. A veteran litigator with a deep understanding of California labor and employment law, he has represented employers in labor and employment law matters for over 30 years handling a variety of challenges, including claims of wrongful termination, discrimination, retaliation, sexual harassment, defamation, wage and hour violations, unpaid commissions, collective and class actions, and unfair labor practice charges. Paetkau also represents employers in litigation involving unfair competition, misappropriation of trade secrets, restrictive covenants, and employee mobility issues. He also has extensive experience representing employers in traditional union-management labor relations matters, including union organizing campaigns, strikes, and collective bargaining negotiations.

Savage has 15 years of experience representing employers in individual and class action lawsuits, arbitrations and administrative agency proceedings involving a variety of employment law claims, as well as litigation involving claims of trade secret misappropriation, unfair competition and restrictive covenants. Savage also represents employers in collective bargaining and union grievance arbitrations and defends employers against unfair labor practice charges. Her counseling practice includes advice in connection with state and federal labor and employment law, and she routinely assists employers with preparation of employee handbooks, personnel policies and employment contracts, and conducts presentations and trainings on employment law compliance and new and emerging employment laws and trends. She joined the firm in June 2022.

Scott counsels and defends clients across a broad range of employment litigation and counseling matters. She handles single-plaintiff discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wrongful termination claims; wage and hour class actions; Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) cases; ADA-accessibility claims; and premises liability. Her counseling practice covers broad aspects of day-to-day corporate policy as well as potential crisis-related events, and she frequently collaborates with in-house legal teams and human resources professionals to develop or revise employee handbooks and various employer policies, including but not limited to arbitration agreements, leave of absence policies, timekeeping policies, and meal and rest break waivers. Scott arrived at Husch Blackwell in May 2022.

A former law clerk with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and a former plaintiff's side employment litigator, Matta focuses on employment litigation and has experience with single plaintiff cases that involve allegations of wrongful termination, discrimination, retaliation or harassment, as well as wage and hour disputes. Matta joined the firm in May 2022.