

Christopher J. Leopold

He/Him

OF COUNSEL

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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, including breach of fiduciary duty, and claims for benefits due under the terms of the plans, including cases with class action allegations. 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, which may arise under state law. 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 Department of Labor.

In the context of business disputes regarding insurance coverage related to business operations, Chris helps business clients submit claims to their insurance carriers and advocates for them, going to court if necessary. He also advises on issues related to potential claims for bad faith, vexatious refusal, or other state law claims related to improper denial of claims.

Chris also represents and advocates for employers in cases under federal and state harassment and discrimination laws, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and state and federal wage and hour laws, including collective actions under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

PRACTICES & INDUSTRIES

Business Policyholder Insurance Coverage
Business Litigation
Employee Benefits Litigation

ADMISSIONS

Missouri, 1999
Kansas, 2000
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit

EDUCATION

Northwestern University, J.D., 1999
University of Kansas, B.A., 1996

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EXPERIENCE

Chris has defended numerous lawsuits on behalf of employee benefit plans, their sponsors, and their insurers, seeking to recover benefits or to obtain injunctive relief related to alleged errors in plan administration, including improper denial of benefits.

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

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

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

He has represented clients against claims under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.

He has obtained appellate court reversal of several district court decisions on benefits due claims in welfare benefit plans.

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

He sued property insurers that denied coverage for property/business interruption insurance claims by a refinery that had lost more than \$100 million in losses after a catastrophic flood.

He filed suit against general liability insurers that denied defense cost coverage for a putative class action seeking tens of millions of dollars that resulted in recovery of substantial defense costs for the policyholder.

PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Kansas Bar Association

The Missouri Bar

Volunteer Attorney Project

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

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