

Jackson Lewis Chair: It's A Good Time For Workplace Law

By **Aebra Coe**

Law360 (September 25, 2023, 11:18 AM EDT) -- Even as the wider legal industry experiences a period of declining demand, the needs of clients in workplace law matters have remained robust, leading national workplace law firm Jackson Lewis PC to experience substantial growth, according to firm chair Kevin Lauri.

According to Lauri, Jackson Lewis is currently actively growing and is focused on the future, bringing on its largest ever summer class of associates this year and making plans to do the same next year.

"The overall market in workplace law is continuing to grow," Lauri told Law360 Pulse in a recent interview.

Between 2018 and 2022, Jackson Lewis grew its overall headcount from 819 attorneys to 937, and increased its revenue from \$447 million to \$580 million. At the same time the law firm's profits per partner grew from \$603,000 to \$752,000.

"2023 is shaping up to be another growth year in terms of revenue," Lauri said.

Some of the reasons behind the current influx of business include an increased need among corporations for legal advice on diversity, equity and inclusion matters following the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on race-based admissions policies at universities.

Additionally, Lauri said, immigration counseling related to corporations' employment of workers from overseas has been robust, and demand for legal services around labor law have increased as well.

Organized labor activity in the U.S. has exploded since 2021, according to data from the National Labor Relations Board.

According to the federal agency, unfair labor practice and union representation petitions are set to increase again this year after a near-historic spike in 2022. The increase in cases between 2021 and 2022 was the largest percentage increase since 1976, and if the current pace continues, 2023 may see the second-largest percentage increase in NLRB filings since 1959, the agency reported.

Jackson Lewis represents corporations on the management side in labor relations matters.



Kevin Lauri

According to Lauri, his primary focus is currently on training the next generation of workplace law experts and using that training as one tool to attract and retain talented lawyers.

The law firm didn't have an internal recruiting department five years ago, but now has a team of approximately seven full-time recruiters.

While it has added around 120 lawyers to its overall headcount over the last four years, the growth has not been linear, with a good deal of lateral activity back and forth among labor and employment attorneys in recent years. According to Lauri, the firm has hired just over 100 attorneys this year and, due to attrition, year-over-year growth is around 10 to 15.

When it comes to retention, Lauri said he believes that the key is creating an environment where junior lawyers can learn the ropes from the best workplace lawyers in the field and build their skills.

"We want to create an environment where people feel good about their experience at Jackson Lewis and know they've been trained well, whether they choose to stay here or go elsewhere," he said.

Lauri said he's also learned to embrace flexibility around in-office and remote work in a way he couldn't have imagined a few years ago. The law firm's attorneys are currently asked to go into the office at least three days a week, and that's something he's found to work out well.

"I was a big proponent of getting people back in the office, but I've found we're happy with the current balance," Lauri said. "We're able to provide employees with work-life balance, and they've proven that they can manage working from home — and three days a week is sufficient in terms of mentoring and interaction."

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.