



JEFFREY RAGER
RAGER & YOON
 EL SEGUNDO

Jeffrey Rager has practiced for 30 years, drawn throughout his career to representing individuals against institutions. "I have always been drawn to fighting for the little guy," he said. "I have a firm dislike

for bullies and there is no more relevant time than today in American history to be fighting against injustice."

Last November, Rager prevailed in a judicial reference hearing and secured an award of \$8.5 million. *Loftus v. Eisenhower Medical Center, et al.*, CVPS2106540 (Riverside Super. Ct., filed Dec. 23, 2021).

His client, Dr. Richard Loftus, had spent 10 years with Eisenhower Medical Center and served as assistant program director for the internal medicine residency. "He had zero discipline in his file and was widely regarded as an excellent clinical physician and teacher," Rager said.

As the pandemic reached the Coachella Valley in March 2020, Loftus advocated for COVID-19 preventative measures, including masking and testing, advocacy that drew resistance from EMC administration. The internal medicine residency's program director, Dr. Mehrdad Abbasi, had a pattern of mistreating female physicians, and Dr. Loftus reported that conduct to Eisenhower's chief operating officer, the chief medical officer and human resources.

In response, Dr. Abbasi filed a complaint against Loftus because he "publicly accused me of sexism" and resisted the masking policy. The chief medical officer then raised questions about Loftus' mental fitness to the medical executive committee, which presented him with a behavior agreement. The terms required him to concede that he had engaged in inappropriate behavior, submit to a forensic evaluation by a psychiatrist of EMC's choosing, undergo psychiatric care, release his legal claims, agree to arbitration and permit disclosure of his medical information. Loftus determined he could not sign, as it would prevent him from credentialing at other hospitals and risk a report to the Medical Board. "The referee found for Dr. Loftus on all claims, awarding \$1.6 million in compensatory damages, \$4 million in punitive damages, and nearly \$3 million in attorney's fees, costs and prejudgment interest," Rager said.

Rager points to an earlier trial as a turning point in his career. He took over the case of an OB/GYN physician

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David Reis has practiced for about 35 years, but his connection to labor and employment law predates his legal career. He grew up as an only child in a working family. His father was a union-represented butcher in a supermarket, and his mother worked as a grants administrator at Rutgers University, a position she earned through performance despite not holding a college degree.

"So my earliest exposure to labor and employment issues was personal and practical," Reis said. "I saw how work, wages, opportunity, fairness, job security and workplace rules affected real families and created opportunities."

That perspective informs his work even as he represents employers. "I have never lost sight of the importance of what employment lawyers do and the very real effect our work has on people's lives," he said.

A recent matter that Reis describes as defining was his representation of Hint, Inc. in an employment arbitration brought by the company's former founder-executives.

who had served as CEO and COO. *Theo and Kara Goldin v. Hint, Inc.*, CGC23610443 (S.F. Super. Ct., filed Nov. 15, 2023).

The case involved claims for wrongful termination, retaliation, wages and reinstatement, and required Hint to pursue affirmative claims arising out of the executives' conduct. The arbitrator commented that it was the most hard-fought case she had ever presided over.

For the founders, the matter carried weight beyond money. "They were seeking reinstatement and, in a very real sense, were trying to regain their roles in and control over something they had built, but no longer controlled," Reis said.

The parties tried the case through a two-week evidentiary arbitration involving credibility disputes and unusual courtroom dynamics, including an emotional outburst that prompted the arbitrator to move proceedings to Zoom. On April 9, 2026, the



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could have stemmed from the jury's enmity toward Argueta rather than the merits of her claims. The Court of Appeal reversed and published its decision as a warning that marginally relevant material may not be used as a Trojan Horse. The case settled in March 2026 for \$4 million.

Rager

who could no longer pay his attorneys hourly, after the doctor reported being forced to perform a C-section without anesthesia amid inadequate coverage, supplies, and nurse training. The hospital retaliated by reporting him to the Medical Board. Facing a zero-dollar offer, Rager tried the case in Merced County against a team of veteran trial lawyers and won punitive damages. "That was a critical point in my career because I overcame a team of hometown lawyers in a reputedly conservative jurisdiction," he said.

He frames the work as a duty to the system itself. "We have a responsibility as attorneys to file only meritorious cases so the judges have the time to do their jobs."

Tellado

In matters where California and federal standards diverge, Tellado advises clients to treat California law as the controlling baseline for work performed in the state. She identifies the point

entitled to costs.

Reis also represented the venture capital firm against a portfolio company founder who sought to impose FEHA retaliation liability based on investment proposals and governance decisions. *Hardell v. Blumberg Capital, L.L.C., et al.*, CGC-22-602112 (S.F. Super. Ct., filed Sept. 30, 2022).

Reis pursued a dispositive motion strategy that resulted in summary adjudication of the key FEHA claims; the plaintiff dismissed the remaining claims and the matter is now on appeal. "Plaintiff's theory attempted to transform investor governance and financing activity into employment retaliation," Reis said.

Lastly, in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA action, Reis narrowed the case through a stipulation, arbitrated the individual claims, and obtained dismissal of the representative PAGA claim as untimely. *Corbin Williams v. Alacrity Solutions*, B335445 (2d Dist. April 22, 2025).

In April 2025, the Court of Appeal affirmed in a published decision holding that a representative PAGA plaintiff must have suffered a Labor Code violation within one year of filing. "PAGA cases often create leverage because of the prospect of representative penalties even when individual damages are limited," Reis said. The California Supreme Court has granted review pending related cases.

Looking ahead, Reis points to AI and automated decision-making in recruiting, screening, and performance management as a pressing area, along with the continued evolution of PAGA and wage-and-hour litigation. He also tracks plaintiffs testing whether employment statutes can reach investors, board-level actors, contractors and others outside the traditional employer-employee relationship, as well as labor unrest in health care. "The employers who fare best will be those that make decisions carefully, document them honestly and are prepared to defend them," he said.

of conflict, maps obligations under both regimes and builds compliance frameworks satisfying the more employee-protective standard while recommending the approach that reduces exposure to penalties under PAGA.

the actual driver after more than thirty years of service.

Both cases turned on the same difficulty. "Employers rarely admit unlawful motives," Shegerian said. The central task was demonstrating that the stated reason for each termination was not the real one — exposing the gap between what the employer said and what the evidence showed.

For Shegerian, outcomes are measured by more than recovery. "A successful outcome is one that meaningfully changes a client's situation," he said. Many clients come to his firm after their careers and livelihoods have been disrupted, and success means a result that reflects the strength of the evidence and the harm suffered.

Looking ahead, Shegerian points to the role of technology in workplace decision-making as one of the developments in employment law, even as California continues to expand protections involving discrimination, retaliation, accommodations, and wage-and-hour rights. For him, the through line holds: "Regardless of the technology involved, the central issue remains accountability."

Sun

agreements governed by another state's law, while managing the interplay between two forums that both have strong policy interests at stake," she said.

Sun also counsels technology and life sciences clients integrating AI tools into hiring and performance management. Her advice centers on three things: treating any algorithm that influences an employment decision as subject to legal scrutiny, preserving human oversight at decision points and conducting vendor due diligence.

She sees AI adoption as the practice's

On trial preparation, she emphasizes early case assessment, discovery strategy and witness credibility. She prepares HR professionals, managers and corporate witnesses on testimony expectations and ensures consistency in explanations of policies and decision-

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law is an extension of the curiosity that developed through reading about a wide variety of subjects and different points of view," she said. Employment law, she added, draws on that same instinct because it centers on understanding how people perceive events that occur within an employment relationship.

Much of her recent work has involved

sought millions in emotional distress damages arising from a termination. The arbitrator rejected the claim after Glarum's team located records that contradicted the plaintiff's assertions. She views the result as a demonstration of what diligent discovery can

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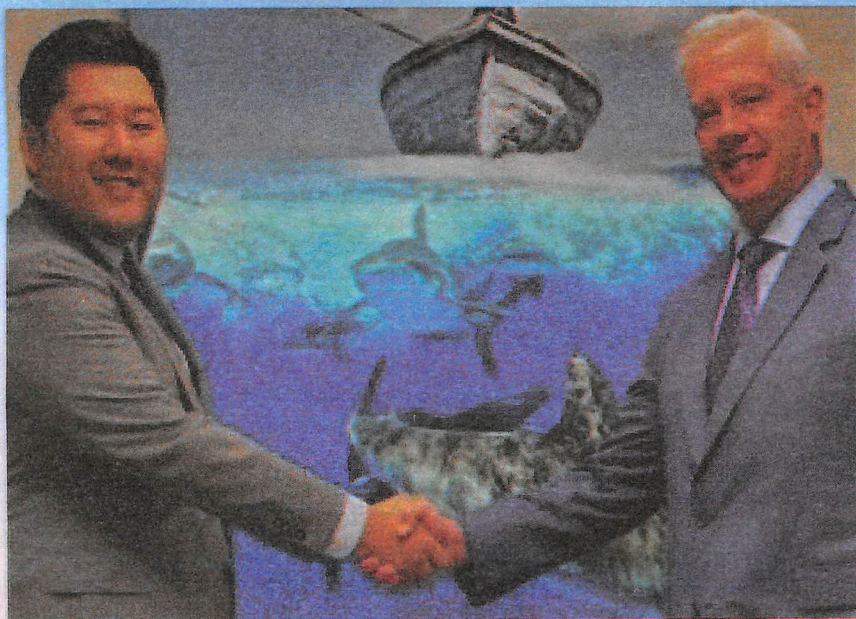
areas.

"Executive compensation is the perfect combination of securities, tax, employment, corporate and governance," Griffin said. "The combination of disciplines drew me to the practice and I've not looked back!"

As head of Skadden's West Coast

"This period typically introduces uncertainty into the equation," Griffin said. "For our clients who are being acquired, retaining talent and continuing to drive the success of the business is paramount."

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*Jeff Rager would like to thank
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and Alana Luna.*



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Employment Lawyers