

Ketul D. Patel

Partner

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Ketul Patel defends California employers against wage-and-hour class actions and employment litigation — from single-plaintiff disputes to complex multi-party matters — turning courtroom wins and proactive compliance into measurable protection for their workforce and bottom line.

Ketul represents employers across the full spectrum of California employment law, with a particular emphasis on high-stakes litigation, wage-and-hour class actions, and Labor Code compliance. Where other counsel may push toward prolonged disputes, Ketul is known for strategic judgment and efficient resolution — whether that means trying a case to jury verdict or negotiating a practical settlement that serves the client's broader business interests.

Ketul's litigation practice covers single-plaintiff, multi-plaintiff, and class-action matters in both state and federal courts, as well as proceedings before administrative agencies. He defends employers against claims involving discrimination, harassment, retaliation, whistleblower allegations, wrongful termination, failure to accommodate, defamation, breach of contract, and independent-contractor misclassification. His wage-and-hour work spans California-specific Labor Code claims and national class actions, areas where the stakes — and the procedural complexity — are consistently high.

Beyond the courtroom, Ketul advises management on the day-to-day decisions that carry legal risk: leave law compliance, the disability accommodation interactive process, workplace violence prevention, and discipline and termination procedures. He conducts large-scale employment audits to identify potential violations before they become litigation, and he drafts and reviews employee handbooks and other employment-related documents to ensure they reflect current law and actual workplace practice.

Ketul also conducts workplace investigations — a discipline that requires both legal rigor and practical sensitivity — and advises on grievance procedures and workforce risk

Education

- University of San Francisco School of Law (J.D., 2007)
 - Arthur C. Zief Scholar; Articles Editor, *Intellectual Property Law Journal*
- University of California, San Diego (B.S., 2002)

Bar Admissions

- California

management strategies tailored to each client's operational realities. His practice reflects a consistent focus on helping employers build compliance frameworks that reduce exposure over time, not just resolve the immediate dispute in front of them.

Restrictive Covenants, Trade Secrets, and Unfair Competition

Ketul litigates the enforceability of restrictive covenants — noncompetition, non-solicitation, and confidentiality provisions — in both state and federal court, including at the appellate level. He handles the full arc of these disputes: emergency temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction proceedings, trade-secret misappropriation claims under the Defend Trade Secrets Act and the California Uniform Trade Secrets Act, and the choice-of-law and enforceability questions that increasingly decide their outcome.

He has particular command of California's controlling statutes — Business and Professions Code sections 16600, 16600.5, and 16601, and Labor Code section 925 — and of how California's strong public policy against restraints on the practice of a profession interacts with out-of-state forum-selection and choice-of-law clauses. That work spans both sides of the question: counseling employers on drafting covenants that are enforceable and defensible, and litigating the validity, scope, and geographic reach of covenants when they are challenged.

Select Experience

- Cross-border enforceability of restrictive covenants — federal appeal
- Lead appellate counsel challenging the injunction against an insurance-brokerage professional. Briefed the appeal on the grounds that California law governs and voids the covenants under Business and Professions Code sections 16600 and 16600.5; that the sale-of-business exception (section 16601) did not save covenants tied to the end of employment and reaching beyond the business sold; that Labor Code section 925 is a forum rule that cannot revive a covenant substantive California law voids; and that the injunction independently failed Rule 65(d)'s specificity requirement. This case was significant because it was a cross-border choice-of-law dispute testing the extraterritorial reach of California's 2024 noncompete statute (section 16600.5) against an out-of-state choice-of-law clause; multi-state covenant; matter pending before a federal court of appeals.
- Defense counsel leading the opposition to class certification of a national restaurant chain with several locations throughout California and the United States. Ketul developed the evidentiary record showing that the plaintiffs' theory turned on individualized questions (variation in local scheduling, manager practices, and actual break-taking) rather than any uniform companywide policy, and defeated commonality and predominance.
- Represented an international transportation company where a former employee sued under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, alleging sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and race discrimination arising out of her employment and separation. Ketul moved for summary judgment on all three claims — establishing that the alleged harassment was not severe or pervasive as a matter of law, and that the employer had legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons for the challenged employment decisions that the plaintiff could not show were pretextual under the *McDonnell Douglas* framework. The court granted summary judgment on every claim,

disposing of the entire case in the employer's favor without trial and eliminating the client's exposure to a jury and to FEHA fee-shifting.

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

Professional Affiliations

- CMCP Ambassador's Council, 2024-2025
- Fellow, South Asian Bar Association Leadership Institute, 2023

Accolades

- *Southern California Super Lawyers*®, "Rising Stars," 2015-2017

Dorsey Work Watch

October 12, 2026

Who Can Be Sued Under California Labor Code § 1102.5? California Court of Appeal Draws the Line

February 17, 2026

Ketul Patel Joined Dorsey & Whitney as Partner in Labor & Employment Group