

SERVICE AREAS

Business

- Employment + Labor
 - Class, Collective Action + Complex Employment Litigation
 - Employment Litigation + Dispute Resolution
 - Employment Practices Counseling: Preventive Employment Relations
 - Labor Relations
 - Public Entities and Governmental Contracting, Compliance + Reporting
- Entertainment, Sports + Multimedia

Litigation + Trial

- Employment + Labor
 - Class, Collective Action + Complex Employment Litigation
 - Employment Litigation + Dispute Resolution
 - Employment Practices Counseling: Preventive Employment Relations
 - Labor Relations
 - Public Entities and Governmental Contracting, Compliance + Reporting

Governments + Nonprofits

- Sustainable Government Initiative
- Employment + Labor
 - Class, Collective Action + Complex Employment Litigation



Principal

Detroit

150 West Jefferson
Suite 2500
Detroit, Michigan 48226

T: +1.313.496.7544

F: +1.313.496.8453

willems@millercanfield.com

John H. Willems brings to his labor and employment clients the unique perspective of having been both a union and management representative. A practicing attorney for more than 25 years, John has extensive experience in every facet of labor and employment law, including complex employment and class action litigation in state and federal court, collective bargaining, contract and interest arbitration, as well as administrative proceedings before the EEOC, NLRB and MERC. John has a consistent record of achieving favorable results in trials, hearings and negotiations in high-exposure labor disputes and summary dismissals of lawsuits.

On the entertainment side, John has represented recording artists and record labels, and has counseled and advised musicians, producers, film makers, visual artists and dancers on business and legal issues. He has also been active as a recording and performing musician and sound designer, producer, recording studio owner/operator and videographer in his own right. John is also a tireless supporter and advocate of arts and culture in the community, providing pro bono legal assistance to artists and arts organizations, as well as contributing countless hours of volunteer time in many other ways.

"Lawsuits, contract negotiations and labor disputes aren't wars, they're business problems. My personal approach is one of creative but practical and cost-efficient problem solving."

John H. Willems

EXPERIENCE

John has represented counties, municipalities, universities and public school districts as lead counsel on highly visible contract negotiations and interest arbitrations as well as class action and individual discrimination and major public policy lawsuits. He has

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EDUCATION

- Wayne State University Law School, J.D.
- Portland State University, B.A.

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Michigan

LANGUAGES

- Dutch

also represented a number of private sector employers in the airlines, manufacturing, advertising, personnel, automotive, consulting, financial and gaming industries in individual and class action litigation. Prior to joining Miller Canfield, John represented a number of major private and public sector unions, including the United Auto Workers (UAW), Steel Workers, Communication Workers, and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Representative Matters

When a local municipality, facing severe budget deficits, determined that its best course of action was to do the unthinkable and disband its Police Department, John was called in to develop the strategy and lead on both the extremely difficult negotiations with the police unions as well the related administrative actions and lawsuits. John successfully negotiated the disbanding of the police department and transfer of police functions to the county and obtained dismissal of the unions' lawsuits and subsequent unanimous affirmance by the Michigan Court of Appeals.

When the City of Detroit's politically controversial decision to spin off its Housing Department was met with union resistance, John led the litigation on behalf of the City. Although a lower court initially granted the union's request for an injunction halting the spin off, John successfully argued for reversal and obtained a unanimous ruling in the City's favor from the Michigan Supreme Court.