

Civil Rights Law Advisory Group

Skadden

Skadden's Civil Rights Law Advisory Group advises private sector entities, educational institutions and nonprofits on complying with civil rights laws, preventing illegal discrimination and promoting fairness and equality in opportunities within their organizations.

Our Services

Proactive Assessments: We conduct proactive, tailored reviews of policies and practices relating to employment, procurement, contracting and other areas to identify potential issues under applicable civil rights laws and regulations and develop risk mitigation strategies. Our focus is on pressure-testing and strengthening governance around such programs and on enhancing safeguards via holistic pre-crisis counseling. Our team also provides regular assistance in the preparation and review of public disclosures, including proxy statements and investor communications, relating to employees, suppliers, customers, vendors, grantees and other stakeholders.

Crisis Management: When controversies erupt, we help companies and boards manage media, government, stakeholder and litigation exposure to protect brand, operations and reputation.

Investigations: In the past several years, we have reviewed numerous highly sensitive employee complaints and whistleblower allegations related to discrimination and retaliation and developed remedies. Our team also excels in representing clients in civil rights-related regulatory investigations, providing comprehensive support by advising on all phases of civil enforcement and criminal investigations.

Litigation Defense: With plaintiffs increasingly challenging employment, procurement, contracting and other policies and practices, we have successfully represented companies and boards in response to shareholder demands and derivative litigation, including in cases of first impression. We have also successfully defended clients in the face of high-stakes discrimination claims and handled significant challenges on behalf of educational institutions.

Shareholder Engagement: Our attorneys regularly collaborate with boards and management on matters involving shareholder proposal demands in connection with civil rights issues. We advise boards and management on responding to such demands and, where necessary, represent our clients in litigation.

Our Team

Our Civil Rights Law Advisory Group features lawyers with unmatched credibility in the area, including former senior government officials, veteran crisis management advisers and leading litigators. In a testament to our stature and direct experience in this arena, in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions v. President & Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* holding that Harvard and the University of North Carolina's race-conscious admissions policies were unconstitutional, leaders of our practice were asked to co-chair a New York State Bar Association blue-ribbon task force to develop strategies for businesses that was finalized in the fourth quarter of 2023.