



Kate Ulrich Saracene

Partner, Chair, Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation, and Deputy General Counsel

Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation

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Kate Saracene speaks HR. Having spent a dozen years as a human resources (HR) and labor relations professional at Xerox, she knows what walking in her clients' shoes is like. Clients count on her to assist them throughout the life cycle of the employment relationship, from hiring to firing and everything in between. But Kate's national reputation was built on her deep knowledge of health and welfare employee benefit plans, third-party benefits administration, multiple employer health plan arrangements and Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA) trusts. She is the leader of the firm's Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation practice.

Where benefits and employment law intersect

Kate is known nationally as a thought leader in health and welfare plan benefits. She regularly helps clients that sponsor, insure or administer health and welfare and fringe benefit plans, including group medical, dental and vision plans, flexible spending accounts, health reimbursement arrangements, dependent care assistance programs, cafeteria plans, wellness programs and paid family leave, among others.

For plan sponsors and administrators, Kate assists with everything from plan design and strategy to day-to-day administration and funding. She regularly helps clients with large-scale projects, like the establishment of on-site medical clinics, the conversion to self-funding or restructuring of overfunded VEBA trusts. She also assists with health and welfare plan issues that arise in connection with corporate mergers and acquisitions.

For insurers, third-party administrators, and health care providers engaged in direct contracting with employer plans, Kate assists with product development, delivery, operations and compliance. Kate also works with numerous industry associations, school districts and municipalities regarding the formation and operation of multiple employer benefit plans, and with both employers and unions regarding collective bargaining for employee benefits.

Kate's in-house background gives her valuable insight into day-to-day benefits and employment issues. Human resources managers are often

Practices

- Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation
- Employment Litigation and Counseling
- Health and Welfare and Fringe Benefit Plan Compliance, Administration and Funding
- Litigation
- Privacy, Data and Cybersecurity
- Retirement Plan Governance, Investment and Asset Management
- Transactional Tax Planning

Education

- JD, Yale Law School
- BS, Cornell University

Bar Admissions

- New York
- Illinois

Court Admissions

- US District Court, Western District of New York
- US District Court, Northern District of New York

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faced with issues that cross over different areas of law, including labor and employment, ERISA, tax and state insurance laws. Kate is adept at untangling the issues that arise at the intersection of these differing mandates. If an employee becomes disabled, for instance, she can help the employer to navigate questions around private disability insurance, state temporary disability benefits, federal Social Security Disability insurance, accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, protections under a collective bargaining agreement, time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act and state leave laws. Wellness programs, another area of focus for Kate, can require compliance with nine different federal laws that overlap the areas of labor and employment, ERISA, tax and privacy regulations.

She has worked with clients of all sizes and in a multitude of industries and has accumulated a wealth of experience working with clients in health care, K-12 education and manufacturing. Kate brings to bear her dozens of years of experience in HR, labor and employment law and benefits to craft advice and solutions that are both practical and efficient for the clients implementing them.

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *The Legal 500 United States*
 - Recommended Attorney, 2019
- *Crain's New York Business*
 - Notable Women in Law, 2022

News

- Katten Draws Benefits and Executive Compensation Pro Meredith Sheldon O'Leary (August 13, 2025)
- Katten Team Advises Chicago White Sox on Long-Term Ownership Investment Agreement (June 6, 2025)
- Katten Represents Airtron in Acquisition of Viccarone (May 15, 2025)
- Katten Represents Airtron in Acquisition of Tucson Peach (May 14, 2025)
- Katten Represents Airtron in Acquisition of Sierra Air Conditioning (March 10, 2025)

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- Katten Team Represents Perdoceo Education Corporation in Acquisition of University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (December 20, 2024)
- Katten Represents POWER Engineers, Incorporated in Sale to WSP Global Inc. (August 13, 2024)
- Katten Represents Buyer Group in Majority Stake Purchase of Charlotte Hornets (September 6, 2023)
- Katten Expands Employee Benefits Practice With New ERISA Partner (February 9, 2023)
- Partner Kate Ulrich Saracene Named to 2022 'Notable Women in Law' List by *Crain's New York Business* (December 27, 2021)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center (November 10, 2021)
- Katten Attorneys Help Drive \$3.2 Billion US Car Dealership Deal (October 6, 2021)
- Kate Ulrich Saracene Discusses the Importance of Career Flexibility With *The Glass Hammer* (January 14, 2020)
- Katten Grows Employee Benefits Practice with Mitchel Pahl (January 7, 2020)
- Katten Praised in The Legal 500 United States 2019 Guide (June 11, 2019)
- Kate Saracene Featured in Law360 (December 7, 2017)
- Katten Adds to Its Employee Benefits Practice With Addition of Partner Kate Ulrich Saracene (November 27, 2017)

Publications

- QPAM Exemption Initial Notification Deadline Nearing (August 21, 2024)
- Q&A – FTC Rule Banning Non-Competes With Workers (April 25, 2024)
- Women on the Move 2023: Navigating the Path to Your Success (December 2023)
- See Katten's Model Clawback Policy as Mandatory Rules Take Effect (October 2, 2023)
- Capital Markets Update in Brief (February 15, 2023)
- *Capital Markets Compass* | Issue 5 (February 15, 2023)

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- FTC Proposes Rule Banning Non-Competes With Workers (January 18, 2023)
- Privacy and Employment Issues for New York Schools: Are You Prepared for a Switch to More Remote Learning? (October 2, 2020)
- Privacy for Schools: Key eLearning Considerations (May 20, 2020)
- The CARES Act Stimulus Bill: Tax Changes to Improve Liquidity for Businesses, Assist Employers and Stimulate the Economy (April 6, 2020)
- Congress CARES About Employee Benefits (April 3, 2020)
- The Code to the Rescue! Leveraging the Internal Revenue Code to Help Employees During the COVID-19 Crisis (March 31, 2020)
- The CARES Act From a Health CARE Perspective (March 30, 2020)
- COVID-19 Considerations for Employers (March 23, 2020)
- COVID-19: Families First Coronavirus Response Act (March 20, 2020)
- Industry Regulators Implement Big Changes to Support Telehealth During COVID-19 (March 20, 2020)
- Fast Approaching Deadlines for Sexual Harassment Prevention Training By Employers Under New York State and New York City Laws (September 19, 2019)
- Are Your Qualified and Nonqualified Employee Benefit Plans in Compliance With the New ERISA Disability Claims Regulations? (March 14, 2018)
- Issues for Compensation Committees to Consider When Grappling With Changes to 162(m) and the Death of the Performance-Based Compensation Exemption (January 18, 2018)
- New York's Family Leave Act Differs in Key Respects From Federal Law (August 25, 2017)
- Nextpert: Affordable Care Act Reporting Deadlines Draw Near (February 27, 2016)
- ACA: Health Insurance Exchanges and the Future of COBRA (June 18, 2014)
- What's New With the Affordable Care Act? (August 2013)
- ACA Checkup Can Help Keep Firm Healthy (April 8, 2013)
- What To Look for in Health Care Reform Mandates Next January (March 15, 2013)

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Presentations and Events

- Women on the Move 2024: Building Your Brand (October 15, 2024) | *Panelist | Overcoming Obstacles in Building Your Legal Brand – Navigating Biases*
- Women on the Move 2023: Navigating the Path to Your Success (October 18, 2023) | *Panelist | Redefining Success*
- Emerging Privacy Law Issues for Schools in 2020 (July 7, 2020) | *Facilitator*
- Employment Law, Benefits and Related Tax Developments to COVID-19 (March 26, 2020) | *Speaker*
- Compliance Guidance and Enforcement Updates for Patient Assistance and Drug Manufacturer Discount Programs (October 9, 2019) | *Presenter*
- How to Stay Compliant During the Healthcare Reform Storm | Mid-Sized Retirement and Healthcare Plan Management Conference (September 17–20, 2017) | *Presenter | Employee Wellness Programs: What Employers Need To Know To Comply With the New Regulations | Choosing the Right Account-Based Health Plans: Tricks, Traps and Tradeoffs of FSAs, HSAs and HRAs | Pre Conference Tutorial: Fiduciary Obligations Under ERISA*
- The Uncertain Future of the ACA: What's Next for Employers? | Mindfulness as a Path to Wellness | Mid-Sized Retirement and Healthcare Plan Management Conference (June 14–17, 2017) | *Presenter | Employee Wellness Programs: What Employers Need To Know To Comply With the New Regulations | Choosing the Right Account-Based Health Plans: Tricks, Traps and Tradeoffs of FSAs, HSAs and HRAs*
- Rewarding Healthy Behaviors Forum–World Congress (February 7–8, 2017) | *Co-Presenter | EEOC Status Update on Wellness Program Regulations*