

Managing Partner | Providence, RI | Boston, MA

Robert P. Brooks

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Overview

Robert P. Brooks is the firm's Managing Partner as well as a member of the firm's Labor & Employment Group. He represents management in all facets of labor relations and employment law in the public and private sectors.

Bob's years of experience benefit the employers he represents. Bob routinely handles complex labor matters, including successfully representing employers in collective bargaining negotiations across a wide range of industries. Bob is also experienced in representing employers in complex administrative law issues, including wage and hour matters under the Fair Labor Standards Act and OSHA compliance. Bob also routinely and successfully represents employers in employment discrimination matters and counsels employers on day-to-day personnel administration. He is also experienced in conducting studies of the appropriateness of Project Labor Agreements to State and local construction projects and is adept at drafting Project Labor Agreements that meet the needs of all parties involved, working closely with the stakeholders to outline clear terms and conditions, minimizing potential disputes. He is widely respected by the construction trade unions and has the ability to quickly address problems and concerns as they arise to the benefit of the owners and construction contractors we serve.

Bob also frequently lectures to groups and private companies on the many issues facing employers and human resource professionals on a daily basis.

Bob is Immediate Past President of the Board of Governors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence and he is the recipient of the RI Bar Association's Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award, given in recognition for his work with the Boys and Girls Clubs. Bob serves on the AP&S Executive Committee and is a member of its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Experience

- Served as chief negotiator and spokesperson for State of Rhode Island's labor negotiations with Rhode Island Council 94, AFSCME, the State of Rhode Island's largest collective bargaining representative, representing 12,000 State employees as well as the coalition of 17 other bargaining representatives representing other state employees. Successfully negotiated a new three-year collective bargaining agreement, which includes a new health insurance plan which will save the State approximately $14,000,000, as well as concessions on seniority rights used for promotions and for the first time language allowing for performance development plans.
- Served as chief negotiator and spokesman for Construction Industries of Rhode Island ("CIRI"), a multiemployer organization representing the major highway and road builders in the State of Rhode Island, in collective bargaining negotiations with Teamsters, Local Union No. 251. Led the successful negotiation of three new 3-year collective bargaining agreements covering CIRI's Heavy Highway Construction, Ready Mix Concrete and Attenuator agreements.
- Represented the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Commissioner of Education in collective bargaining

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negotiations with the Providence Teachers' Union following the Commissioner of Education's takeover of the Providence Public School District. Served as chief negotiator and lead spokesman in the successful negotiation of a 3-year agreement which included numerous concessions aimed at improving teacher performance and improving student educational outcomes.

- Successful completion of collective bargaining negotiations on behalf of the R.I. Convention Center with Rhode Island Laborers' District Council on behalf of Local Union 271, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 99 and Plumbers & Pipefitters Union, Local No. 51. All three contracts were negotiated over a short timeframe with minimal wage and benefit increases.
- Successfully represented one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the world, National Grid, which provides gas and electric service to customers in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island in a grievance arbitration with United Steelworkers, Local 12431 in defense of the company's decision to terminate an employee for using an inappropriate racial epithet when referring to a co-worker.
- Successfully defended a grievance arbitration on behalf of one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the world which provides gas and electric service to customers in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island. The union representing a design engineer with 22 years of seniority who had been terminated for running an outside business from his company computer sought the employee's reinstatement, along with back pay and benefits. The arbitrator determined that the employee's termination was for just cause, and that the employee's termination, despite the lack of any prior discipline, was justified under the circumstances.
- Represented a textile manufacturer in Massachusetts that was facing the possible shutdown of its operation due to economic circumstances. Bob developed a strategy for collective bargaining negotiations with the union and represented the employer as the chief spokesperson at the bargaining table. Collective bargaining negotiations were concluded without a work stoppage and the employer achieved its goals, including wage and benefit concessions and strengthening management's rights as set forth in the collective bargaining agreement.

Credentials

Practices

- Labor & Employment
- Government Relations
- Hospitality
- Cannabis

Education

- Suffolk University Law School (J.D., 1987)
- Rhode Island College (B.A., 1982)

Admissions

- Rhode Island
- Massachusetts
- U.S. District Court, District of Rhode Island
- U.S. District Court, District of Massachusetts
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

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Honors

- Selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America®* 2007-2027 editions in the field of Labor and Employment Law.
- Selected as a Rhode Island *Super Lawyer*, 2007-2026.
- Professional Excellence in the Law, Labor and Employment, *Rhode Island Monthly*, 2019 – 2026.
- Selected in 2022. 2023, 2024 and 2025 as one of the 500 Leading Corporate Employment Lawyers by *Lawdragon*.
- Selected as a "Go To Lawyer" for Labor & Employment, Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly, October, 2021. RI Lawyers Weekly Go To Lawyer.
- Benchmark Litigation, Labor & Employment Star, 2021.
- *Best Lawyers'* 2012, 2014 and 2019 Lawyer of the Year, Labor Law- Management, Providence.
- Named in 2019 as one of the "Top 100 Most Powerful Employment Attorneys in the Nation" by *Lawdragon Magazine* and *Human Resource Executive.*
- Named in 2012 – 2018 as one of the "Top 20 Most Powerful Labor Attorneys in the Nation" by *Lawdragon Magazine* and *Human Resource Executive*.
- Recognized in *Chambers USA America's Leading Business Lawyers* in the area of Labor and Employment Law.
- AV rated by *Martindale-Hubbell*, its highest rating for attorneys.

Seminars/Publications

- Quoted, RI Lawyers Weekly, Management-side lawyers scrutinize vaccine mandate, September 23, 2021.
- Quoted, Providence Business News, Many Rhode Island companies struggle with question of vaccine mandates, August 30, 2021.
- Presenter, Virtual Hearings: Best Practices and Lessons Learned, 21st Annual Labor Arbitration Conference, November, 2020.
- Presenter, Solving the Puzzle of Just Cause in Labor Arbitrations, American Arbitration Association, July, 2020.
- Presenter, Marijuana and Your Workforce: What You Need to Know, Occupational and Environmental Health Center of RI, June 2019.
- Co-Author, Leave Laws: Rhode Island, Practical Law Labor & Employment, Thomson Reuters, 2018.
- Co-Author, Independent Contractors: Rhode Island, Practical Law Labor & Employment, Thomson Reuters, 2018.
- Co-Author, Background Check Laws: Rhode Island, Practical Law Labor & Employment, Thomson Reuters, 2018.
- Co-Author, Non-Compete Laws: Rhode Island, Practical Law Labor & Employment, Thomson Reuters, 2018.
- Contributing Editor, *Practical Law Company*, Rhode Island State Q&A Surveys for the following areas of Labor & Employment Law:
  - Anti-discrimination Laws – July, 2014
  - Leave Laws – July, 2014
  - Leave Policy Language – October, 2013
  - Drug Testing Laws – July, 2013
  - Wage and Hour Laws – August, 2013
  - Non-compete Laws – August, 2013
  - Trade Secret Laws – August, 2013
- *Inside The Minds Series, Complying With Employment Regulations*, "Understanding Key New Employment Regulations," Aspatore Books 2012.

Professional Affiliations

- Rhode Island Bar Association's Labor Law Committee, and served as its chair for one year.
- Member, American Bar Association.

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In The Community

- Board Member, Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council.
- Past President, Boys & Girls Club of Providence.
- Member, East Greenwich Zoning Board.
- 2003 Graduate Leadership Rhode Island.

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