Cynthia Chen McTernan

Partner

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T: +1 213.229.7633
Los Angeles



Capabilities

Labor and Employment
Class Actions
Consumer Protection
Higher Education
Life Sciences
Litigation
Technology Litigation

Credentials

Education

Harvard University - 2013 Juris Doctor
Duke University - 2010 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

New York Bar
California Bar

Cynthia Chen McTernan is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Gibson Dunn. She is a member of the firm's Labor and Employment, Class Actions, and Litigation practice groups, and represents clients across a variety of industries, including technology, retail, life sciences, and higher education.

Cynthia specializes in high-exposure employment and class action litigation. She has represented clients in a wide range of employment litigation matters, including wage-and-hour, discrimination, retaliation, and harassment claims under both federal and state law, and including in class, collective, and representative actions under the California Private Attorneys General Act. She also dedicates a portion of her practice to employment counseling, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training, and pre-litigation investigations. She has advised clients on employment-related issues ranging from DEI best practices to employee misconduct and termination issues.

In addition to her employment expertise, Cynthia also handles a range of other civil and commercial disputes for her corporate clients, and has significant experience in class actions, government enforcement actions, and mass arbitrations involving consumer protection issues.

Cynthia is recognized as a "Key Lawyer" for her work in labor and employment disputes by *Legal 500*. *Lawdragon* recognized her in their guide of the *500 Leading Corporate Employment Lawyers* for 2025-2027, which features "the nation's best advisors on workplace mobility, employee benefits and executive compensation, traditional labor matters and, of course[,] disputes . . . from wage and hour class actions, to discrimination and non-compete agreements." She is recognized by her peers as one of *The Best Lawyers in America*® in Commercial Litigation for since 2025, and before that, by *Best Lawyers*® as "One to Watch" for multiple years.

Recent representative matters include:

- Representing and advising major technology and life sciences companies in connection with novel regular rate of pay theories relating to employee equity.
- Advising companies and nonprofit organizations on DEI best practices and policies following the *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard/UNC* Supreme Court decision as part of the Firm's DEI Task Force.
- Obtaining a rare full grant of summary judgment on behalf of a cancer screening biotechnology company in California state court on discrimination, retaliation, and harassment claims brought under the Fair Employment and Housing Act.
- Representing food-delivery platform in mass arbitrations alleging reverse discrimination under the California Unruh Civil Rights Act and Section 1981.

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- Representing multiple major universities in mass and class action litigation relating to employee conduct.
- Representing a leading technology manufacturer in multidistrict consumer class action litigation involving their flagship mobile phone devices.
- Defeating class certification and obtaining favorable resolutions for various technology and retail clients in wage-and-hour class and PAGA actions.

Cynthia maintains an active pro bono practice, including representation of victims of anti-Asian hate crimes in coordination with the Alliance for Asian American Justice. She is also a member of the Firm's Los Angeles Area Diversity Committee.

Cynthia graduated from Harvard Law School in 2013, where she was an editor on the *Harvard Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law*. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English with High Distinction and *summa cum laude* from Duke University in 2010, where she was a Benjamin N. Duke Scholar and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. Cynthia is admitted to practice in the States of New York and California.

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