



Stephen A. Rossi

Partner



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legal expertise

Stephen A. Rossi represents employers across industries in all aspects of labor and employment law, with special expertise in issues arising in the motion picture, television, and commercial production industries. He takes a client-centered approach to all matters that focuses on efficiently achieving client objectives while tailoring strategies to meet their specific needs. Prior to specializing in labor and employment, Stephen litigated complex intellectual property and commercial disputes in many different industries, which honed his ability to quickly distill even the most complex disputes to their core issues, enabling early and effective resolutions.

representative matters

- On behalf of a major motion picture studio, prevailed in an arbitration brought by SAG-AFTRA on behalf of performers challenging the studio's right to reuse film clips of highly compensated "deal players" in a sequel.
- Brought an anti-SLAPP motion against a television composer's discrimination claims at the outset of the case, which resulted in an order dismissing several claims and ultimately the plaintiff's complete withdrawal of all claims following Defendant's appeal on the remaining claims – all before any discovery was taken.
- Regularly defends class and PAGA representative wage and hour actions and utilizes novel legal arguments to secure favorable settlements and court approval, including in many cases in the motion picture industry involving allegedly late payment of wages, missed or late breaks, and failure to reimburse business expenses.
- Won summary judgment in the Los Angeles Superior Court against a sexual harassment claim filed by a male employee against a female manager.
- Second-chaired a three day arbitration regarding wage and hour claims arising from a motion picture production, which resulted in a complete

practice areas

labor & employment
employment litigation & counseling
labor litigation & counseling

admissions

California, 2012
U.S. District Court
Central District of California
Northern District of California
U.S. Court of Appeals
Ninth Circuit
Federal Circuit

education

University of Pennsylvania Law School, J.D., 2011; Order of the Coif, *magna cum laude*

Senior Editor, *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*

Certificate in Public Policy & Planning, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

Giles S. Rich Moot Court
National Semi-Finalist

University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business, B.S., 2006; Trustee Scholar



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defense victory.

- First-chaired a four day arbitration, which resulted in a complete defense victory against claims of breach of fiduciary duty under ERISA.
- Secured early dismissal of a PAGA complaint with an award of attorneys' fees to Defendant.
- Won partial summary judgment in federal court against a motion picture industry union's breach of contract claim regarding a popular television program.
- In arbitration, successfully argued the Labor Management Relations Act preempted an actor's claim attempting to invalidate his acting contract.
- Before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal, won affirmance of summary judgment against discrimination claims after raising an intricate legal argument related to summary judgment evidence, the standard of review, and appellate waiver.
- Regularly represents employers before the California Labor Commissioner through settlement and merits hearings, including securing a complete defense victory against a claim arising from alleged late payment of wages on a motion picture production.
- Regularly resolves potential litigation claims before they can be publicly filed.
- Regularly represents producers in guild disputes and arbitrations, including securing dismissal of several claims before the arbitration hearing began.
- Regularly provides advice and counsel on labor and employment matters including layoffs, terminations, handbooks, policies, and cutting edge issues affecting employers.
- Regularly provides anti-harassment training to client employees in multiple industries, including entertainment production staff members, writers, and other employees.
- Regularly investigates claims of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation before mediating the claims.
- Has extensive knowledge of employee arbitration agreements, has successfully enforced numerous arbitration agreements, and frequently writes on the topic of arbitration.

other career experience

- Associate, Irell & Manella LLP
- Law Clerk, United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
- Intern, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit



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- Litigated a wide variety of intellectual property and commercial disputes, including patent infringement cases and a patent license dispute, a procedurally complex action in state and federal courts relating to an arbitration award, an attorney disqualification case in a trade secret proceeding, class actions, a construction contract dispute, a breach of fiduciary duty case and various other commercial disputes.

honors & awards

- "Ones to Watch," *Best Lawyers in America*® in *Labor and Employment Law - Management* (2021-2025)
- Selected as a *Super Lawyers* Rising Star (2017-2019, 2021)

professional, business and civic affiliations

- Membership Chair and former Secretary, Howard T. Markey American Inn of Court
- Member, Orange County Bar Foundation's Associate Board, Building Committee and Grant Committee

headlines

MSK Prevails in SAG-AFTRA Arbitration Involving Reuse of Film Clips
October 21, 2025

34 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*® for 2025
August 15, 2024

38 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*® for 2024
August 17, 2023

Adam Levin and Stephen Rossi highlighted in *Variety*
January 25, 2022

26 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*® for 2022
August 19, 2021

3 MSK Attorneys Named to the List of 2021 Southern California *Super Lawyers* "Rising Stars"
June 9, 2021

33 MSK Attorneys Named Among *The Best Lawyers in America*® for 2021
August 20, 2020

Six MSK Attorneys Named to Southern California's *Super Lawyers*' 2020 "Rising Stars" List
June 18, 2020



Stephen A. Rossi

Seven MSK Attorneys Named to Southern California's *Super Lawyers*' Rising Stars 2019 List
June 19, 2019

media mentions

Stephen Rossi Featured in the *Los Angeles Business Journal*'s Special Reports Q&A
Los Angeles Business Journal , May 5, 2025

Stephen Rossi Quoted in *Law360*
Law360 , August 2, 2024

Stephen Rossi Quoted in *Bloomberg Law*
Bloomberg Law, June 25, 2024

Stephen Rossi Featured in *Daily Journal*
October 15, 2019

client alerts

New California Supreme Court Case Provides Guidance to Employers Seeking to Rely on the "Good Faith Defense" to California Wage and Hour Violations
MSK Client Alert, September 3, 2025

Mandatory Arbitration Is Off The Ropes in California!
Reversing Itself, Ninth Circuit Invalidates California's Ban on Mandatory Employment Arbitration Agreements
MSK Client Alert, February 16, 2023

President Biden Signs Law Weakening Pre-Dispute Arbitration Agreements by Allowing Employees to Opt Out of Arbitration of Claims Relating to Sexual Assault and Harassment
MSK Client Alert , March 14, 2022

Mandatory Arbitration Is On the Ropes Again In California
MSK Client Alert, September 22, 2021

Print Shoot Pay Delay
MSK Client Alert, September 30, 2019

CA Employers Hungry for Time-Rounding Meal Breaks
MSK Client Alert, December 26, 2018

U.S. Supreme Court Rules That Class Action Waivers in Employment Arbitration Agreements Are Enforceable
MSK Client Alert, May 30, 2018



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MSK's Annual Labor & Employment Update
January 11, 2017

events & speaking engagements

California Employment Law Year in Review
December 10, 2025

MSK's 2025 Employment Law "Year in Review" Seminar
February 20, 2025

MSK's Labor & Employment Department's Annual "Year in Review" Seminar
January 10, 2024

MSK's 2023 Traditional Labor Law Update
March 15, 2023

MSK's Labor & Employment "Year in Review" Seminar
January 11, 2023

MSK's Annual Labor & Employment Law Update
January 15, 2020

MSK's Annual Labor & Employment Law Update
January 9, 2019

Inclusion Riders
April 19, 2018

MSK's Annual Labor & Employment Law Update
January 11, 2018

California Employment Law Update
March 30, 2017

MSK's Annual Labor & Employment Law Update
January 11, 2017