



Varun Behl
Counsel

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Education

- University of Michigan Law School (J.D., 2013) magna cum laude; Order of the Coif
- University of Chicago (B.A., 2010, Economics)

Clerkships

- Hon. Jerry E. Smith, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

Admissions

- California

A veteran of more than 10 trials, Varun Behl is a former federal prosecutor who focuses on high-stakes business disputes, employment matters, class action defense, and white-collar defense.

Before rejoining Hueston Hennigan in 2025, Mr. Behl spent four years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, where he conducted numerous criminal jury trials, ranging from wire fraud, to murder and assault under Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering charges (VICAR), to firearms and drug trafficking. His trials included securing across-the-board convictions in a four-defendant wire fraud case involving the theft of more than \$1.1 million in unemployment benefits.

While at Hueston Hennigan from 2016-2020, Mr. Behl represented clients in a wide range of complex litigation matters. During that time, he represented the State Bar of California on the trial team in a high-profile legal battle brought by its former executive director Joseph Dunn, winning a complete judgment on Mr. Dunn's claims for whistleblower retaliation, breach of fiduciary duty, and breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing. Additionally, as a key member of the California Institute of Technology trial team, he secured a full defense verdict in a wrongful termination suit in which a former researcher claimed the school retaliated against him for allegedly exposing the misuse of government funds.

Mr. Behl was also previously an associate at Munger, Tolles & Olson. During law school, he interned at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Experience

Roumi et al. v. California Institute of Technology et al. Obtained a complete defense verdict for Caltech after a four-week trial in a wrongful termination suit in which a former researcher claimed the school retaliated against him for allegedly exposing the misuse of government funds. Dr. Roumi, who sought tens of millions of dollars in damages, was hired to work on a project funded by the Department of Energy, but ultimately failed. (See "Jury gives CalTech complete win over former researcher's claims," *Daily Journal*; "Hueston Hennigan Beats Back Whistleblower Claim Against CalTech," *The American Lawyer*).

Dunn v. State Bar of California et al. Prevailed at trial on behalf of the State Bar of California in a high-profile legal battle brought by its former executive director, Joseph Dunn, winning a complete judgment on Dunn's claims for whistleblower retaliation, breach of fiduciary duty, and breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing. (See "California Bar Wins Over Executive Director In Whistleblower Case," *Law360*; "Arbitrator Rejects Remainder of Ousted Bar Leader's Claims," *The Recorder*).

Oehler / Layton / Noonan v. State Bar of California et al. Representing the State Bar and individual defendants in multiple lawsuits brought by former executive employees alleging wrongful termination, defamation, and tortious interference, Mr. Behl helped secured early victories at the pleading stage in several of these actions. (See "Calif. Bar Escapes Wrongful Firing Suit Of Dunn Ally," *Law360*; "Judge Dismisses Former Bar Employee's Suit," *Daily Journal*).

United States v. Arteaga. Following a five-day jury trial, secured a conviction and life sentence for a gang member charged with gang (VICAR) murder.

United States v. Deshannon. Secured a conviction of a secretary in the Mexican Mafia. Following a five-day trial, the jury found the defendant guilty of conspiracy to violate RICO, committing VICAR, and using a firearm in furtherance of a violent crime.

United States v. Taylor et al. Secured guilty verdicts in a jury trial against four defendants charged with wire fraud who fraudulently obtained more than \$1.1 million in unemployment benefits from California's unemployment agency.

Monster Energy Co. v. Vital Pharmaceuticals Inc. et al., Vital Pharmaceuticals Inc. et al. v. Orange Bang Inc. et al. Represented Monster Energy Company against rival beverage company Vital Pharmaceuticals, Inc. in separate cases involving trademark infringement, false advertising, tortious interference, and theft of trade secrets claims.

Aspinal v. Phillip Morris. Purchasers of Marlboro Light cigarettes brought a certified class action on behalf of nearly 200,000 Massachusetts smokers, seeking more than \$600 million in damages. During the two-month long bench trial in 2015, Mr. Behl assisted preparing Philip Morris's damages case and the cross examination of the plaintiff's damages experts. Ultimately, the court found that the plaintiffs had not shown any actual damages.

Lea v. LinkedIn Corp. Represented LinkedIn in a putative class action lawsuit involving the alleged use of LinkedIn members' names and pictures in emails sent to other members.

Amgen Inc. v. California Correctional Health Care Services. Obtained a preliminary injunction on behalf of Amgen, holding that information related to potential price changes submitted to the state pursuant to California Senate Bill 17 is protectable trade secrets and may not be disclosed in response to a California Public Records Act request. This was a highly watched case with huge implications to the pharmaceutical industry.

Recognitions

- Southern California Rising Stars (2020)
- Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch