

Phil Eckenrode

Cleveland
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Overview

Phil maintains a diverse practice combining work with clients on matters of employment law, complex commercial litigation and outside general counsel services. Formerly serving as GC for a privately held company, Phil appreciates the bottom-line impact of litigation strategies as well as how to navigate an ever-changing workforce.

His work on behalf of employers around the country includes the enforcement of post-employment restrictive covenants, counseling HR managers on how to properly recruit, hire, train and-when necessary-separate from employees, negotiation of severance packages, anti-harassment training, protection of trade secrets, and handbook compliance. He also regularly defends companies against claims of race, age and other forms of alleged discrimination, as well as hostile work environment and whistleblower claims and wage and hour class actions.

In his litigation practice, Phil has represented health insurance providers in multi-million dollar payor/provider litigations and arbitrations, has litigated ERISA preemption issues, prosecuted and defended fraudulent transfer/alter ego/veil-piercing lawsuits, and has handled a variety of general commercial matters involving contracts, fraud, tortious interference, and related state and federal claims.

Additionally, in representing small and medium-sized businesses as outside general counsel, Phil negotiates contracts with vendors and customers, oversees due diligence for new acquisitions, advises on compliance with a diverse and complex number of regulatory schemes, and leads internal investigations.

**Matter completed prior to joining Benesch.*

Representative Matters

- Obtained favorable settlement of race discrimination claims asserted against healthcare client after it was demonstrated that plaintiff was terminated as part of a company-wide reduction in force.
- Successfully defended and obtained summary judgment in favor of aviation client on claims of age and race discrimination and whistleblower retaliation.*
- Oversaw acquisition of one of client's major competitors along with post-merger integration of workforces (50+ new employees), policies, and procedures.*
- Successfully conducted oral arguments in both state and federal courts of appeals, including successful reversal at the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals which resulted in client's full jury award being reinstated. The Sixth Circuit found that the District Court abused its discretion in issuing a remittitur of jury's award based on a pleading technicality.*
- Defended numerous clients in EEOC and analogous state proceedings. In one case, despite a successful mediation of the matter with the charging party, the EEOC insisted on a continued investigation of the employer. Represented client in resisting fishing expedition, and EEOC eventually relented.*
- Secured summary judgment in Ohio state court on behalf of community bank counter-sued by commercial borrower following collections efforts. In 31-page opinion, state court granted the bank summary judgment on all 10 counts of the counterclaim which sought over $1MM in damages.*
- Examples of trial victories include complete defense verdict in multi-million-dollar lender liability case, 100% damages award in construction arbitration, $650,000 verdict in federal court jury trial based on claims of electronic trade secrets misappropriation and related claims.*
- Obtained TRO and eventually agreed injunction against former employees who resigned from insurance company and then established local office of competitor in violation of non-compete agreements. Electronic discovery revealed that employees had downloaded hundreds of proprietary documents to USB drives prior to leaving, giving them a significant head start in their efforts to compete with client.*

Credentials

EDUCATION

- The Ohio State University, Moritz College of Law, 2008, J.D.
  - Labor & Employment Moot Court Team, Negotiations Team, Mediation Team
- Kent State University, 2005, B.A., Political Science, *cum laude*

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Ohio
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern and Southern Districts of Ohio
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan

Memberships

- Vice President, Olmsted Falls City School District, Board of Education
- Member, Make-A-Wish Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, Northern Ohio Regional Advisory Board

Awards & Recognition

- Listed, Ohio Rising Stars, 2012 - 2017
- Listed, Ohio Super Lawyers, 2025

News & Insights

- 48 Benesch Attorneys Selected to 2026 Ohio Super Lawyers and Rising Stars
  January 27, 2026 | Press Releases
- Investing in the Performance Materials & Plastics Industry Conference Thought Leader Wrap-Up
  June 17, 2025 | Contributed Content & Presentations
- 49 Benesch Attorneys Selected to 2025 Ohio Super Lawyers and Rising Stars
  December 17, 2024 | Press Releases
- Phil Eckenrode mentioned in Crain's Cleveland People on the Move
  February 6, 2024 | Media Mentions
- Benesch Strengthens Labor & Employment Practice with Addition of Partner Phil Eckenrode in Cleveland
  January 10, 2024 | Press Releases
- New York Labor Law Creates Joint Liability for Construction Contractors | Phil Eckenrode
  January 9, 2024 | Contributed Content & Presentations

Speaking & Events

PAST EVENTS

- The Ever-Changing Economy | Phil Eckenrode
  October 1, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- He Took a New Job, But First He Took a Thumb Drive: A Trade Secrets Case Study | Phil Eckenrode
  September 23, 2026 | Firm Events
- Mitigating the Impact of a Fluid Tariff Landscape | Phil Eckenrode
  February 18, 2025 | Speaking Engagement
- Managing Legal Risk and Your Bottom Line | Phil Eckenrode
  December 17, 2024 | Speaking Engagement
- No More Non-Competes? An Overview of Federal and State Trends | Hannah J. Kraus, Grace M. Karam, Phil Eckenrode
  November 21, 2024 | Speaking Engagement