

Stephen D. Pauwels

Chicago, IL

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SENIOR COUNSEL

Overview

Stephen's clients benefit from his ability to think on his feet in high-stress situations and find creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Stephen calls on his real-world experience to better understand the challenges businesses and front-line management face every day and uses his experience to tailor his advice to his client's needs.

Stephen brings nearly a decade of litigation experience to the firm, having represented employers of all sizes—from some of the world's largest companies to family businesses in state and federal courts and before administrative agencies on matters including non-compete agreements, employment discrimination, trade secrets, and wage and hour claims, among a myriad of others. His experience in retail management helps him connect with and better understand his clients and their day-to-day operations so that he can help them navigate the ins and outs of litigation.

Stephen also helps his clients navigate everyday employment issues, such as FMLA leave, employee discipline and termination, internal investigations, and maintaining employee handbooks and agreements. Stephen understands that today's employers need a trusted advisor to keep them on top of ever-shifting legal and regulatory requirements. He is admitted to practice in Illinois as well as the Northern District of Illinois and the Northern District of Texas federal courts.

Outside of the office, Stephen is an avid golfer and was a Charles "Chick" Evans Scholar at Miami University. He loves to experiment with new recipes for his friends and family and on the weekends can be found watching baseball from the bleachers on Chicago's North Side.

SERVICES

Labor, Employment & Immigration

EDUCATION

Chicago-Kent College of Law, J.D., 2014

Miami University, B.A., 2007

ADMISSIONS

Illinois

Experience

Court Order Obtained to Stop Agreement Violations by Former Employee and New Employer

FMLA Interference Claim Dismissed Following Plaintiff Testimony

Leadership in COVID-19 Legal Response

Membership & Involvement

- Previous, Chicago-Kent College of Law: Executive Articles Editor, Law Review; Staff Editor, Seventh Circuit Review; Moot Court Honor Society.
- Court Admissions: Illinois; U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois; U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas

Honors

- Selected to the Illinois Super Lawyers "Rising Stars" list: 2023, 2024

Firm News

Stephen D. Pauwels Joins Labor, Employment & Immigration Service Group
Firm News, October 14, 2024

Published Works

Laundry and Cable Television: How the Seventh Circuit Preserved Consumer Protection Class Action Litigation from Washing Down the Tubes
Publication, *Seventh Circuit Review*, 2014

Blog Posts

Employee Non-Competes: Where We Stand Today
Labor & Employment Law Update, July 24, 2025

FMLA, State-Mandated, or Employer-Sponsored Leave? New U.S. Department of Labor Guidance for Employers Tries to Answer Tricky Questions
Labor & Employment Law Update, January 21, 2025

Illinois Department of Labor Gives Long-Awaited Guidance on January 1, 2025 Pay Transparency Requirements
Labor & Employment Law Update, December 10, 2024

Election Results May Lead to More States Implementing Paid Leave
Labor & Employment Law Update, November 26, 2024