

STEVEN BALKEN

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Steven Balken represents employers in workplace conflicts, combining results-driven litigation advocacy with strategic counseling to manage risk while moving business forward.

In today's fast-changing and increasingly litigious workplace environment, Steven partners with employers to prevail in legal disputes and protect their business interests. He represents clients across industries including healthcare, hospitality, petroleum, food and beverage, transportation, and retail in matters involving discrimination, retaliation, and harassment claims, as well as disputes concerning disability and religious accommodations, wage and hour laws (including class and collective actions), and employment contracts. Steven brings strategic insight and a clear understanding of both the legal and business considerations at stake, helping employers manage conflict while reducing operational disruption.

Steven also advises employers on everyday workplace issues, helping them minimize legal risk while advancing business objectives. He provides practical guidance on employee onboarding, discipline, terminations, accommodations, leave management, and wage practices, and regularly drafts and updates employee handbooks, policies, and procedures. His approach is grounded in a practical understanding of how legal compliance intersects with real-world business operations.

Before joining FordHarrison, Steven practiced employment litigation at a New York-based general practice firm. He also served as a judicial intern for the Honorable Justice Leon Ruchelsman in the New York State Supreme Court, Kings County.

Representative Experience

- » Prevailed on pre-answer motion to dismiss complaint in the New Jersey Superior Court (Bergen County) defeating oil company employee's hostile work environment claim under New Jersey common law.
- » Obtained preliminary injunction award in the New York Supreme Court (Kings County) preventing former employee

EDUCATION

- » Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law (J.D., 2022)
- » Touro College (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2018)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- » New York
- » New Jersey

COURT ADMISSIONS

- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- » U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit
- » U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York
- » U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
- » U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York
- » U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey
- » New York State Courts
- » New Jersey State Courts

from competing with homecare agency client.

- » Successfully compelled arbitration of clothing retailer employee's race and sexual orientation discrimination and retaliation claims under New Jersey Law Against Discrimination and 42 U.S.C. § 1981 brought originally in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey.
- » Defended a healthcare provider network in the New York State Supreme Court (New York County) against failure to accommodate disability and discriminatory discharge claims under New York State and City Human Rights Law.
- » Appealed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit on behalf of a homecare agency from a decision by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York in a class-action lawsuit involving wage and hour violation claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act and New York Labor Law.
- » Defended a multi-state mortgage brokerage in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York from wage and hour violation claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act and New York Labor Law, as well as sexual harassment claims under New York State Human Rights Law.
- » Guided an esthetician business through administrative proceedings in the New York State Division of Human Rights to defend against claims of citizenship and national origin discrimination and retaliation under New York State Human Rights Law.
- » Defended a homecare agency in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York against retaliation claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act and New York Labor Law.

Honors & Awards

- » The *Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch*, Litigation - Labor and Employment and Labor and Employment Law - Management (2026)

News & Insights

- » June 23, 2025 - New Paid Prenatal Leave Requirements for Employers in New York City
- » May 20, 2025 - Liquidated Damages Now Unavailable in Certain New and Pending Payroll Frequency Lawsuits
- » September 30, 2024 - How Courts Have Analyzed Discrimination Claims after the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in *Muldrow v. City of St. Louis, Missouri*: What New

York Employers Need to Know

Offices

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