

Michael Stefanilo Jr.

Special Counsel

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Focus Areas

Discrimination and Harassment
Leaves of Absence and Disability Accommodation
Litigation and Trials
Inclusion, Equity and Diversity
Investigations
Wage and Hour

Overview

Michael Stefanilo Jr. routinely handles employment law matters on behalf of both private and public employers in the litigation and counseling spheres. He also regularly litigates claims in the area of employment practices liability insurance (EPLI). Michael practices in both federal and state court, and frequently before the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. He also regularly conducts internal investigations.

As a litigator, Michael has handled hundreds of cases on behalf of his clients with a distinguished record of success. He has extensive experience defending against workplace and public accommodation discrimination, harassment, retaliation, hostile work environment, and sexual assault claims, including those based on sex, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity. On top of his litigation skills, Michael acts as an investigator for employers in instances of alleged discrimination or harassment.

An advocate of LGBTQ+ rights, Michael is well versed in handling claims based on sexual orientation, sexuality, gender identity, pronoun use, and gender expression. In 2022, Michael was awarded the prestigious honor of being named one of the Best LGBTQ+ Attorneys in the United States by the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association.

Michael is also a highly knowledgeable wage and hour litigator. He handles complex employment litigation claims alleging wrongful termination, whistleblower, and breach of contract. He has defended against class actions and has negotiated several settlements arising out of class action litigation.

Notably, Michael is one of the leading attorneys in the Commonwealth with regard to its anti-sexual harassment statute in the education context. Chapter 214, Section 1C protects students from harassment and sexual assault in schools. Michael has been published twice in highly respectable legal journals regarding teacher-on-student sexual harassment in education and with regard to school bullying. He is equipped to handle sexual abuse and sexual harassment claims in both the education and employment spheres.

Finally, Michael zealously represents public and private employers in claims brought pursuant to the Massachusetts Tort Claims Act, the Massachusetts and United States Civil Rights Acts, and the Massachusetts and United States Anti-Discrimination Statutes.

Not only a litigator, Michael is also a recognized legal scholar and has been published in the *Northeastern University Law Review*, the *Sports Lawyers Journal*, the *Tulane Journal of Law & Sexuality*, various American Bar Association and Federal Bar Association publications, and is a long-standing contributing author to Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education (MCLE). Presently, Michael is serving a multi-year term as a hearing officer for the Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers of the Supreme Judicial Court. He was also appointed by the President of the Massachusetts Bar Association to serve on its Labor and Employment Section Council.

Prior to joining Littler, Michael was a partner with a full-service Boston area litigation firm. Previously, Michael worked as a law clerk for GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, now known as GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders), where he assisted in analyzing various legal issues facing the gay, lesbian, and transgender communities, including participation in GLAD's successful and nationally recognized challenge to the Defense of Marriage Act. He also spent three months clerking for the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts.

While in law school, Michael served as the managing editor of the *Northeastern University Law Review* and was a teaching assistant for the Legal Research and Writing Program.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member & Employment Section Council, Massachusetts Bar Association
- Member, Federal Bar Association
- Member, Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association
- Member, National LGBTQ Bar Association
- Member, American Bar Association
- Hearing Officer, Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers of the Supreme Judicial Court

Recognition

- Named, Ones to Watch, *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2024
- Named, Super Lawyer, *Super Lawyers*, 2024
- Named, Rising Star, *Super Lawyers*, 2014-2023
- Named, Top Lawyer, *Boston Magazine*, 2023
- Named, Best LGBTQ+ Lawyers Under 40, *National LGBTQ+ Bar Association*, 2022
- Member, Leadership Academy, *Massachusetts Bar Association*, 2022
- Editor, Litigation News, *American Bar Association, Section of Litigation*, 2020-2023
- Member, Diverse Leaders Academy, *American Bar Association, Section of Litigation*, 2020-2022
- Named, One of 25 “Up & Coming” Attorneys in the Commonwealth, *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly, Excellence in the Law*, 2018
- Named, Top 40 Attorney Under 40 in Boston, *National Law Journal*, 2015
- Recipient, First Place, Annual Michael Greenberg National Writing Competition, *National LGBT Bar Association*, 2012

Education

J.D., Northeastern University School of Law, 2012, *with Distinction*

B.A., Boston College, 2006

Phillips Exeter Academy, 2002

Bar Admissions

Massachusetts

Courts

U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Court of Appeals, 1st Circuit

U.S. District Court, District of Massachusetts