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FOCUS



Joe Nullmeyer VP, General Counsel, Mitchell Martin Inc.

A Message From the President

Joe Nullmeyer

Dear ACC Greater Philadelphia Members and Friends:

As the newly elected President of the ACC Greater Philadelphia

Chapter, now in its 41st year, it is an honor and a privilege to serve our 1800+ in-house counsel members. I follow in the footsteps of many outstanding Chapter Presidents who have served before me. In particular, I'd like to thank Lisa Fleischer, our outgoing President, for her commitment, enthusiasm, and guidance in 2023 and for her many years of leadership with the Chapter. Among her many accomplishments, Lisa was instrumental in incorporating health and wellness into many of our programs, oversaw the growth of the Chapter's DEIB initiatives, and ensured the long-term success of our Chapter by leading the Chapter Administrator's succession plan. Lisa will continue to serve the Chapter as Immediate Past President, attending Board and Officer meetings and serving as Executive Chair of our DEIB Committee.

In 2024, we welcome a new Diamond sponsor, Fisher Phillips! Many thanks to Cozen O'Connor for being our Diamond sponsor for many years and they will continue as an Emerald sponsor, along with our other Emerald sponsor, Dechert LLP. Because of the support of our loyal and dedicated sponsors, we have a full calendar of programming, all at no cost to

our members. Please help us to continue to maintain these strong relationships with our sponsors by telling them if you've enjoyed a program that they presented, letting them know that you appreciate their support, and consider engaging them when searching for outside counsel or a service provider.

This year we have over 50 standalone programs planned, ranging from educational opportunities (including our flagship In-House Counsel Conference, practice area institutes, and webinars) to non-educational events (Meet Your Counterparts, sporting events, and other networking opportunities). Our dedicated Officer leadership team is ready to lead the Chapter and support our members. We are fortunate to be supported by a dedicated and talented Board of Directors, group of Practice Area Network/Committee volunteer leaders and our Chapter Administrator. It is with this support that our Chapter continues to be one of the premier chapters of ACC.

Please mark your calendars for our signature events in 2024 (a link to our full calendar is here):

- GC/CLO Summit on March 14th
- In-House Counsel Conference on April $18^{\rm th}$
- Women's Summit on May 15th
- Annual Family Fun Night and Softball Game on July 31st
- Golf & Tennis Outing on September 16th

- Fall Gala on November 7th
- Diversity Summit on December 5th

In 2024, the Chapter will continue to grow our relationship with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania, Inc. Their Lawyers Assistance Program was established in 1988 to provide caring peer assistance to save the lives and restore the health and professional competence of lawyers and judges, members of their extended families, and law students who are at risk as a result of alcohol and drug use, gambling, depression or other serious mental illness. They carry out this mission through a combination of confidential helpline services, volunteer support and education. All services are free and nonobligatory. Their confidential helpline number is 1-888-999-1941.

Be sure to follow the ACC Greater Philadelphia Chapter on LinkedIn! It's a great way to engage with the Chapter and stay up to date on our programming. And please like, share, and interact with the Chapter's posts!

Finally, if you have any ideas on ways to improve our programming or would like to get more involved, you can always reach me directly at joe.nullmeyer@itmmi.com or 215.383.0490. I look forward to seeing all of you at future Chapter events!

Very truly yours, Joe Nullmeyer President, ACC Greater Philadelphia

Reassessing Contractual Relationships in the Post-Pandemic Era

By Michael Witsch and Gabrielle Gesek, Armstrong Teasdale LLP

Standard boilerplate contractual language presents a growing problem in the post-pandemic world as breach of contract lawsuits remain on the rise. The pandemic has brought commercial agreements into sharper focus and has led many parties to reevaluate their obligations under such agreements.¹

Pre-pandemic, few drafters and signatories properly anticipated the impact of a global pandemic when entering into standard-form agreements or agreements with boilerplate clauses.² As a result, the legal industry is seeing a significant uptick in breach of contract lawsuits ranging from class actions to lawsuits against companies for issuing agreements for season passes, monthly memberships, tuition, insurance policies and special events.³

The pandemic disrupted global economic activity by rendering performance impossible for many companies while evaporating income and new opportunities for others. Commercial agreements were reassessed based on need, and businesses sought to reduce their exposure via strict reading of existing contracts or emergency talks with their contracting partners.⁴

Although courts are seeing an increase in contractual disputes, in the early days of the pandemic, parties were reluctant to seek judicial intervention as there was little case precedent as to how courts would interpret contractual issues of first impression. While many companies negotiated resolutions privately to avoid the unchartered judicial territory, courts have since addressed force majeure and related issues in the COVID-19 context. New York courts, for example, interpret force majeure provisions narrowly, and they are also typically reluctant to

excuse a party of its obligations under a valid and binding contract based on related common-law doctrines, such as impossibility and frustration of purpose.⁵

The formal judicial or arbitral interpretation of contracts is still to be decided in many recent cases, as disputes have commenced recently and remain pending. Now that the pandemic has ended, however, companies should review their contractual and commercial relationships to ensure they are aware of current and future obligations and the presence of a force majeure clause, concepts like frustration and waiver, material adverse change provisions and termination clauses.

Moving forward, companies should consider the following:

1. Review all current contractual obligations and relationships.

Gather and review copies of contracts to assess what rights and remedies are available and what current obligations exist. Reviewing contracts is a highly fact-specific exercise and parties should consider whether the underlying contract is in fact breached, whether the COVID-19 outbreak is a force majeure event excusing non-performance under the contract's clause as written, and whether notice to the counterparties is required.⁶ Parties should carefully observe any procedure the contract requires to claim force majeure or risk losing the right altogether.⁷

2. Draft new boilerplate contractual language.

Review each new potential contract under the lens of risk management and risk

allocation. Although a future global crisis cannot be precisely predicted, the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear force majeure clauses must be carefully constructed.

Revisit previously drafted force majeure clauses and redraft the "boilerplate" language to explicitly identify and describe qualifying events, exclusions to those events, and any desired prerequisites to seeking relief, such as notice or diligence requirements.

Legal departments engaged in this exercise may also benefit from consulting the comprehensive risk assessments that many businesses have recently conducted in light of recent events. Sorporate drafters should involve litigators, and litigators should seek the input of corporate lawyers for their disputes. Moving forward, parties should consider contractual provisions that set out consequences not only of a future pandemic, but also related implications like national restrictions and health regulations.

These may include express force majeure clauses that respond to both a pandemic and governmental restrictions that may come with it, contractual mechanisms for automatic deferral of performance and extensions of time in a defined set of scenarios, mechanisms to require parties to maintain financial reserves for critical suppliers in order to ensure ongoing performance of key contracts, and exclusions and liability limits.

Parties drafting commercial contracts going forward should stay abreast of developments from cases that remain under adjudication today and utilize the post-pandemic contractual interpretation trends that emerge to develop new drafting language.

 $^{1\ \} New \ Boilerplate \ Needed\ as\ Contract\ Actions\ Heat\ Up, \\ \underline{https://news.bloomberglaw.com/bloomberg-law-analysis/analysis-new-boilerplate-needed-as-contract-actions-heat-up}$

² *Id*.

³ *Id*.

⁴ Rethinking commercial contracts post COVID-19, https://www.financierworldwide.com/qa-rethinking-commercial-contracts-post-covid-19

⁵ *Id*.

⁶ Rethinking commercial contracts post COVID-19, https://www.financierworldwide.com/qa-rethinking-commercial-contracts-post-covid-19

⁷ Id.

⁸ Id.

Board Member Spotlights



Laura Bautista Associate General Counsel The Vanguard Group, Inc.

Current Role with ACCGP: Secretary

What is your favorite part about ACC Greater Philadelphia?

My favorite thing about ACCGP is the people that I've met through the organization.

There are so many talented and kind individuals working in the greater Philadelphia area, and I have enjoyed getting to know them through the fantastic event offerings from ACCGP.

What is your favorite restaurant in Philadelphia?

Without a doubt, it's Parc. The view, the food, and the ambience are perfect every time. But there are a number of other great places too--Barbuzzo, Vedge, Jose Pistola's, Cafe Lift, Laser Wolf, Bar Bombon, and many more!

What is your favorite vacation destination?

We just returned from a trip to Cartagena, Colombia so it's fresh on my mind. It was a dream vacation of bright colors, warm sun, and delicious food!



Yan Ling (Winnie) Wang

Senior Legal Counsel De Lage Landen Financial Services, Inc.

Current Role with ACCGP: Director

What is your favorite part about ACC Greater Philadelphia?

The people! ACC Greater

Philadelphia has a wonderful member base who are so willing to share knowledge and experience within and beyond this community.

What is your favorite restaurant in Philadelphia?

The Restaurant School

What is your go-to karaoke song? Chinese songs

What did you choose law as your profession? To protect, advocate, and empower others

Fun fact about yourself:

I was a radio station DJ for two live shows before I went to law school and I speak four languages.

New and Returning Members

Toma Acholonu

Comcast Corporation

Enid Banton

Braeburn, Inc.

Katharine Batista

Towne Park, LLC

Nola Bencze

GOG Foundation, Inc.

Kerry Bender

Vanguard

Steve Bertil

Wawa, Inc.

Jake Bishop

Vanguard

Bender Brad

Siemens Medical Solutions

USA, Inc.

Sadyhe Bradley

Tara Buckley

Vanguard

Kristyne Bullock Colby

Brentwood Industries. Inc.

Claire Burke

Vanguard

Jose Calves

Pep Boys

Matthew Care

Toll Brothers, Inc.

Katherine Carranza

Bohler Engineering

Clarissa Chenoweth-

Shook

Exelon Business Services

Company, LLC

Winnie Chow

Opex Corporation

Anthony Coletta

Vanguard

Gillian Cooper

Eurofins NSC US, Inc.

Megan Cottone

NuVasive. Inc.

Pamela Crocker

Vanguard

Charles Daum

Ellucian Company LP

Matt Decker

Chubb Group

Maria del Mar Oliva Incyte Corporation

Frank DeSimone

Radial. Inc.

Dave Dobson

Ellucian Company LP

Grace Doe

Zoll Medical Corporation

Matt Doonan

Inspira Health Network

Matthew Draper

Ametek, Inc.

Michael Drayo

Vanguard

Lexie Dressman

De Lage Landen Financial

Services, Inc

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Kerry Dustin

Rockwell Medical, Inc.

Tanya Eliason

Pivot Bio

Katie Elsner

Unisys Corporation

Jaliya Faulkner

The Vanguard Group Inc.

Alexis Fennell

ARAMARK Corporation

Matthew Fradin

Jean Galanos

Xactus

Kristy Gaul

Asurion

Michelle Geller

Unisys Corporation

Alex Gonzalez

Unisys Corporation

Jeffrey Goodman

WSFS Bank

Jordan Green

GHD Group

Courtney Griffin

Vanguard

Andrew Hahm

Penske Transportation

Solutions

Martha Hanna

Campbell Soup Company

Marwa Hassoun

TE Connectivity

John Michael Hickey

Holman Automotive Group,

Inc.

Meghan Hoerner

Cumberland Insurance Group

Kia Holifield Wimmer

Birkenstock USA. LP

Aliya Horne

Unisys Corporation

Richard Howe

Lockheed Martin Corporation

Malvina Iannone

Holman Automotive Group, Inc.

Melissa Jean

Audacy

Michelle Jones

Unisys Corporation

Leah Katz

CSL Behring LLC

Kenneth Katz

Chubb Group

Daniel Kaufmann

Holman Automotive Group, Inc.

Caroline Kavanagh

Automated Financial Systems, Inc.

Jane Kelly

Cencora, Inc.

Jack Kenney

Medrisk, Inc.

Linda Kibbe

Unisys Corporation

Alexandra Kitei

ARAMARK Corporation

Jermy Kolman

BetMGM, LLC

Nathaniel Koonce

Holman Automotive Group,

Gio Laflotte

BigCommerce, Inc

Monica Lawrence

World Travel, Inc.

Vvorid Travel, Inc.

Kenneth Levin

WSP USA Inc.

Rhea Loney

BetMGM, LLC

Aldie Loubier

TJU/Jefferson Health

Jeanine Lutz

B. Braun Medical Inc.

Michelle Joy Magbalon

South Jersey Industries Inc

Chris Manchin

Perseus Management Group

Aaron Maskery

Karuna Therapeutics

Judy Mayer

Inspira Health Network

Nicole McCann

RPM International Inc.

Kathryn Mellinger

Vanguard

Beth Morales Singh

Vanguard

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Christopher Young

Siemens Medical Solutions USA. Inc.

Narda Zuniga

AAA Club Alliance Inc.

In Case You Missed It

2023 Fall Gala

November 2, 2023

ACCGP held our Annual Fall Gala at the Penn Museum on November 2. During this special event, we celebrated ACCGP's administrator Chris Stewart, as she enters retirement. The event featured a live band, delicious food and wonderful toasts to Chris Stewart.























2023 Women's Summit November 14, 2023

Thank you to Anderson Kill, Greenberg Traurig, Ogletree Deakins, Reed Smith, Saul Ewing and Troutman Pepper for speaking at our 2023 Women's Summit. The event was held at the Philadelphia Marriott Old City and featured five educational sessions focused on women's issues in the workforce.



















2023 Diversity Summit

December 6, 2023

Our 2023 Diversity Summit was held on December 6, 2023 at the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History. This year's theme was "DEI Under Siege: Legally Compliant Strategies to Combat the Attack on DEI Initiatives" and programming focused on equipping legal professionals with the tools and knowledge to navigate the complex landscape of challenges posed by these outside forces.





















Holiday Party December 12, 2023

ACCGP held our annual Holiday Party & Board Installation at The Notary Hotel, one of Philadelphia's newest hotels. In addition to installing our 2024 Board of Directors, we also presented the Health, Biotech and Pharm Practice Area Network with the 2023 Committee of the Year Award. Nina Blackshear was the recipient of the Chris Stewart Leadership Excellence Award and Rose Oskanian was awarded the President's Award.













Women's Networking Event February 20, 2024

After the holiday season, everyone deserved a little self-care! ACCGP's women lawyers joined Fisher Phillips for cocktail reception and a "Skincare + Sip" DIY workshop, focused on beauty from the inside + out.









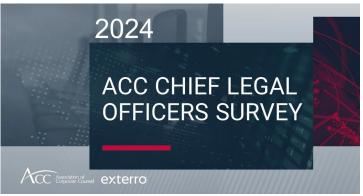


ACC News

ACC CLO Survey - Download Today

The Association of Corporate Counsel, in collaboration with Exterro, is excited to announce the launch of the <u>2024 Chief</u> <u>Legal Officers Survey</u>.

Celebrating its 25th year, this research provides a critical lens into the evolving role of CLOs and how legal departments are adapting to the broader business environment. This year's report is a treasure trove of insights, directly from CLOs themselves, highlighting their expectations, challenges, and opportunities for the year ahead. This comprehensive survey, featuring responses from over 600 CLOs across 20 industries and 31 countries, reveals the intense pressures and challenges confronting legal departments.



ACC365 App Now Available to Download

Your work goes beyond your desktop and now so does the ACC member experience. The brand-new ACC365 app is now available to <u>download</u>. Stay connected and get the ACC experience in the palm of your hand. With one tap, you are plugged into the people, resources, and knowledge that accelerate your career.



Mark your calendars and get ready for the event of the year! The 2024 ACC Annual Meeting is heading to the vibrant city of Nashville, TN, from October 6-9, and you won't want to miss it.

This annual gathering is the world's largest for in-house counsel, attracting thousands of professionals like you for an unforgettable experience.

How HR can guide a workplace through the fraught 2024 election season

By Ginger Christ

Employers should designate a member of the HR team to help with heated conversations, Fisher Phillips recommends.

Any election opens up the possibility for fraught conversations in the workplace, and a presidential election even more so.

To help employers navigate potential turmoil wrought by political differences, law firm Fisher Phillips developed a guide of frequently asked questions.

"We're in a really politically charged environment. That's what makes this so fraught with peril this election cycle," Rick Grimaldi, a partner at Fisher Phillips and one of the guide's authors, told HR Dive.

Be mindful of the law

The First Amendment's free speech guarantee typically doesn't apply to private employers disciplining employees for taking part in prohibited conduct, the Fisher Phillips team wrote.

However, private sector employees in union and nonunion workplaces can engage in concerted activity, which include discussions about higher wages, changes to work schedules and job security, under the National Labor Relations Act.

"Therefore, certain political discussions impacting terms and conditions of employment would fall under the NLRA's purview, while political activity that is unrelated to employment concerns would not be protected," the guide's authors, two partners and an associate at the firm, wrote.

While federal antidiscrimination laws don't directly protect political activity or speech, employers need to be careful when workers' discussions involve race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age or disability, per the guide.

"An employee could claim that [an employer's] action responding to their political discussion on such subjects is actually a proxy for illegal discrimination," the authors wrote.

Be consistent

Employers also must be consistent in how they handle political discussions to avoid the appearance of preferential treatment, the authors said. And they need to check state laws to see if taking action against an employee based on political action is permitted.

The same is true of dress code and appearance policies, the authors said.

"If you don't allow employees to wear 'MAGA' hats in support of Trump, you also shouldn't let them wear hats promoting Biden or any other political candidate. Likewise, you can establish reasonable, consistent limits on posters and other workplace displays, so long as you comply with the NLRA rules," the authors said.

Promote civility

The best — and safest — thing an employer can do is to repeatedly encourage employees to "act civilly and to act with etiquette" when it comes to political discussions, Grimaldi said.

"While you might not be able to stop the conversations altogether, it's important to set expectations on professionalism and appropriate workplace interactions," the authors said.

The guide recommends training managers on how to identify and address heated conversations and designating someone in human resources or on the legal team who managers can call with questions.

In-Transition Membership

If you are a member who is in transition, take advantage of the opportunity to continue your membership **AT NO COST**. ACC will waive dues for existing members for up to one year, and offer a reduced membership rate for up to an additional two years if you are displaced but actively seeking a new in-house position.

[In-Transition/Retired Application] For more information about In-Transition Membership, please visit: https://www.acc.com/membership/become-a-member/in-transition-member.

Retired Membership

Recently retired ACC members may continue their membership at a reduced rate of \$95 annually. You can email membership@acc.com to request an invoice for this great rate, or submit the ln-Transition/Retired Application, and be sure to select the RETIRED option. For more information about Retired Membership, please visit: https://www.acc.com/membership/become-a-member/retired-member.

If you have questions, please contact ACC's membership department at 202.293.4103, ext. 360 or at membership@acc.com.

2024 Upcoming ACCGP Events

Visit ACC Greater Philadelphia for the most current event details or to register for chapter events.

March 14, 2024

GC/CLO Summit

The Union League Philadelphia, PA

March 20, 2024

Meet Your Counterparts with Armstrong Teasdale

> Restaurant School Philadelphia, PA

March 26, 2024

CLE Webinar with BakerHostetler

Webinar

March 27, 2024

Sixers Game with OpenText
SOLD OUT

Wells Fargo Center Philadelphia, PA **April 18, 2024**

16th Annual In-House Counsel
Conference

Pennsylvania Convention Center
Philadelphia, PA

Be on the lookout for calendar updates!

Sponsors for 2024

We thank our 2024 Sponsors for their support of our chapter. Without them, we could not achieve the levels of success that the chapter consistently reaches.

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