

## Robert S. Nichols

Of Counsel

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For more than 29 years, Bob Nichols has represented employers in litigation, administrative investigations, and other actions related to employment including the defense of claims of alleged discrimination, retaliation, harassment, wrongful discharge, and occupational safety and health violations.

Bob frequently represents employers in matters pending with government agencies, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), state Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) agencies, National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and a variety of other federal and state agencies.

Additionally, Bob also advises companies on union matters and other employment issues associated with mergers and acquisitions. He also provides day-to-day legal advice to employers concerning executive compensation, employment-related documents, occupational safety and health, and all aspects of the employment relationship.

### Industries

[Energy](#)

[Healthcare](#)

### Practices

[Employee Benefits & ERISA](#)

[Environment, Lands and](#)

[Resources](#)

[Healthcare & Life Sciences](#)

[Incident Prevention & Response](#)

[Labor & Employment](#)

[Litigation](#)

[Environmental Litigation](#)

[Environmental Litigation &](#)

[Enforcement Defense](#)

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## Experience

### Cactus, Inc.

- approximately \$620 million acquisition of FlexSteel Technologies Holdings, Inc. and certain of its affiliates

### Phillips 66

- agreement to sell the Belle Chasse Terminal, formerly the Alliance Refinery, to Harvest Midstream

# BRACEWELL

- realignment of its economic and governance interests in DCP Midstream, LP and Gray Oak Pipeline, LLC through the merger of existing joint ventures owned by Phillips 66 and Enbridge Inc.; advised on employment aspects

## **Woodforest National Bank**

- proposed sale of its asset-based and equipment finance lending businesses, including \$504 million loan portfolio, to Sterling National Bank; advised on employment aspects

## **Great Plains Energy Incorporated**

- revised stock-for-stock merger of equals transaction with Westar Energy, Inc., creating a company with a combined equity value of approximately \$14 billion, and with nearly 13,000 MW of generation capacity and more than 51,000 miles of distribution lines; advised on employment aspects

## **Drilling Tools International, Inc.**

- a portfolio company of Hicks Equity Partners LLC, in its acquisition of the drill pipeline rental division of Premium Oilfield Services LLC; advised on employment aspects

## **Basalt Infrastructure Partners II LP**

- acquisition of Detroit Renewable Energy LLC, an integrated renewable energy system comprised of Detroit Thermal, Detroit Renewable Power and Hamtramck Energy Services; advised on employment aspects

## **Parsley Energy, Inc.**

- \$2.8 billion acquisition of certain entities holding undeveloped acreage and producing oil and gas properties in the core of the Midland Basin from Double Eagle Energy Permian LLC and certain of its affiliates consisting of approximately \$1.4 billion in cash and approximately 39.8 million units of Parsley Energy; advised on employment aspects

## **Three Rivers Natural Resource Holdings III LLC**

- equity commitments from Riverstone Holdings LLC; advised on employment aspects

## **Vopak North America Inc.**

- binding agreement to sell three terminals and undeveloped land to a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan, Inc. for \$158 million; advised on employment aspects

## **Rockland Capital, LLC**

- and its wholly owned affiliate, Main Line Generation, LLC, in the acquisition of three natural gas-fired generation facilities from a subsidiary of Ameren Corporation; advised on employment aspects

## **Lufkin Industries Inc.**

- approximately \$3.3 billion acquisition by General Electric Co.; advised on employment aspects

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## **Credentials**

### **Education**

- Baylor Law School, J.D., 1987, *with distinction*
- University of Wisconsin - Madison, B.A., 1984, *with distinction*

### **Bar Admissions**

- Texas

### **Affiliations**

- State Bar of Texas

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## **Recognition**

### ***The Legal 500 United States***

- Labor-Management Relations, 2018

### **BTI Consulting Group**

- *BTI Client Service All-Stars*, 2018

### **BL Rankings**

- *Best Lawyers*, Labor Law – Management, 2023 – 2025

### **Lawdragon Inc.**

- *Lawdragon 500 Leading Corporate Employment Lawyers*, Employment Litigation, 2024

### **Thomson Reuters**

- *Texas Super Lawyers*, 2004, 2008 – 2012
- *Super Lawyers*, Corporate Counsel Edition, 2009

## Baylor Law School

- *Baylor Law Review*, Lead Articles Editor, 1986 – 1987

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## Resources

### **The COVID-19 Vaccine: Now Is Time for Employers to Plan for Whether They Can, and Should, Require Employees to Be Vaccinated**

Update

### **Virus Mitigation Steps for Employers Amid OSHA Ramp-Up**

Article

### **Latest CDC Mask/Testing Guidance Requires Employers to Evaluate Workplace Rules**

Update

### **Marijuana and Workplace Safety: Managing the Risk of Occupational Accidents as Cannabis Use Increases and Legal Prohibitions Are Relaxed**

Video

### **Growing Regulation of Pay Information by States and Municipalities**

Video

### **Unintended Consequences: Legal Compliance Concerns With Long-Term Remote Work Arrangements**

Video

### **Remote Work As An ADA Accommodation**

Video

### **What to Expect From a More Aggressive OSHA in the Next 12 Months**

Video

### **Bonuses Tied to Low Injury Rates: Will They Be Unacceptable to Biden's OSHA**

Video

**Employment Background Check Class-Action Litigation:  
Avoiding the Seemingly Minor Mistakes Fueling a Costly  
Wave of New Lawsuits**

Video

**The COVID-19 Vaccine: An In-Depth Discussion Exploring  
Emerging Legal Issues for Consideration by Employers**

Video

**EEOC Says Employers May Mandate COVID-19 Vaccinations –  
Subject to Limitations**

Update

**Texas Governor Lifts Mask Mandate, but Employers Must Still  
Comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act**

Update

**Signaling More Aggressive Enforcement Going Forward,  
OSHA Issues “Stronger” COVID-19 Guidance For Workplaces**

Update

**EEOC Issues Guidance Confirming Vaccine Incentives are  
Lawful, Among Other Updates**

Update

**OSHA Issues COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard  
Requiring Employee Vaccination or Weekly Testing**

Update

**New Federal Guidance Broadly Construes President’s  
Executive Order Requiring Vaccination and Other COVID-19  
Mitigation Measures for Many Federal Contractors**

Update

**President Biden and OSHA Launch New Effort to Protect  
Workers from Heat Hazards, Indoors and Outdoors**

Update

**Biden’s Plan to Combat COVID-19: Significance of  
Vaccination/Testing Requirements for Employers**

Update

## **OSHA's Revised COVID-19 Guidance Adopts CDC's Latest Recommendation on Masks for Vaccinated Employees, Advocates for Vaccination, and Suggests Periodic Testing for Unvaccinated Employees**

Update

## **OSHA's Revised COVID-19 Guidance Highlights Employer Duties for Unvaccinated and At-Risk Workers**

Update

## **Employer Considerations in Light of Updated CDC Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People**

Update

## **Biden's Selection of Doug Parker as OSHA Head Signals Aggressive Safety and Health Enforcement and Close Collaboration with Organized Labor**

Update

## **Federal Court of Appeals Allows OSHA's Vaccination/Testing Rule for Employers with 100+ Employees to Go Forward**

Update

## **The 411 on 420: Can Employers Still Test for Marijuana?**

Article

## **FTC Pursues Crackdown on Employee Noncompetes**

Update

## **NLRB Finds Employer's Use of Confidentiality and Non-Disparagement Provisions in Separation Agreements Violated Federal Law**

Update

## **Proliferation of Laws Providing Employment Protections for Marijuana Users Complicate Businesses' Efforts to Maintain Occupational and Public Safety**

Article

## **NLRB Revises Test for Evaluating Workplace Policies**

Update

## Publications & Speeches

- "Proliferation of Laws Providing Employment Protections for Marijuana Users Complicate Businesses' Efforts to Maintain Occupational and Public Safety," *Texas Lawyer*, May 18, 2022.
- "The 411 on 420: Can Employers Still Test for Marijuana?" *IndustryWeek*, April 14, 2022.
- "Cos. Should Brace For Workers' Vaccine Safety Concerns," *Law360*, September 2020.
- "State Legislatures, Local Governments and Courts Attack Employer Use of Salary History," *Texas Lawyer*, April 23, 2018.
- "Criminal Prosecutions over No-Poaching Arrangements Are Coming," *Society for Human Resource Management*, April 5, 2018.
- "End of an era? Growing list of laws is ending the use of comp history in hiring," *Westlaw*, January 2018.
- "The case for uniform ban-the-box laws," *Strategic HR Review*, December 2017.
- "New Laws Complicate Employee Marijuana Use Rules," *Today's General Counsel*, August 2017.
- "A Growing Number of State and Local Governments Ban Salary History Inquiries to Prospective Employees," *Bloomberg Law*, August 2017.
- "OSHA Sharpens Focus on Businesses' Obligations to Contingent Workers," *Society for Human Resource Management*, December 2015.
- "Review of case laws provides insight into jurisdiction of federal agencies," *Offshore*, November 2015.
- "OSHA vs. PHMSA: The Tangled Web of Jurisdiction Over Midstream Operations," *North American Oil & Gas Pipelines*, July 2015.
- "Producers can use CVS case as guidance when engaging in workforce reductions," *Oil & Gas Journal*, February 2015.
- "Effects Bargaining: Understanding the Impact on the Sale of Businesses," *Inside Counsel*, October 27, 2014.
- "Drafting Effective Separation Agreements to Withstand EEOC Scrutiny," *State Bar of Texas Corporate Counsel Section*, Fall 2014.
- "Attorney-Client Privilege in OSHA Compliance Self-Audits," *Corporate Counsel*, August 2014.
- "National Labor Relations Board Increases its Focus on Issues Impacting Nonunionized Employers," *State Bar of Texas Corporate Counsel*, July 2013.
- "EEOC V. US Steel Gives New Hope To Employers," *Law360*, March 2013.