

Daily Journal

JULY 1, 2026

2026 TOP LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAWYERS

The annual list of California's top labor and employment lawyers specializing in litigation, PAGA matters, unlawful terminations and workplace investigations.



JESSE A. CRIPPS

**GIBSON, DUNN &
CRUTCHER LLP**

LOS ANGELES

Jesse Cripps has practiced for more than 24 years.

"What drew me to labor and employment law initially was the people I met and connected with early in my career," Cripps said. He worked with mentors in his firm's labor and employment group who, as he describes it, "took me under their wing, helped me develop and gave me meaningful opportunities early on."

One of those opportunities became a turning point. A supervising partner gave Cripps the chance to take his first deposition of a named plaintiff in an employment matter, a moment he still returns to. "To this day, I view plaintiff depositions as one of the most significant events in an employment case because they can shape the factual record, the strategic direction of the case, settlement posture, and trial themes," he said. The experience shaped how he prepares for and approaches litigation.

Much of Cripps' recent work has centered on arbitration enforceability.

In a separate matter, Cripps compelled the individual's claims to arbitration, the case proceeded to a full evidentiary hearing in February 2025, involving meal and rest period claims, off-the-clock claims and related wage and hour allegations. Cripps secured dismissal of all wage and hour claims. "That result was particularly meaningful because it is difficult in any forum, whether before a judge, jury, or arbitrator, to win across the board on so many wage and hour theories," he said. The client, he noted, was thrilled with the

validation of its policies and practices.

Cripps points to the threshold fight over arbitration as a factor that often dictates the shape of an entire case. "Plaintiffs' lawyers are increasingly creative in trying to avoid enforceable arbitration agreements, so those issues require careful briefing, factual development and strategic focus from the outset," he said.

Earlier in his career, Cripps worked on *Dukes v. Wal-Mart*, a matter studied in employment law and class-action jurisprudence. "It is meaningful to have been part of a matter that became part of judicial history and that new lawyers and summer associates still study in law school," he said.

In discrimination and harassment matters at scale, Cripps focuses on developing the record and understanding the client's practices. "Because the arbitration issue can shape the entire case — including whether claims proceed individually or on a broader basis — defense counsel must stay on top of developments and think strategically about arbitration from the beginning of a matter," he said.