Connor S. Sullivan

Partner

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New York



Connor Sullivan is a partner in the New York office of Gibson Dunn. He represents technology companies and media and entertainment clients in high-stakes litigation in state and federal court, including multiple jury trials involving billions of dollars in claims. He has handled founders' disputes, breach of contract and tort claims, antitrust litigation, and copyright and trademark issues, involving social media platforms, artificial intelligence and fintech applications, and smartphone technology. He represented the founders of the dating app Tinder in litigation that resulted in a $441 million settlement paid to his clients and defended Pinterest against claims brought by a purported co-founder. He secured summary judgment for OpenAI against the first-ever defamation claim arising from generative AI output. And he is representing one of the world's largest technology companies in multidistrict antitrust litigation.

Connor serves as Co-Chair of the firm's First Amendment and Free Expression practice group and regularly represents clients in First Amendment litigation, especially defamation defense. He co-led the team that secured a preliminary injunction requiring the White House to restore access to CNN, MS NOW, and Politico after the administration banned those news outlets from the White House grounds. He argued the anti-SLAPP motion and won complete dismissal with prejudice of a $100 million defamation lawsuit brought by Sean "Diddy" Combs against NBCUniversal and Peacock. Before joining the firm, Connor served as a member of the trial team in one of the largest defamation suits ever tried.

Connor is a co-author of "Defamation and Reputation Management in the United States" for the global research platform Lexology and co-hosts the firm's regular webinar on developments in First Amendment jurisprudence. He also works on behalf of pro bono clients in connection with immigration matters, First Amendment rights, and LGBTQIA+ issues.

Law360 recognized Connor as a Rising Star in Media & Entertainment. *The American Lawyer* selected him as a finalist for Young Lawyer of the Year in Litigation. He was a member of the team honored with the *Financial Times*' Innovative Lawyers North America 2025 award for Disputes and Litigation. *The American Lawyer* has also recognized him as one of the "Litigators of the Week." *Super Lawyers* consistently names him to its New York Metro "Rising Stars" list for litigation.

Significant representations include:*

Technology Matters

- Secured a complete defense victory for OpenAI at summary judgment against the first-ever defamation claim arising from generative artificial intelligence output.
- Represented the founders, early executives, and employees of the online dating application Tinder in a four-year multibillion-dollar litigation, which settled at the conclusion of a month-long jury trial with the defendants paying Gibson Dunn's

Capabilities

Litigation
Appellate and Constitutional Law
Artificial Intelligence
First Amendment and Free Expression
Intellectual Property
Media, Entertainment, and Technology
Privacy, Cybersecurity, and Data Innovation
Tech and Innovation
Technology Litigation
Trials

Credentials

Education

Yale University - 2013 Juris Doctor
University of Virginia - 2008 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

New York Bar
District of Columbia Bar

Clerkships

US Court of Appeals, DC Circuit, Hon. Thomas B. Griffith, 2014 - 2015
USDC, Southern District of New York, Hon. Katherine Polk Failla, 2013 - 2014

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clients $441 million.

- Won a preliminary injunction on behalf of RealPage, a leading real estate software developer, that bars New York State from enforcing a statute criminalizing the use of RealPage's property management software.
- Defended Pinterest against a breach of implied contract claim brought by a purported co-founder who alleged she had created the company's technology product.
- Defending a global technology company in multidistrict antitrust litigation.
- Counseled a cryptocurrency company on contract terms and free-speech protections regarding social media promotion of crypto products.
- Represented a fintech startup in trade secret litigation against a competitor launched by a departing employee.

Media and Entertainment Litigation

- Argued and won the anti-SLAPP motion, obtaining dismissal with prejudice, in a $100 million defamation lawsuit filed by Sean "Diddy" Combs against NBCUniversal and Peacock arising from the streaming documentary *Diddy: The Making of a Bad Boy*.
- Obtained a preliminary injunction that prohibited the White House from enforcing its ban of CNN, MS NOW, and Politico and their journalists from the White House grounds.
- Won a precedential appellate decision for Warner Bros. Discovery and Sony Pictures Television, reversing the trial court and directing it to grant an anti-SLAPP motion against a defamation claim brought by a prominent television producer arising from the streaming documentary *Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV*.
- Defending Netflix, documentary filmmakers, and others against a defamation claim arising from the documentary series *Reality Check: Inside America's Next Top Model*.
- Representing the former MSNBC host Joy Reid against a defamation claim arising from social media activity.
- Defended a national news network against defamation and product disparagement claims seeking billions of dollars in damages, including a month-long jury trial.
- Represented Mary Trump, the niece of President Donald Trump, in successfully defeating an attempt by the Trump family to prevent the publication of her bestselling family memoir *Too Much and Never Enough*.

Prior to joining Gibson Dunn, Connor was an associate at a firm in Washington, D.C., where he focused on defending news organizations in defamation actions. He was also involved in significant copyright, product liability, and breach of contract actions.

He clerked for the Honorable Thomas B. Griffith of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and the Honorable Katherine Polk Failla of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. In the summer after law school, he served as what is now called a Phillips Fellow in the Office of the Solicitor General at the Department of Justice.

Connor graduated from Yale Law School in 2013, where he was a director of the law school's Supreme Court clinic, an editor of the *Yale Law Journal*, the Executive Editor of the *Yale Journal on Regulation*, and a winner of the Morris Tyler Moot Court competition. Prior to law school, Connor was a strategy and operations consultant for McKinsey & Company. He graduated with distinction from the University of Virginia in 2008, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Connor is admitted to practice in New York and the District of Columbia, and before the United States Supreme Court, the United States Courts of Appeals for the Second, Third,

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Fourth, Sixth, Ninth, and District of Columbia Circuits, and the United States District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York and the District of Columbia.

* *Includes matters Connor handled prior to joining Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher*.

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