



## James R. Pirages

**Partner**  
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James Pirages has more than 30 years of experience representing management and employers in labor and employment matters. He handles investigations of unfair labor practice charges, and represents employers in proceedings of the National Labor Relations Board and Illinois State Labor Relations Board. Mr. Pirages also deals with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Illinois Department of Human Rights discrimination charges against employers, investigating charges and, when necessary, speaking on behalf of clients at hearings before those administrative agencies.

In addition, Mr. Pirages advises clients in matters involving OSHA inspections and citations, and has effectively contested the agency's citations and administrative actions.

Mr. Pirages' vigorous advocacy of employers extends to wage and hour matters, from contesting the results of audits completed by the Illinois Department of Labor and United States Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, to representing clients in federal court litigation.

Mr. Pirages has extensive experience acting on behalf of employers in matters involving union representation. He advises on certification and decertification of third-party organizations, and helps employers maintain a union-free working environment. He also handles charges involving claims of secondary boycotts and other illegal activity by unions.

For companies with unions, Mr. Pirages represents management in collective bargaining negotiations and advises on discipline and discharge matters (including "preventative" measures to avoid legal claims over these actions). His proactive dispute avoidance counsel includes the drafting of personnel rules, employee handbooks and affirmative action programs that comply with employment laws and regulations.

In the area of employee benefits, Mr. Pirages handles defense of collective bargaining agreement claims involving employer obligations to contribute to pension, health and welfare funds. He also helps clients resist assessments of multi-employer withdrawal liability pursuant to the provisions of the Multi-Employer Pension Plan Amendments Act of 1980.

### Service Areas

Employee Benefits  
Labor & Employment

### Education

J.D., Southern Illinois  
University College of Law, 1980

- Notes and Comments Editor,  
*Southern Illinois University  
Law Journal*, 1979-1980
- Ethics Committee Chair,  
1979-1980

B.A., *magna cum laude*,  
Rockford College, 1977

### Admissions

Illinois

U.S. Court of Appeals for the  
Seventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the  
Northern District of Illinois



## Professional Background

Mr. Pirages is the former leader of the Labor & Employment Practice Group of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP. He is also a past partner-in-charge of the Rockford office. Mr. Pirages joined the firm in September 1987.

## Honors & Awards

- Selected as a "2013 Top Rated Lawyer in Labor & Employment" by American Lawyer Media and Martindale-Hubbell
- Recognized by his peers as a Leading Lawyer in the categories of Employment Law: Management and Labor Law: Management
- Included by *Leading Lawyers Magazine Business Edition*, as one of the Top 100 Leading Downstate Business Lawyers in Illinois, 2010
- Holds the AV® Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell, its highest rating for ethics and legal ability

## Presentations

Frequent speaker on behalf of the Employers' Association of Illinois, the Council on Education in Management, Lorman Business Center, Inc., the National Business Institute, and to private industry on all matters of labor and employment law, including such topics as:

- "Surviving and Saving Board Meetings in Chaos: Dynamics of Effective Board Meetings...from an attorney's perspective," NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) National Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 27, 2017
- "The Labor & Employment Year in Review," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hilton Chicago-Northbrook, Northbrook, Illinois, October 12, 2017
- Co-Presenter, "Labor & Employment Law Update the Year in Review 2017," AAIM Employer's Association Group, Rockford, Illinois, October 11, 2017
- "Changes in NLRB Policy and Law: How Your Workplace Is Affected," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2016
- "2016 Employment Legal Update," Society for Human Resource Management, Rockford Chapter, Rockford, Illinois, February 17, 2016
- "Mastering Leaves of Absence and Accommodation Issues Under the FMLA, the ADA, and Workers' Compensation Law," and "Fly on the Wall: A Conversation Among L&E Lawyers", Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2015
- "Employment Law Update," Rockford Area Society for Human Resource Management meeting, Rockford, Illinois, March 2015
- "The NLRB's New Limitations on the Deferral of Unfair Labor Practice Charges to Arbitration," national webinar, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, March 2015
- "Mastering Leaves of Absence and Accommodation Issues Under the ADA, the FMLA and Workers' Compensation Law," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2014
- "Make Like a Tree: Effectively Managing Difficult Leave Situations," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2013
- "The Labor & Employment Year in Review," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2013
- "The Year in Review: 2012," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2012
- "NLRB Decisions and New Rules Affecting All Employers," Hinshaw's Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, October 2011
- "The Ever-Expanding Coverage of the Family and Medical Leave Act," Hinshaw's 2010 Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2010



- "ADA Amendments Act of 2008," Hinshaw's 2009 Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, October 2009
- "Pre-Employment Inquiries," Hinshaw's 2008 Annual Labor & Employment Seminar, Oak Brook, Illinois, November 2008
- "Hiring Employees," "Sexual Harassment" and "Terminating Employees," Community Bankers Association of Illinois seminar "A Guide to Human Resources Law," Naperville, Illinois, June 2008
- "New Union Organizing Trends," at Hinshaw's "Effectively Dealing with Current Labor & Employment Issues," Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, November 2007
- "Accommodating Employees and Applicants With Intellectual Disabilities, Hinshaw's "Effectively Dealing with Current Labor & Employment Issues" seminar, Oak Brook, Illinois, November 2006
- "Union Organizational Activity," Hinshaw's 2006 Health Care Conference, "Current Issues Affecting Health System and Hospital Boards and Management," Chicago, Illinois, September 2006
- "Rights of the Employer and Employee Under the FMLA," and "Wage and Hour," Lorman Education Services' seminar, "State and Federal Personnel Laws in Illinois," Rockford, Illinois, June 2006
- "Blagojevich-Era Labor and Employment Legislation," Hinshaw's "Effectively Dealing with Current Labor & Employment Issues" seminar, Chicago, Illinois, September 2005 and again in Lisle, Illinois, November 2005
- "Labor and Employment Law Update," Hinshaw's Breakfast Seminar Series, Rockford, Illinois, March 2005
- "Recent Developments in Illinois Law," and "Hiring and Recruiting," Lorman Education Services seminar "Illinois State and Federal Personnel Laws," Rockford, Illinois, March 2005
- "Advanced Techniques for Managing the Interplay between the ADA, FMLA and the Workers' Compensation Act"
- "Liability for Sexual Harassment Outside the Workplace"
- "Record Keeping and Record Retention"
- Presented "The Labor and Employment Law Year in Review" for the last seven years on behalf of the Employers' Association of Illinois.

## Publications

- "The National Labor Relations Board and Pre-Election Misrepresentations: From General Shoe to General Knit," *Southern Illinois University Law Journal*, Vol. 1979, No. 3 (1980)

## Community/Civic Activities

- Three (3) time nominee for the Rockford Register Star's "Excalibur Award" (annual award presented for community service and excellence)
- Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce, Received the "Top of Illinois" Award (2005)
- Inducted into the Rock Valley College Alumni "Hall of Fame," by the Rock Valley College Foundation, for volunteer work advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities (2005)