



## Laura A. Rideout

Partner

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207.791.3000

Laura is a member of the firm's Employment Law and Litigation practice groups. Recognized as a "Rising Star" in her field of practice, Laura implements a thoughtful yet aggressive approach to her work, helping clients find unique ways to resolve legal issues to best fit their needs.

As a member of the firm's Employment Law team, she regularly advises employers on a wide range of issues, including anti-discrimination laws, FMLA, FLSA, ADA compliance, as well as other laws that impact her clients across industries. Laura often assists clients in drafting employee handbooks and policies, conducting anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training, investigating pre-litigation employment-related claims, and advising on a variety of issues ranging from sensitive personnel decisions to other compliance-related matters.

A seasoned litigator, Laura regularly represents clients in claims before administrative bodies and in state and federal court in each of the jurisdictions where she is admitted to practice. She has significant experience defending clients in cases involving allegations of wage-and-hour violations, whistleblowing, discrimination, and sexual harassment.

Laura's extensive litigation experience extends beyond her employment-related focus. She also represents clients in a wide range of other matters, including real estate litigation, commercial disputes, and non-employment disability discrimination claims. She is skilled at preparing cases for trial but is also experienced in representing clients at mediation and negotiating settlement agreements as appropriate.

Laura is a member of Preti Flaherty's Recruitment and Professional Development Committees. A Maine native, Laura resides in the Portland area with her husband and two sons.

### Admissions

- Maine
- Massachusetts
- U.S. District Court, District of Maine
- U.S. District Court, District of Massachusetts

### Services

- [Employment Law](#)
- [Litigation](#)

## Education

- University of Maine School of Law (J.D., *with honors*)
- University of California Davis (B.A., *with honors*)

## Professional Activities

- Maine State Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Human Resources Association of Southern Maine

## Honors & Recognition

- *Super Lawyers* Rising Star (2016-2020)
- Recognized by *Best Lawyers in America* as "One to Watch" for Labor and Employment Management Law and Labor and Employment Litigation in the Portland, Maine, region - 2021, 2022

# Representative Matters

## EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

### General Employment Law Matters—represent and counsel employers regarding:

- Interviewing, applications, and hiring
- Employment discrimination
- Employment contracts
- Restrictive covenants
- Independent contractor agreements
- Personnel file issues
- ADA issues
- Pregnancy-related issues
- Employee handbooks, policies and procedures
- Family and Medical Leave Act issues
- State paid leave laws
- Posting and recordkeeping requirements
- Performance evaluations
- Disciplinary actions
- Employment torts
- Severance policies and procedures
- Settlement agreements and releases
- Investigation of workplace harassment matters
- Developing and auditing personnel policies and procedures
- Manager and supervisor training on personnel practices
- Human Resources "help desk" support

### Litigation—represent employers in defending claims before administrative agencies and in court, including:

- Discrimination claims brought under Title VII, ADEA, the ADA, or comparable state law, including race, age, sex, religion, disability, national origin, and sexual orientation discrimination

- Sex harassment and other harassment/hostile work environment
- Family and Medical Leave Act interference and retaliation
- Fair Labor Standards Act and Wage and Hour
- Wage Payment and Collection Law
- Wrongful Discharge
- Enforcement of Restrictive Covenants
- Whistleblower Retaliation

**Workplace Safety and Health—represent and counsel employers regarding:**

- COVID-19 related workplace safety issues, including compliance with OSHA General Duty Clause

**Mergers & Acquisitions:**

- Perform labor and employment due diligence and report on risk

**Representative Litigation Matters:**

- Defended healthcare industry client in race and national origin discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended healthcare industry client in religious discrimination claim by unsuccessful job applicant.
- Defended engineering industry client in disability discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended hospitality industry client in race discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended childcare industry client in race discrimination claim by former employee who resigned from employment.
- Defended energy industry client in sex discrimination and whistleblower retaliation claims by terminated employee.
- Defended manufacturing industry client in wage claim by former employee who resigned from employment.
- Defended restaurant industry client in sex discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended forestry industry client in sex discrimination and harassment claims by terminated employee.
- Defended retail and design industry client in disability discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended finance industry client in age and disability discrimination claims by current employee.
- Defended shellfish industry client in whistleblower retaliation claim by terminated employee.
- Defended energy industry client in sexual orientation discrimination claim by former who resigned from employment.
- Defended manufacturing industry client in racial harassment and discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended healthcare industry client in racial harassment and discrimination claim by terminated employee.
- Defended public official in sex discrimination claim by terminated state employee.

**OTHER REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE**

- Defended education client in misrepresentation and breach of contract claim brought by student and prevailed at bench hearing.
- Defended healthcare industry client in ADA Title III public accommodation disability discrimination claim.
- Defended correctional healthcare industry client in ADA Title III public accommodation disability discrimination claim.
- Prevailed on motion to dismiss nine-count complaint alleging tort and contract claims in pandemic-related commercial dispute between special event industry service providers.
- Represented clients in achieving successful resolution of anti-terrorism case against large producer of bananas brought by family members of U.S. citizens kidnapped and killed by guerrillas in Colombia. Lead role in facilitating production of discovery and preparing fact and expert witnesses for depositions and trial as well as taking and defending depositions.
- Represented client in commercial dispute with contractor in case involving remediation in accordance a Nuclear Regulatory Commission-approved decommissioning plan in order to achieve license termination. Claims against the contractor involved escalating change orders and failure to complete the work within the projected timeline and budget and in accordance with the appropriate degree of skill.
- Represented clients in premise liability and other personal injury claims.
- Represented client in defense of town administrative action involving violations of shoreland zoning requirements. This involved advising the client regarding the town's administrative process and negotiating a consent agreement with town officials to obtain favorable resolution of the outstanding violations.
- Represented clients before town administrative bodies in support of and in opposition to various permit applications or projects.
- Represented clients before Maine's Land Use and Planning Commission, including drafting permit application packages, retaining and interfacing with consultants, and interpreting Commission rules and regulations and crafting successful legal arguments to advance client objectives in the face of NIMBY opposition.
- Represented clients before town administrative bodies to obtain subdivision approval.
- Represented client in defense of RCRA citizen suit involving mercury-contaminated sediments and biota in one of New England's largest river systems and estuary. This multi-phase litigation involved a month-long trial in federal district court in Maine and testimony from twenty-two witnesses in various technical disciplines related to contaminated sediment such as fate and transport, stable isotope analysis, marsh geochemistry, biology, and remediation engineering.
- Represented client in CERCLA and toxic tort litigation involving the emerging contaminant PFAS and extensive groundwater contamination.
- Oversaw and advised client regarding portfolio of contaminated sites across the country and participated in cooperating parties group allocation negotiations in connection with state-ordered remediation.
- Represented client in toxic tort litigation involving copper exposure in drinking water and obtained favorable pre-trial settlement.
- Advised client during implementation of state-ordered remediation plan and successfully petitioned state for a "contained-out" determination pursuant to EPA guidance.
- Obtained favorable pre-suit resolution of case involving toxic tort claims associated with a home heating oil spill.
- Provide yearly comprehensive summary to Maine client regarding statutory and regulatory environmental requirements applicable to their business operations.

## News

August 19, 2021

**46 Preti Flaherty Attorneys Selected by Peers for Inclusion in Best Lawyers in America 2022, Including 3 “Lawyers of the Year”**

January 1, 2021

**Preti Flaherty Partnership Announces Promotion of Moppin, Rideout, White to Partner**

October 13, 2020

**Twenty-Two Preti Flaherty Attorneys Selected for Inclusion in 2020 Super Lawyers**

August 20, 2020

**46 Preti Flaherty Attorneys Selected by Peers for Inclusion in Best Lawyers in America 2021, Including 4 “Lawyers of the Year”**

March 2, 2020

**Benchmark Litigation Names Preti Flaherty 2020 “Maine Firm of the Year”**

October 17, 2019

**Twenty-One Preti Flaherty Attorneys Selected for Inclusion in 2019 Super Lawyers**

October 18, 2018

**Twenty-Three Preti Flaherty Attorneys Selected for Inclusion in 2018 Super Lawyers**

October 17, 2017

**Nineteen Preti Flaherty attorneys selected for inclusion in 2017 Super Lawyers**

October 21, 2016

**17 Preti Flaherty Attorneys Recognized by Super Lawyers**

March 15, 2016

**Ken Rubinstein & Laura Rideout Author ABA Article on Municipalities Asserting Nullum Tempus**

August 27, 2013

**Preti Attorneys Secure Unanimous Approval for Madrid Township Gravel Pit**

November 9, 2012

**Attorney Laura Rideout Joins Preti Flaherty's Environmental Law Group**

## Press Coverage

January 17, 2021

**Maine blazes workplace trail with earned paid leave requirement**

January 3, 2021

**Should workers wary of COVID-19 vaccines be forced to take one for the team?**

July 11, 2018

## **Bucksport Salmon Farm Clears Hurdle**

February 5, 2018

**Chiquita Settles Antiterrorism Act Case Involving Six U.S. Deaths**

December 7, 2016

**Preti Flaherty Attorneys from Midcoast recognized**

## **Publications**

August 20, 2021

**Understanding the New COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for Healthcare Workers**

August 11, 2021

**New Maine Law Limits Employers' Ability to Request Applicant Criminal History Information**

July 12, 2021

**The Latest from OSHA on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 at Work**

June 15, 2021

**Six Take-Aways from EEOC's Updated COVID-19 Guidance**

March 1, 2021

**Court Upholds Maine Employers' Discretion Not to Pay for Unused Vacation Time**

November 13, 2020

**How to comply with Maine's new paid leave law**

June 21, 2018

**Peer-Reviewed Articles Are Facially Reliable. Not?**

*ABA Toxic Torts and Environmental Law Committee News*

February 12, 2018

**Environmental Alert: EPA Enforcement Year in Review 2017**

*Environmental Alert*

February 9, 2018

**Environmental Alert: EPA Bumps Up Civil Penalties**

*Environmental Alert*

December 5, 2017

**Environmental Alert: Upcoming Maine VRAP Application Fee Increase**

*Environmental Alert*

March 16, 2017

**Environmental Alert: EPA and OSHA Civil Penalty Limits Increase for 2017**

*Environmental Alert*

December 27, 2016

**Environmental Alert: 2016 OSHA Year in Review**

*Environmental Alert*

March 15, 2016

## **Time Does Not Run Against the King — But What About The Prince? When Municipalities Can Assert Nullum Tempus**

*Under Construction, Vol 17. No 4.*

## **Raising the Bar**

# RAISING THE BAR

Laura has been recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America* as "One to Watch" in 2020, a designation given to attorneys who, early in their careers, show outstanding professional excellence. Recognition for this honor is completely based upon peer review. We sat down with Laura to discuss how her practice has evolved since she began her career and what she thinks makes a good attorney.

### **How has your practice evolved from when you started out?**

I began my career at Preti Flaherty as a rising 2L in law school as a summer associate. I came back for a second summer and started with the firm full time in September 2012. I started out with a relatively diverse litigation practice. That part really hasn't changed, though in recent years I am focusing heavily on employment litigation and advising clients when they confront issues related to their workforce. A significant part of my practice is assisting clients across industries as they navigate the laws and regulations that impact them as employers. I have also developed a significant trial-oriented skillset and I am at a point in my career where I handle all aspects of developing cases for trial.

### **What skills/talents/methods do you think help you excel in this field?**

Strong interpersonal skills, attention to detail, and pragmatic problem solving. I have the ability to connect with others and make people feel comfortable if they need to talk about a difficult subject matter (i.e., circumstances surrounding a disciplinary action or termination decision or a sexual harassment investigation). Effective communication is also key and I strive to provide clients with the information they need to decisively and confidently make decisions.

### **Where are you most active or visible within your practice area? Is there a specific niche you're known for?**

I cover the gamut of labor and employment law issues, but a particular interest of mine is issues related to working parents. I have spoken on topics including legal requirements that relate to pregnant employees, employees who have welcomed a new child, or employees who are breastfeeding upon return to the workplace. I have also spoken on gender equality at work, including combating implicit bias. Otherwise, a significant portion of my work is assisting clients in responding to and defending discrimination claims brought by current or former employees.

### **How would your clients describe you?**

Attentive, thorough, enjoyable to work with.

### **What do you like best about your practice area?**

One collateral benefit of my practice area is that I get to work with people in many different industries, including retail, hospitality, manufacturing, timber, healthcare, and professional service providers. They are all employers, and they all confront issues related to their workforce, but it is fun and interesting to better understand the inner workings of their individual businesses.

### **How do you start your day?**

Hot lemon water while I drive my kids to day care, the five minute journal, and a couple of americanos as I get started with my work day. Always.

### **When you're able to sneak in a break during the day, where could you be found?**

An outdoor run on a local trail.

### **When it comes to reviewing your own peers, what criteria are important? What makes an attorney stand out?**

I am impressed with other attorneys when they demonstrate that they understand the issues facing their clients, when they are pragmatic, when they look for creative solutions to problems, when they have strong oral advocacy skills, when they are articulate and well-versed in applicable legal standards and requirements, and when they are aggressive but know how far to push the envelope.