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Erin M. Connell

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

EMPLOYMENT LAW

SAN FRANCISCO

Erin Connell is a seasoned employment law attorney with nearly 22 years of experience, all of it with Orrick in San Francisco.

She is also co-head of the firm's Equal Employment Opportunity, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs practice and pay equity task force.

One of her most notable recent cases was *OFCCP v. Oracle*, which stands as the largest systemic compensation discrimination case ever brought by the OFCCP.

After years of intense litigation and an eight-day bench trial, Connell led her team to victory on all claims, marking a significant win for their client.

"In the OFCCP case, one of the main obstacles was that not only were we defending Oracle against significant pay discrimination claims by the U.S. Department of Labor, but we were doing so in an unfamiliar legal forum that itself is housed within the U.S. Department of Labor," she said. "Despite the unique and challenging circumstances of this particular litigation, we nevertheless prevailed."

In a parallel case, Connell defended Oracle in a statewide civil class action in California concerning pay equity and discrimination claims. Despite initial class certification, Connell's efforts resulted in decertification of the class.

"In the Jewett case, one of the main obstacles was that we were defending one of the first major class actions filed under the California EPA following significant amendments by the California legislature, so we did not have a substantial body of relevant legal precedent on which to rely," Connell said. "In the end, this reality allowed us to make creative and novel arguments that ultimately prevailed at decertification."

Connell's expertise in pay equity was further highlighted by her involvement in the *Chen-Oster v. Goldman Sachs* case, a prominent gender class action in the financial services industry, which concluded with a $215 million settlement.

Currently, Connell is representing Workday in *Mobley v. Workday*, a proposed nationwide class action that has the potential to set a significant precedent in AI-related discrimination law.

Discussing trends, Connell said she is seeing a notable increase in pay equity claims, combined with a transformation in the way employers and employees think about compensation, including due to the explosion of pay transparency laws around the world.

Lastly, she believes AI will have the most significant impact in the years to come.

"The rapid pace at which the use of AI is transforming the way in which employers make employment decisions, combined with the proliferation of new laws seeking to regulate employers' use of AI are sure to have lasting effects from both a compliance and litigation standpoint," Connell said.