



Rufino Gaytán III

SENIOR COUNSEL

HOUSTON, TX

PHONE: 713.525.6229

EMAIL: RUFINO.GAYTAN@HUSCHBLACKWELL.COM

OVERVIEW

Rufino has dedicated his career to helping employers map out optimal paths to resolve staffing and compliance issues with high-stakes outcomes.

Rufino has significant experience representing clients in labor matters, including collective bargaining, labor arbitrations, unfair labor practice claims and union election petitions, and has represented numerous clients before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

At the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rufino has helped employers navigate quickly changing federal, state and local employment law, including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA); Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; state and local “stay at home” and similar orders; and related issues of leave, accommodation and safety.

Rufino also has extensive experience negotiating health and safety matters before the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and discrimination claims before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Clients and colleagues value Rufino’s hands-on view regarding labor and employment matters, from drafting proactive policies and handbooks to efficiently handling general day-to-day human resources issues, as well as crafting strategies and solutions for unexpected investigations or litigation.

Prior to beginning his law practice, Rufino served in the U.S. Army Reserve, including a yearlong tour in Iraq, with Bravo Company,

Industries

Education
Healthcare
Life Sciences

Services

Employment Litigation Defense
Labor & Employment
Traditional Labor Relations

980th Engineer Combat Battalion. For his service, Rufino received the Army Commendation Medal and the Combat Action Badge. He currently serves as co-chair of HB Vets, the firm's Employee Resource Group for military veterans.

Experience

UNION & LABOR RELATIONS

- Represented and counseled craft coffee roasting company regarding union election petition, resulting in vote against unionization.
- Negotiated dismissal of National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) unfair labor practice charge implicating joint employer issues for specialty tea and coffee manufacturer/distributor.
- Represented defense contractor and shipbuilder in multiple proceedings before NLRB, including unfair labor practice charges claiming retaliation and failure to respond to information requests by union.
- Obtained injunctive relief against union and union representatives in an unfair labor practice charge against union representatives for making threats against senior management employees.
- First-chair representation of hospital system in arbitration related to emergency medical technician (EMT) and ambulance driver scheduling.

EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION

- Obtained dismissals for Indian tribe and related development corporation in numerous employment disputes and all related actions before Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), in federal district court and before U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, including claims under Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).
- Represented manufacturer in donning/doffing class/collective action lawsuit filed by Department of Labor (DOL), negotiating settlement representing nearly 60 percent reduction to initial DOL demand.

Experience

- Secured summary judgment against former owner/employee for violating confidentiality obligations to client and misappropriating confidential information and trade secrets.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Negotiated elimination of all Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) citation items and penalties, including alleged fall hazard allegations, for biomedical device manufacturer.
- Negotiated significant reductions to OSHA penalties and elimination of citation items related to employee fatality (electrocution) for equipment provider.
- Negotiated significant reductions in proposed penalties and elimination of majority of alleged willful violations of lockout/tagout, confined space entry and fall hazard regulations for chemical and colorant manufacturer/distributor.
- Negotiated elimination of all serious citation items and significant reduction in penalties for alleged violations of lockout/tagout standard based on employee injury.
- Negotiated significant reductions of penalties for alleged violations of training and personal protective equipment (PPE) standards based on employee injury.
- Advised numerous clients with development of Employee Health and Safety (EHS) Committees and safety manuals, including development of fall hazard programs, lockout/tagout procedures and PPE requirements.

Recognition

- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*
 - Labor and Employment Law - Management, 2022-2025
- Thomson Reuters' *Texas Super Lawyers*
 - Rising Star, Employment & Labor: Employer, 2020
- Super Lawyers, Wisconsin Rising Star, Employment & Labor: Employer, 2019
- Top Latino Lawyer, Latino Leaders, 2018

Education

- J.D., University of Wisconsin Law School
 - *Wisconsin Journal of Law*, Gender & Society Member
- B.A., University of Texas at Austin
 - Government

Admissions

- Texas
- Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit

Community Leadership

- Milwaukee County Personnel Review Board, Vice President, 2016-2019
- Casa Romero Renewal Center, Board Chairman, 2017-2019
- Easterseals Southwest Wisconsin, 2016-2019



2025 Best Lawyers Ones to
Watch