

# Daily Journal

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## LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

What's the point of all this?

Despite being a relatively old practice (the U.S. Department of Labor was created in 1884), labor and employment law continues to develop in significant ways. California has for years led the nation in the development of labor and employment law. Because

of that, California has some of the most experienced practitioners in the nation.

You need no further proof of this than the *Daily Journal's* annual list of Top Labor & Employment lawyers. As you read through these pages you will find attorneys on the plaintiffs' and defense side involved

in every major labor and employment issue of the day. We considered 250 attorneys in compiling a list of 75. We did not include general practitioners, even those who argued marquee labor or employment cases. We wanted this list to be about litigators, and corporate and regulatory specialists.

— The Editors

### TOP 75 LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAWYERS



#### HOWARD A. SAGASER

Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo  
Fresno  
Specialty: Employment

**W**hen he talks about his experience with labor and employment litigation, Sagaser stresses the importance of sticking to one's guns and pushing through tough situations.

"You just have to keep working at it," he said.

Sagaser, a partner at Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo APLC, spe-

cializes in labor law representing management. His clientele is derived primarily from the agricultural sector and includes dairies, cattle ranches, farms and nurseries, a result of his extensive experience in the area.

During his undergraduate studies at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Sagaser received the Agricultural Economics Award and the Outstanding Agricultural Senior Award.

"[My agricultural experience] has allowed me to bond much quicker with farmers and ranchers and gain their respect and trust," he said. "The long hours growing up in production agriculture helped prepare me for the long hours that the practice of law requires."

In one of his most significant cases of the past year, *Maria Gutierrez v. Zacky Farms*, the plaintiff sued over "donning and doffing" of specialized clothing and meal and rest period allegations. As lead counsel for Zacky Farms, Sagaser mediated and resolved the case.

"The Zacky lawsuit was critical to the company's continued existence," he said, adding that they were able to resolve the

matter without exorbitant attorney fees.

Another case, *Antonio Cruz v. Poso Creek Family Dairy LLC*, involved a wage-and-hour class action against Poso Creek Family Dairy. The dairy's employees alleged numerous wage-and-hour and meal and rest period violations.

Sagaser served as lead attorney for the defense and successfully opposed motion for class certification, whereupon he mediated and settled the case.

"I try to remember each case is important to those involved, no matter how big or how small," he said.

In addition to his insistence on perseverance, Sagaser says he places a premium on devotion to clients.

"I always try to remember that every case involves people and that what I do has a significant impact on all the parties' lives," he said. "I also try to make myself available to my clients, as lawyers are service providers, and communication with the client and opposing counsel is important."

— Zack Smith