



Labor and employment law veteran, trusted adviser and proven advocate Don Lawless consistently delivers responsive, focused advice, while leveraging each client's workforce potential and business objectives.

Don focuses his practice in the pharmaceutical and health, food processing, manufacturing, higher education and service industries. His traditional labor experience is extensive and includes contract negotiation, grievance arbitration and defense of unfair labor practice charges, and union avoidance.

Don advises on workforce restructurings and works with clients on a broad range of civil rights compliance and defense, with particular emphasis on ADA compliance, facility and program access under Titles II and III of the ADA, FMLA compliance, and employment-related contracts and policies. He also represents multinational auto parts, major global brands and other manufacturers in OSHA-related compliance and appeals.

As vice chair of the firm's Higher Education practice group, a significant portion of Don's practice is devoted to representing college and university clients in labor and employment matters and student affairs, athletic program compliance, internal investigations, tenure denial disputes, and facility and program accessibility issues. Don also successfully defends civil rights matters, including many discreet faculty and student OCR complaints of discrimination typically related to disability accommodation.

Don offers honed abilities in designing and executing a wide variety of workplace investigations. He consistently executes workplace investigations that are comprehensive and complete, ascertaining all the evidence available and rendering sound, balanced conclusions that are ultimately clear and justifiable.

Don is a frequent speaker to a variety of organizations on legal developments and related strategies, such as the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan Public Employer Labor Relations Association, the National Association of College and University Attorneys, and numerous industry-specific organizations.

Donald P. Lawless

Partner

171 Monroe Avenue NW
Suite 1000
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2694

P 616-742-3994
F 616-742-3999
dlawless@btlaw.com

EDUCATION

The University of Texas School of Law,
(J.D.), 1986

University of Michigan, (B.B.A.), cum
laude, 1980

BAR ADMISSIONS

Michigan

COURT ADMISSIONS

U.S. District Court for the Western
District of Michigan

LANGUAGES

English

PRACTICES

Accessibility and Disability
Affirmative Action/OFCCP Compliance
Arbitration and Grievances
Aviation and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
Collective Bargaining
Disability, Leave and Medical Issues
Discipline and Termination
Discrimination Defense
Downsizing and WARN Act
EEO Compliance
Executive Level (or C-Suite) Internal
Investigations
Labor and Employment

Professional and Community Involvement

Co-author, Chambers Global Practice Guide - USA Regional Employment (Michigan)

Board member, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, 2016 to present

Former chair, Michigan Chamber of Commerce Health and Human Resource Committee, 2012-2017

Member, American Employment Law Council

Member, National Association of College and University Attorneys

Member, Lakeshore Advantage

Co-founder, West Michigan Works

Former chair and board member, Interurban Transit Partnership (The Rapid), 2004-2012

Former second ward commissioner, East Grand Rapids, 1997-2005

Former chair, East Grand Rapids Planning Commission, 2007-2014

Honors

Grand Rapids Business Journal's Notable West Michigan Lawyers, 2023

The Best Lawyers in America, 2008-2024

Chambers USA, Michigan, 2017-2023

Grand Rapids Magazine Top Lawyers, 2022-2023

Martindale-Hubbell, AV Preeminent

Labor Relations

Management and Employee Training

Mergers and Acquisitions - Labor Issues

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

Student Disability

Union Avoidance

Workplace Counseling

Workplace Culture 2.0

Workplace Safety

INDUSTRIES

Agriculture and Food

Colleges and Universities

Education