

# Christopher J. Leopold

## OF COUNSEL

chris.leopold@stinson.com

Direct: 816.691.3253

Office: Kansas City



**Chris is a strong advocate for his clients who emphasizes solving problems before they spiral out of control.**

Chris defends employee welfare benefit and pension plans and their sponsors from claims related to the administration of the plan. This includes claims for breach of fiduciary duty, benefits due, and errors in the administration of the plan, including violations of the Department of Labor (DOL) claims regulations. The claims often arise under ERISA, but the case can also involve claims related to benefits not covered by ERISA, such as executive severance plans and claims under ERISA-exempt benefit plans. These claims may include allegations of bad faith or vexatious refusal of the claim for benefits. He also assists his clients with audits and investigations of their benefit plans conducted by the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA), an agency of the DOL.

In the context of business disputes regarding insurance coverage, Chris helps clients in the claims process, and advocates for them, going to court if necessary.

Chris also represents and assists employers in cases under federal and state harassment and discrimination laws, and related state and federal employment laws.

## PRACTICES & INDUSTRIES

Business Policyholder Insurance Coverage  
Business Litigation  
Employee Benefits Litigation

## ADMISSIONS

Kansas  
Missouri  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit  
U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas  
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri  
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri  
U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado  
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin

## EDUCATION

Northwestern University, J.D., 1999

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## EXPERIENCE

University of Kansas, B.A., 1996

Chris has defended employee health and welfare benefit plans, their sponsors, and their insurers from numerous lawsuits brought by benefit plan participants that sought to recover benefits or to obtain injunctive relief, including claims for improper denial of benefits, breach of fiduciary duty, and violations of claims handling regulations.

He assisted and advised clients with claims related to alleged excessive fees and improper investment alternatives in 401(k) pension plans.

He has counseled and represented benefit plan sponsors and service providers in investigations and audits by the EBSA.

He has defended clients against claims under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA).

He has advised employers on administration of claims under executive severance plans and defended them in subsequent arbitrations and lawsuits.

He represented a retirement account custodian from class action claims related to alleged mismanagement of assets under its control.

He has counseled plan sponsor clients with disputes with their plan service providers.

## PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Kansas Bar Association

The Missouri Bar

Volunteer Attorney Project

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

## PUBLICATIONS

DOL Settlements Remind Employers to Avoid Collecting

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Premiums Until Evidence of Insurability is Approved

06.27.2024

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