From landmark Supreme Court rulings in the earliest days of ERISA in *Massachusetts Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Russell* and *Pilot Life Ins. Co. v. Dedeaux*, to the present day, Steptoe has long been recognized as one of the nation’s premier ERISA litigation practices. Steptoe’s ERISA litigation practice is one of only four firms to receive a national number one ranking in the current edition of *Chambers USA*, a position the group has enjoyed every year this publication has ranked law firms in this category. *Legal 500* also consistently has ranked Steptoe among the top ERISA litigation practices.

This national rating is evident in our lawyers’ litigation experience, having successfully litigated cases in federal courts throughout the United States, at both the trial and appellate levels, in matters ranging from simple benefit claim disputes to the most significant and complex ERISA matters involving fiduciary responsibility, prohibited transactions, retiree medical obligations, commercial transactions, and ERISA’s preemption of state law. Our clients in these matters have come from all segments of the employee benefit community, including Fortune 100 companies, major insurance carriers, plan fiduciaries, investment advisors, and service providers to both pension and health benefit plans. In addition, the ERISA litigation team regularly represents clients in investigations conducted by the Department of Labor and other regulatory agencies.

Steptoe also has extensive experience handling class actions which have come to dominate ERISA fiduciary litigation in recent years, particularly with respect to 401(k) and other individual account plans. From employer stock drop cases to cases alleging excessive or improper management fees in violation of ERISA’s fiduciary responsibility and prohibited transaction provisions, the firm has been at the forefront in defending clients, including BP, Honda America, Morgan Stanley, American Express, Dynegy and Visteon, among others. With extensive experience in this area, Steptoe is intimately familiar with these issues, both from a litigation defense and a plan administration standpoint.

Unlike many other firms, Steptoe’s ERISA Litigation Group consists of dedicated ERISA practitioners whose court room experience is complemented by a thorough knowledge and understanding of the underlying substantive law. This dual experience not only assures our clients effective and cost efficient representation in the event of litigation, but also enables us to bring practical considerations to bear, particularly with respect to the avoidance of potential liability and exposure, in providing advice and counsel on planning matters.

**Noteworthy**

- *Chambers USA*, ERISA Litigation, Nationwide (2005-2020)
- *Chambers USA*, Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation, DC (2005-2020)
- *Chambers USA*, Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation, Nationwide (2010-2020)
Representative Matters

- From the very inception of ERISA employer stock drop litigation, we have been a leader in the defense of these matters. The firm has had lead defense roles in such high-profile cases as *Tittle v. Enron Corp.* (In re Enron Corp. Sec. Derivative & ERISA Litig.), *In re Dynergy, Inc. ERISA Litigation*, *In re Williams Companies ERISA Litigation*, and *In re Qwest Savings and Retirement Plan Litigation*, and have defended class actions raising these issues in the energy, automotive, retail, and financial services industries.

- *Whitley v. BP, P.L.C.*, 838 F.3d 523 (5th Cir. 2016). Successfully secured the first precedential appellate opinion to address the legal standards for employer stock drop claims based on alleged inside information following the Supreme Court’s decisions in Dudenhoeffer and Amgen. The Fifth Circuit held that plaintiffs’ putative class action complaint seeking to recover plan losses on employer stock following the 2010 Gulf Oil spill failed to state a viable ERISA employer stock drop claim.

- *In re Express Scripts/Anthem ERISA Litigation*, Case No. 1:16-CV-03399-ER (S.D.N.Y.). Secured dismissal of action against the nation’s largest PBM, in a putative class action brought against it and Anthem, Inc., alleging ERISA fiduciary breach and prohibited transaction, RICO, breach of contract, Affordable Care Act, and other claims.


- *Soehnlen v. Fleet Owners Insurance Fund*, 844 F.3d 576 (6th Cir. 2016). Secured decision from the Sixth Circuit affirming dismissal of putative class action asserting ERISA, LMRA and state law breach of contract law claims against multiemployer welfare plan and its trustees based on alleged violations of the Affordable Care Act.

- *Skin Pathology Associates, Inc. v. Morgan Stanley & Co., Inc.*, 27 F. Supp. 3d (S.D.N.Y. 2014). Obtained dismissal of putative class action brought by a 401(k) plan fiduciary alleging our client participated as a “party in interest” in a prohibited transaction in connection with the plan’s acquisition of a third party’s bundled investment/recordkeeping program.

News & Publications

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 67 Rankings in 2021 US News - Best Lawyers' 'Best Law Firms'
November 5, 2020

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 125 Individual Mentions in Best Lawyers in America 2021
Four Lawyers Named 'Lawyer of the Year'
August 20, 2020

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 28 Practice Rankings, 29 Individual Awards in Legal 500 US 2020
July 7, 2020

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 19 Practice, 56 Individual Mentions in Chambers USA 2020
April 23, 2020

CLIENT ALERTS
Responding to Limits on Gatherings and Quarantines: Considerations for Employers
March 17, 2020
By: Elizabeth A. Schallop Call, Tyechia L. White

CLIENT ALERTS
The SECURE Act in 2020
January 14, 2020
By: Melanie Nussdorf, Paul J. Ondrasik, Jr., Sara Pikofsky, Eric G. Serron, Edward Thomas Veal

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 64 Rankings in 2020 US News - Best Lawyers' 'Best Law Firms'
November 1, 2019

CLIENT ALERTS
ERISA Arbitration Looks Safer; Ninth Circuit Reverses District Court, Sends Fiduciary Dispute to Arbitration
September 12, 2019
By: Paul J. Ondrasik, Jr., Melanie Nussdorf, Eric G. Serron, Sara Pikofsky, Edward Thomas Veal

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 86 Individual Mentions in Best Lawyers 2020
Two lawyers named 'Lawyer of the Year'
August 15, 2019

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe's Renigar, McDowell Elected to the American Law Institute
August 6, 2019

Resources
FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP ADVISORY
SEC Finalizes Best Interest Standard For Brokers, Related Disclosure Requirements, And Issues Interpretations Under The Advisers Act
June 12, 2019
By: Micah S. Green, Scott A. Singer, Kate Irizarry, Jack Copach, Paul J. Ondrasik, Jr., Melanie Nussdorf, Eric G.