

Katten's Employment Group Prevails Before the Illinois Supreme Court in Whistleblower Action

December 9, 2014

The Illinois Supreme Court awarded victory to Precision Alliance Group, represented by Katten Employment Law and Litigation attorneys Julie Gottshall and Laura Waller, in a lawsuit involving a claim for wrongful discharge in violation of public policy. In the case, three former employees sued Precision, asserting that the company unlawfully terminated them for reporting alleged wrongdoing by the company to a state agency. Following a bench trial, the trial judge found in Precision's favor. The appellate court reversed that decision, entering judgment for the plaintiffs instead.

Katten's team petitioned the Illinois Supreme Court for leave to appeal, becoming one of only seven cases (out of 237 petitions) the highest court agreed to hear last term. In affirming judgment for Precision, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that an employer cannot be held liable in a whistleblower action if the factfinder believes the employer had a legitimate, nonretaliatory reason for the discharge decision. The Court went on to reject the theory, advanced by the plaintiffs' bar in an amicus brief, that more than one proximate cause for termination can exist, such that a wrongful discharge claim can stand if the employer had both a retaliatory motive and a legitimate motive for the dismissals.

CONTACTS

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