

Fisher Broyles

Name: Kaitlin Abplanalp Brown

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Office: Detroit

Practice Areas: Compliance Counseling; Employment; Executive Compensation & Benefits; General Corporate

Bar Admissions: Michigan; U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

Education: Washington & Lee University School of Law, JD (2011); Washington & Lee University, BA Studio Art Honors (2005)

Experience: Maddin Hauser Roth & Heller; Sue Ellen Eisenberg & Associates; Kitch Drutchas

Katie's expertise is in advising businesses to create legally compliant and protective contracts, policies, and processes. She also works with executive leaders to negotiate agreements related to compensation, stock, transition, and severance. Katie has worked with clients in myriad industries, including automotive, corporate, medical, educational, non-profit, legal, and financial.

In advising business owners, managers, and human resources directors, Katie's goal is to keep her clients out of litigation by promptly addressing concerns before they become legal actions filed in court. She implements strategies such as conducting internal audits of processes and procedures, strengthening policies, and conducting trainings for all employees. Katie conducts separate management training to explain the red flags managers must recognize to prevent liability for unlawful conduct that can be avoided. In response to claims by employees, customers, and vendors, Katie conducts investigations and prepares responsive communications. When these concerns are unable to be resolved internally, Katie defends against charges of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or improper payment of wages that are filed with government agencies. After disputes have been resolved, Katie implements proactive strategies to prevent more costly claims of wrongful termination and other statutory violations. When businesses grow, Katie strategically assists with streamlining employment practices for purposes of tax, insurance, human resources related processes.

Before beginning her legal career, Katie worked in New York City making documentaries for National Geographic International, The History Channel, and Discovery Health. As an Executive Committee

member of her prior firm, Katie knows the challenges that business owners and managers face in running their business and refined her experience in leading teams to reach the next level.

Awards and Recognition

- DBusiness Magazine Top Lawyer in Metro Detroit in Labor & Employment Law, 2023
- Crain's Detroit Business Notable Women in Law, 2021
- Michigan Lawyers Weekly Women in Law, 2021
- Michigan Lawyers Weekly Go-To Lawyer in Employment Law, 2021
- Oakland County Executive's Elite 40 Under 40 Class of 2020
- Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer by the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section
- Fellow of the Oakland County Bar Foundation
- Rising Star by Michigan Super Lawyers® 2014-Present
- Women's Bar Association (Oakland County Region of Women Lawyers Association of Michigan) Member of the Year Award, 2017
- Michigan Lawyers Weekly's Up and Coming Lawyers, Class of 2016
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Pro Bono Recognition Award, 2013

Representative Transactions

- Advised employees and employers on claims, rights, and liabilities arising out of contracts (e.g., restrictive covenants, compensation, etc.) and statutes (e.g., protected leaves, disability accommodations, wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, etc.).
- Updated and prepared employment policies and procedures, including auditing businesses' processes for documentation from onboarding to termination of employees.
- Conducted management and employee training regarding leadership skills and compliance requirements.
- Investigated sexual harassment complaints, employment disputes, and public safety concerns.

- Negotiated severance agreements for executives.
- Evaluated and revised employment contracts to assure legal compliance and protection of clients.
- Reviewed civil rights charges, including working with investigators, to determine validity of claims.
- Represented employers in investigations conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, and Michigan Wage and Hour Division.
- Resolved issues involving unemployment insurance benefits, including tax rates, and properly transferring unemployment experience accounts to avoid SUTA dumping penalties.
- Analyzed and handled complex litigation cases by reviewing voluminous records, preparing concise chronologies, conducting discovery/depositions, and resolving cases through case evaluation, facilitation, and dispositive motions.

Presentations & Compliance Coaching Experience

- "Legal Compliance and Best Practices for Managers" (2023).
- "Handbook and Respectful Workplace Training" (2023).
- "Employee Workshop: Respectful Workplace, Job Responsibilities, Safe Spaces, Teamwork, and Procedures" (2023).
- "Right-Sizing and Reducing Workforce: Navigating Severance Agreements, Adverse Impact Studies, and the WARN Act" (2022).
- "Recruiting and Retaining Employees: Attracting Top Talent to Your Business" (2022).
- "Management Training Series: How to Comply with Statutory Legal Obligations; Attract & Hire; Onboard & Engage; Perform & Develop; Leaves & Accommodations; and Termination & Employment" (2022).
- "Proactive Legal Compliance in Construction: The Importance of Updated Handbooks, Employee Training and Audits" (2022).
- "The Pandemic Workforce: Tax Implications of Perks Provided by Employers Enticing Top Talent" (2021).

- "Creating and Maintaining a Respectful Workplace: Valuing Differences and Respecting Boundaries" (2021).
- "Creating and Maintaining a Respectful and Inclusive Workplace" and Respectful Workplace Trainings (2018 – 2022).
- Management and Employee Trainings (2016-2022).
- "Understanding Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: The Business, Legal, and Moral Case – Why it's Important and What You Can Do" (2020, 2022).
- "Guidance on Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policies" (2020).
- State Bar of Michigan Race and Justice Forum (2020).
- "COVID-19: The Parent Trap – Childcare and Caregiving Considerations in the Workforce" (2020).
- "COVID-19: Return to Work Preparedness & Response Plan" (2020).
- "COVID-19: Employer Plans and Responses to the Known and Unknown" (2020).
- "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: In Action" (2019).
- Workplace Investigations (2018 – 2019).
- "Employee Handbook Policies: The Importance of Regular Updates and Training" (2017 – 2019).
- Annual Manager & Supervisor Training, PowerPoint for multi-state client to develop leadership skills and promote legal compliance (2017).
- "How to Maintain and Protect Confidential Information and Personnel Files," PowerPoint presentation for American Payroll Association seminar (2017).
- "Encouraging Optimal Performance as Individuals and as a Company," PowerPoint presentation about employee handbook updates, legal obligations, and company expectations in regard to employee conduct and work rules (2016).
- "A Financial Evaluation of How to Comply with the Wage & Hour Department's New Overtime Rule" PowerPoint presentation to discuss employee classification and compensation structures (2016).

- “Early Resolution of Employment Law Cases,” Moderator for discussion about how to save clients time and money by obtaining early resolutions to employment law cases (2016).
- “Severance Agreements: Tax and Employment Considerations” (2016).
- “Pro Bono: Making the Connection,” PowerPoint presentation about how to handle pro bono cases and utilize resources available (2013).
- “Getting Social: Use of Social Media as a Marketing Tool,” PowerPoint presentation to large firm (2013).

Publications

- “Michigan Causes of Action Formbook” (ICLE), Co-Editor (2020).
- “Top Tips in Ten Minutes,” written for ICLE for their Partnership subscription. Topic: Complying with the Michigan Paid Medical Leave Act (2019).
- “The EOBR Mandate and its Potential Impact on Safety, Claims Handling, and Underwriting,” co-authored with Timothy Groustra & Jim Rodi, 15 *The Transportation Lawyer* No. 1, 47–52 (2013). Re-published in 30 *Michigan Defense Quarterly* No. 2, 11–16. (2013).
- “Enhancement of Pro Bono Culture in Michigan: A Summary of the State Bar of Michigan’s Pro Bono Workshop,” *State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section’s Newsletter, Inter Alia*, 5–6 (2013).
- “European Court of Human Rights & European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights,” Presentation (2010).
- “Conference Report — The Transnationalization of Legal Cultures,” co-authored with Ronald Bruckmann, 10 *German L. J.* No. 10, 1399 (2009).