

George E. O'Brien Jr.

Senior Counsel

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Practice Areas

Labor Management Relations
Litigation and Trials
Healthcare
Higher Education
Arbitration

Overview

George O'Brien represents and counsels employers on a wide variety of labor matters, including:

- Collective bargaining
- Unfair labor practice proceedings
- Labor representation cases and elections
- Grievances
- Injunction proceedings
- Arbitrations
- Mediation
- Union relationships
- Wrongful discharge
- Breach of contract
- Discrimination claims
- Jury trials

He appears in state and federal courts and represents management before the National Labor Relations Board and other administrative agencies, including the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations, and the Connecticut Board of Mediation and Arbitration. He has handled claims arising under:

- The National Labor Relations Act
- The Connecticut Municipal Employee Relations Act
- State and Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws
- State and Federal Wage & Hour Laws

In 2015, George obtained an important decision from the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia that strengthened the rights of employers to regulate employee attire and conduct that may be offensive to customers. The decision overturned a controversial ruling of the National Labor Relations Board.

George tried the first federal court case in Connecticut involving a claim of sexual orientation discrimination, obtaining a defense judgment for a major insurance company. He helped a large Connecticut municipality privatize the town golf course, defeating union attempts to enjoin the transaction. He obtained a precedent-setting decision by the National Labor Relations Board defeating a union's successorship claim against a regional transportation company, and on behalf of an acute care hospital in New York he obtained multi-million dollar contract concessions from a registered nurses' union.

He won a defense verdict for a Connecticut acute care hospital in a jury trial involving discrimination and retaliation claims based on race and national origin. He has negotiated severance agreements with departing officers of numerous Connecticut employers, and represented a Massachusetts acute care hospital in an NLRB representation case and election in which the union was soundly defeated.

George's clients include:

- Hospitals
- Manufacturers
- Physician Practices
- Colleges and Universities

A founding member of Littler's New Haven office, George served for nine years as the office's first managing shareholder and continues as a core team member of the firm's Health Care Industry Practice Group. Prior to working at Littler, he was a partner in a major Connecticut general practice firm, where he chaired its labor and employment practice. He was the editor-in-chief of the *Connecticut Law Review* while in law school, and afterward served as the law clerk for Chief Judge T. Emmet Clarie of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Executive Committee, Labor and Employment Section, Connecticut Bar Association
- Member, Executive Committee, Federal Practice Section, Connecticut Bar Association, 2005-2011
- Former Chair, Annual Meeting Program, Connecticut Bar Association
- Former Chair, Human Rights and Opportunities Committee, Connecticut Bar Association
- Former Chair, NLRB Liaison Committee, Connecticut Bar Association
- Member, Board of Directors, Long Wharf Theatre, 2005-2011
- Secretary, Board of Trustees, Long Wharf Theatre, 2009-2011

- Member, Board of Directors, Friends of New Haven Legal Services, 2006-present
- Member, New Haven Inn of Court
- Former Co-Chair, Special Masters Panel, United States District Court, District of Connecticut
- Former President, Alumni Association, University of Connecticut School of Law
- Former Member, Board of Directors, Whitney Center
- Former Member, Board of Directors, Gateway Community College Foundation
- Former Chair, Board of Directors, St. Mary's High School
- Former Member, Strategic Planning Committee, St. Thomas More Chapel

Events & Speaking Engagements

NLRB Focus on Non-Union Workplaces

New Haven, CT
June 9, 2016

NLRB Focus on Non-Union Workplaces

New Haven, CT
May 10, 2016

2015 Tri-State Employer Conference

New York, NY
November 5, 2015

Paid Sick Leave: What Employers Need to Know and Do by January 1, 2012

New Haven, CT
October 6, 2011

Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America® * , 2001-2025
- Named, Lawyer of the Year*, New Haven, *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2013-2019, 2021, 2023-2025
- Ranked, Labor & Employment *Chambers USA*, 2003-2024
- Named, Super Lawyer**, Connecticut, *Super Lawyers*, 2006-2019
- Awarded, AV® Peer Review Rating - Healthcare *Martindale-Hubbell*
- Named, Recommended Lawyer, Workplace and Employment Counseling, *Legal 500 United States*, 2016

Education

J.D., University of Connecticut School of Law, , *With Honors*
B.A., Princeton University, , *cum laude*

Bar Admissions

Connecticut

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit

Connecticut Supreme Court

U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut

Publications & Press

More Than 240 Littler Attorneys Recognized in 2025 Editions of Best Lawyers in America® and Best Lawyers: Ones To Watch® in America

Press Release

August 15, 2024

Littler Ranked in 2024 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

June 6, 2024

Littler Recognized in 2023 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

June 6, 2023

More Than 230 Littler Lawyers Recognized in 2023 Edition of Best Lawyers in America®

Press Release

August 18, 2022

Littler Ranked in Chambers USA Guide 2022

Press Release

June 1, 2022

Connecticut Set to Enact Ban on Employer-Sponsored Meetings

Littler ASAP

May 3, 2022

Best Lawyers in America© 2022 Edition Honors More Than 240 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 19, 2021

Littler Ranked in Chambers USA Guide 2021

Press Release

May 27, 2021

Best Lawyers in America© 2021 Edition Honors More Than 250 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 20, 2020

Essential Employers: What Does Connecticut's Reopening Plan Mean for You?

Littler ASAP

May 15, 2020

Connecticut's New Restaurant Wage Law Codifies "80/20 Rule" for Tipped Employees

Littler ASAP

January 15, 2020

Best Lawyers in America© 2020 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers; 14 Named Lawyer of the Year

Press Release

August 15, 2019

Littler Ranked in 2019 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

April 25, 2019

Best Lawyers in America© 2019 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 15, 2018

Littler Ranked in 2018 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

May 15, 2018

Best Lawyers in America© 2018 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 17, 2017

Littler and Its Attorneys Receive Top Rankings in 2017 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

May 26, 2017

The Best Lawyers in America© Honors More Than 180 Littler Lawyers in Its 2017 Edition

Press Release

August 16, 2016

Littler Ranks in The Legal 500 United States Guide

Press Release

June 20, 2016

Chambers USA Recognizes Littler and Attorneys in 2016 Guide

Press Release

May 27, 2016

Employment Bar Divided Over Bill Barring Criminal Record Queries on Job Applications

In the News

May 13, 2016

Littler Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America© 2016 Edition

Press Release

August 18, 2015

D.C. Circuit Declares AT&T Had Right to Ban "Prisoner" T-Shirts

Littler ASAP

July 13, 2015

Connecticut Restricts Employer Access to Personal Social Media, E-mail and Online Retail Accounts of Employees and Applicants

Littler ASAP

May 27, 2015

Chambers USA Recognizes Littler and Its Attorneys

Press Release

May 20, 2015

Laid-Off Labor Relations Official Considers Legal Action

In the News

December 5, 2014

Connecticut Amends Paid Sick Leave Statute to Provide Some Employer-Friendly Changes

Littler ASAP

June 17, 2014

Nurse's Vaccination Refusal on Secular Grounds Not Misconduct, New Jersey Court Rules

Littler ASAP

June 10, 2014

Littler and Its Attorneys Ranked In 2014 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

May 23, 2014

Clerical and Administrative Roles in Firms Are Changing

In the News

February 21, 2014

Is Sick Leave Law Having Ill Effect On Businesses?

In the News

January 24, 2014

Hospital Settles Religious Bias Claim With Vegan

Littler ASAP

October 9, 2013

Veto Halts Law Change For Non-Compete Agreements

In the News

July 26, 2013

Trib 20: New Practices Help National Firms Make Mark In State

In the News

June 25, 2013

Connecticut Adds Burdensome Requirements to Personnel File Statutes

Littler ASAP

June 22, 2013

Littler Mendelson Named in the 2013 Chambers USA Guide

Press Release

May 24, 2013

Pharmaceutical Reps Found Exempt From OT Rules

External Publication

July 18, 2012

Acting General Counsel Comments on Hot NLRB Topics

Littler ASAP

June 18, 2012

Tenet Reaches Agreement with CNA/NU on Nurses Contract at Six California Hospitals

Littler ASAP

March 16, 2012

New Connecticut Law Targets Workplace Violence Risk to Healthcare Employers

Littler ASAP

October 5, 2011

Anti-Bias Agency Feels Sting of State Budget Crisis

In the News

July 11, 2011

Connecticut Becomes First State to Require Paid Sick Leave

In the News

July 8, 2011

Chambers USA Honors Littler And Its Attorneys

Press Release

June 27, 2011

Health Care Practitioner Dress Code Bill Proposed in New York

Littler ASAP

June 15, 2011

Physician-Owned Hospitals Continue Fight Against PPACA Restrictions

Littler ASAP

June 8, 2011

Federal Bill Would Establish Minimum Nurse/Patient Ratios, Provide Whistleblower Protections

Littler ASAP

May 31, 2011

HHS Issues Final Rule on Insurer Disclosure and Reporting of Unreasonable Rate Increases

Littler ASAP

May 19, 2011

House Passes Bills Repealing State Funding for Health Exchanges, Restricting Funding for Abortions

Littler ASAP

May 5, 2011

Agencies Seek Input on Affordable Care Act's Employer Responsibility Provisions

Littler ASAP

May 4, 2011

Nurse Staffing Bill Reintroduced in the House

Littler ASAP

March 11, 2011

Hospital Staffing Legislation Introduced in Congress Again This Term

Littler ASAP

February 3, 2011

State Supreme Court Decision Bars Hospitals from Considering Economic Factors in Deciding Physician Staff Privileges

Littler ASAP

December 6, 2010

Final Rules Issued Requiring Equal Visitation Rights for All Hospital Patients

Littler ASAP

November 19, 2010

California Expands List of Criminal Convictions Barring In-Home Caregivers

Littler ASAP

October 21, 2010

Healthcare Workers Again Challenge Mandatory Flu Vaccinations

Littler ASAP

October 13, 2010

Littler Attorneys Honored by Chambers USA

Press Release

June 21, 2010

Hospital Nurse Staffing Level Bill Proposed in Congress

Littler ASAP

June 17, 2010

Hospitals Fall Short Serving LGBT Patients, Says 2010 Healthcare Equality Index

Littler ASAP

June 16, 2010

Federal HHS Agency Touts Nurse-Patient Ratio Study

Littler ASAP

June 7, 2010

Exodus of General Internists Adds to Primary Care Shortage

Littler ASAP

May 12, 2010

Expansion of Hospital Visitation and Decision-Making Rights for Gay and Lesbian Partners

Littler ASAP

April 26, 2010

Mayo Clinic Case Difficult to Diagnose

External Publication

April 26, 2010

Unfair Competition and Trade Secrets Dispute Over Medical Record Computer Software

Littler ASAP

April 7, 2010

DOL Targets FLSA Compliance in New York's Healthcare Industry

Littler ASAP

March 30, 2010

Connecticut Employees Can Keep Unearned Commissions Unless Employment Agreement Expressly Requires Repayment of Advances

Littler ASAP

May 6, 2008