

# Daily Journal

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## TOP Labor & Employment Lawyers 2024



### Jesse A. Cripps

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher  
Los Angeles

**J**esse Cripps' caseload over the last 22 years has encompassed labor and employment law at the federal and state level.

His most notable achievement this year was securing a jury trial victory for Gulfstream Aerospace under a tight timeline imposed by the judge due to unusual procedural circumstances. Cripps led a Gibson Dunn team to a complete defense

verdict in a case brought by a former employee alleging age discrimination, misclassification and violation of the California WARN Act due to COVID-19 layoffs.

"We jumped into action. And we put on a very powerful and emotional defense," Cripps said. "It always helps when you have truth on your side. But the entire exercise was a testament to the power of teamwork. I surrounded myself with great lawyers — both from the company and here at the firm — and together, we proved to me that even the most complex and difficult of cases can be effectively tried on the most aggressive of timelines."

The plaintiff, Robert Rice, filed suit in 2021, claiming Gulfstream selected him for layoff because of his age, in violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act. He also contended that Gulfstream failed to provide adequate notice as required by Executive Order N-31-20, which temporarily suspended the California WARN Act, and that his role as customer delivery associate was improperly classified as exempt, seeking PAGA penalties for the alleged misclassification.

Cripps' expertise shone through when Judge Michael P. Vicencia granted Gibson Dunn's motion for judgment on the pleadings regarding the PAGA claim just before trial.

In a separate matter, Cripps and the Gibson Dunn team secured a major win when Judge Dale Fischer granted Marathon Refining Logistics Services LLC's motion for reconsideration of her prior order denying Defendant's motion to dismiss travel time claims brought by Plaintiffs on behalf of a putative class of non-exempt employees.

Reflecting on the recent PAGA reforms, Cripps acknowledged the statute's significant role in California employment law and anticipated a period of adjustment to fully grasp the impact of these reforms.

"And while my clients have reacted positively to the recent reforms, I expect that it will take time to fully understand the impact of these reforms," Cripps said. "There are quite a few unanswered questions that are created by the new legislation, and I expect that we will all be spending the next 10 years or so litigating these new issues in the courts and in arbitral forums."