

## WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS ARE OUR BUSINESS

### Defending Florida Employers

Burruezo & Burruezo, PLLC is a woman and minority-owned law firm that devotes its practice exclusively to labor and employment law primarily in Florida, but also in other jurisdictions throughout the country for certain clients. Founded by Bertha Burruezo in 2007, the firm is committed to building relationships that strengthen the work environment for businesses and their employees. As part of this service orientation, most attorneys and staff members are bilingual in Spanish and English to better assist Florida's diverse population.

Carlos Burruezo joined his wife at the firm in 2014, after nearly 25 years of partner-level practice at several of the country's largest employment law firms, including Littler Mendelson, P.C. and Jackson Lewis, LLP. Both Carlos and Bertha also gained experience at Fisher Phillips, a national labor and employment firm with more than 500 attorneys.

The Burruezo & Burruezo mission is to provide "big firm" expertise in a more intimate setting.

All attorneys concentrate exclusively in workplace law and issues that impact the employer-employee relationship. Throughout the firm's history, all of Burruezo & Burruezo's attorneys have represented both employers and employees in a range of employment law matters, giving their attorneys helpful knowledge of plaintiff bar members and strategies. With a renewed focus on servicing exclusively employers, the goal in all cases is to provide innovative solutions to our clients' legal challenges with commitment and creativity at a great value. The firm also has experience serving as General Counsel, handling business law matters, as well as cases involving general civil litigation.

In addition to Florida, attorneys are licensed in Alabama and Mississippi. Court admissions include all U.S. District Courts in Florida, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

### Recognized by Leading Legal Organizations

The firm is proud to be AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell. Attorneys are also listed in state and national directories published by Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers, and Chambers USA. The firm is also a proud member of the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF).

### Focused on Efficiency in Case Management

The team of attorneys and paralegals at Burruezo & Burruezo is committed to delivering high quality service on every matter. This is reflected in frequent status updates for clients, fast response times, the use of technology to track litigation deadlines, and a close attention to detail in all work product.

*90% of all employment law matters are resolved within six months.*

Aggressive representation is provided in all cases, using a holistic approach to problem solving.

### Preventative Employment Practices

Proactive employment policies, handbooks, and training are provided to business clients to avoid or minimize the risk of litigation. Training programs are conducted for management and employees in a variety of employment law areas, such as wage and hour, discrimination, harassment, whistleblower, and diversity. All training sessions are interactive and entertaining.

### Panel Counsel Diversity

Burruezo & Burruezo brings a diverse language and cultural perspective to your litigation defense panel. Contact Bertha or Carlos to discuss a potential matter.

## Employment Claims and Litigation

Burruezo & Burruezo attorneys stand ready to defend employers in state, federal and appellate courts. The firm also represents clients before administrative agencies, including:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
- National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)
- U.S. Department of Labor

The firm frequently defends employers in sensitive employment practices liability matters involving discrimination, harassment, wage and hour law, whistleblower, retaliation, wrongful termination, and more. Many claims are governed by federal or state employment laws, such as:

- Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- Americans With Disabilities Act
- Equal Pay Act
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Family & Medical Leave Act
- Florida Civil Rights Act
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act

Attorneys work closely with employers during the pre- and post-employment process to maintain compliance in employment agreements, benefit packages, and compensation terms.

## Discrimination and Harassment

Discrimination claims can take many forms, including age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, disability, and marital or veteran status. While litigation avoidance is always a priority, members of the firm have tried many discrimination and harassment cases before juries. Carlos Burruezo has successfully defended companies in numerous trials involving a full range of employment-related claims.

## Workplace Investigations

Burruezo & Burruezo assists clients with workplace investigations involving harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. Depending on the circumstances, the firm can either lead the investigation, supervise an independent third-party investigator, or guide the employer in conducting their own internal investigation.

A thorough investigation includes the creation of a plan, development of interview questions, the actual interview process, a written summary, evaluation of the facts, a recommended course of action, implementation, and closure of the matter.

## Mediations & Arbitrations

Carlos Burruezo is certified as a mediator (#25941 R) by the Florida Supreme Court and an arbitrator. He is eligible to mediate cases in all 20 circuit court districts in Florida and is frequently appointed by federal district judges to serve as mediator in cases pending before those courts. Chambers USA recognized Carlos in 2022 Band 2 for Labor & Employment: Mediators.

He is often appointed as a mediator by Florida Middle District judges and was recently inducted into the National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals.

## Wage and Hour Cases

Class and collective actions are on the rise against employers. Such lawsuits often claim violations of federal and state wage and hour laws. Employers often risk legal action when exemptions on overtime compensation are improperly assigned. Burruezo & Burruezo helps to assess if exemptions apply in any given circumstance. Attorneys also conduct wage and hour audits to determine compliance with applicable laws.

## Management and Employee Training

Risk management training is provided to clients on a range of topics, including supervisor training, employment policies, discrimination, harassment, and performance management. When needed, audits of HR practices are conducted to maintain compliance.

## ADDITIONAL AREAS OF HR GUIDANCE

### HR Policies & Forms

- Accident forms
- BYOD policy
- Confidentiality policy
- COVID policy
- Credit card policy
- Performance evaluations
- Personnel activity form
- Reimbursement form
- Teleworking agreement
- Vehicle policy

### Evaluations and Recommendations

- Asset software
- Company culture
- Document retention software
- Employee recognitions
- HR software
- Organization structures
- Task management software
- Training videos software

### HR Agreements

- Arbitration agreements
- Confidentiality agreements
- Contract review
- Independent contractor agreements
- Service agreements

### Onboarding & Offboarding Procedures

- Background check authorization
- Employment applications
- Job descriptions
- Offboarding checklist
- Offer letters
- Onboarding checklist
- Payroll packet
- Tax forms

### HR Trainings

- ADA training
- Confidentiality training
- EEOC Training
- Management training
- Personalized corporate training
- Sexual harassment training
- Wage and hour training

### Employee Handbooks

- Accommodations
- Attendance policy
- Employee benefits
- Equal employment statement
- FMLA policy
- Payroll policies
- Sexual harassment policy
- Time off policies

## MEET OUR EMPLOYMENT LAW ATTORNEYS



Bertha L. Burruezo

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Bertha Burruezo began focusing on workplace law after practicing insurance defense law for several years. She worked as an associate in the Orlando office of Fisher & Phillips, LLP, a national law firm representing management exclusively in labor, employment, immigration, and benefits law. She then opened her own law firm in 2007 to focus on the representation of small businesses and employees.

As a small business owner herself, Bertha understands the challenges that business managers encounter. She has a distinctive ability to creatively resolve issues in a thoughtful and collaborative way.

Bertha is a student of Tony Robbins' Strategic Intervention (SI) Coaching program, which gives her the framework to serve as a business and executive coach to clients. Throughout her law practice, she has witnessed first-hand how conflict, and the emotions that feed conflict, can escalate to serve only one purpose: the destruction of the other side. Long-term solutions demand more positive, proactive strategies.

Bertha's SI business clients demand goals that are dedicated to extracting the most practical and effective forms of strategic action and communication. As such, she is able to utilize SI tools that resolve individual, organizational, and cultural paradoxes that would otherwise lead to internal conflict and blocked initiative.

Bertha taught middle school for several years after earning her master's degree in education. She then returned to school to complete her law degree.

She is a Daytona Beach native with Central American roots. Her father hails from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, while her mother originates from El Salvador. Bertha's paternal grandmother, Trinidad, emigrated to the U.S. in the 1960s and worked hard to become a nurse, a profession she practiced for more than 25 years. Trinidad's perseverance served as encouragement for Bertha as well as other family members.

### **Professional & Community Affiliations**

The Florida Bar  
Florida State Minority Supplier Development Council  
Hillsborough Bar Association  
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Tampa  
National Employment Law Council  
South Tampa Chamber of Commerce  
Tampa Hispanic Bar Association  
Orange County Bar Association  
Hispanic Bar Association of Central Florida  
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando  
Bikram Yoga Aficionado

### **Education**

J.D., Stetson University College of Law, 2002  
M.A.Ed., Secondary English Education, Florida A&M University, 1997  
B.A., English Literature, Florida State University, 1996  
A.A., Liberal Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach Community College, 1994

### **Admissions**

Florida, 2002  
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida, 2002

### **Languages**

Spanish



Carlos J. Burruezo

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Carlos Burruezo has more than 36 years of experience in labor and employment law. He joined his wife Bertha in her employment law firm after serving as a partner at Jackson Lewis, LLP, a founding and managing partner of the Orlando office of Fisher Phillips, LLP, and founding and managing shareholder of the Orlando office of Littler Mendelson, P.C. He also has experience in complex commercial, business and general civil litigation matters before state and federal courts.

He focuses his practice on a full range of employment matters, including sexual harassment, discrimination, wage and hour law, whistleblower, retaliation, and leave policies. He also has handled trials in many of these areas. He assists clients with litigation prevention through supervisor training, business audits, and recommended employment policies and procedures.

Carlos is certified by the Florida Supreme Court to serve as a mediator and arbitrator. He provides alternative dispute resolution services to firm clients and also is affiliated with the firm Florida Dispute Solutions.

Carlos was born in New York City. His father, also a New York native, had Cuban roots. His mother, born in Lajas, Puerto Rico, spent her early years in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. At the age of 22, she moved to New York City in search of professional and economic opportunity. Upon arriving in New York, she enrolled in English classes and beauty school, eventually opening several beauty salons in what is known today as "Spanish Harlem." After many years of entrepreneurship, Carlos and his family moved to the Ocala, Florida area in the late 1970s.

### **Professional & Community Affiliations**

The Florida Bar  
Member, Hillsborough Bar Association  
Member, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Tampa  
Member, South Tampa Chamber of Commerce  
Member, Tampa Hispanic Bar Association  
Member, Florida State Minority Supplier Development Council  
Orange County Bar Association  
American Employment Law Council, Member  
National Employment Law Council, Member  
Aspire Health Partners, Board Member

### **Awards and Recognition**

AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell  
Listed in Chambers USA Band 2, USA 2022: Labor & Employment: Mediators  
Listed in Best Lawyers in America, 2006 – Present  
Listed in Super Lawyers, 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2023

### **Education**

J.D., Cornell University Law School, 1989  
B.S., College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida, 1986

### **Admissions**

Florida, 1990  
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida, 1991  
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida, 1990

### **Languages**

Spanish



Toni J. Braxton\*

Toni Braxton is an experienced labor and employment attorney who is admitted to practice law in Alabama and Mississippi. She has more than 26 years of experience representing employers and employees in a full range of employment law and civil rights matters.

She has handled cases involving Title VII discrimination, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), and wage and hour claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Toni has significant litigation and appellate experience as well as legal research and brief writing.

Toni has always focused her legal talents on research and writing. She has drafted hundreds of briefs and motions for clients over the years. She has also filed numerous appeals in state appellate courts, federal circuit courts of appeal, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

She worked as a litigation attorney for several of Alabama's top firms after graduating from law school in 1997. She then started her own practice in 2013, with a focus on supporting firms like Burruezo & Burruezo with legal research and writing services, including drafting pleadings, briefs, and discovery documentation.

#### **Publications**

"Navigating the Appellate Process: A Guide for Appellants in Civil Cases." *The Alabama Lawyer*, January 2005.

"How to Prepare Yourself and Your Client for Potential Retaliation in Employment Discrimination Cases." *The Alabama Lawyer*, September 2004.

"Harassment in the Workplace." *The Alabama Lawyer*, March 2003.

"Bad Medicine: Good Intentions Can Create Problems." *Addendum*, February 2003.

#### **Education**

J.D., University of Alabama School of Law, 1997

B.S., Psychology, Yale University, 1994

#### **Admissions\***

Alabama, 1997

Mississippi, 2011

U.S. District Court, Middle (1997) and Southern (2001) Districts of Alabama

U.S. District Court, Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi, 2011

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh (1988) and Fifth (2011) Circuits

Supreme Court of the United States, 2008

*\*Note: Ms. Braxton is admitted to practice in Alabama and Mississippi. She is not admitted to practice in Florida.*

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*AV<sup>®</sup>, AV Preeminent<sup>®</sup>, Martindale-Hubbell Distinguished<sup>SM</sup> and Martindale-Hubbell Notable<sup>SM</sup> are certification marks used under license in accordance with the Martindale-Hubbell<sup>®</sup> certification procedures, standards and policies.*

## BUSINESS OPERATIONS AT BURRUEZO & BURRUEZO

### Billing Rates

Burruezo & Burruezo offers competitive rates for the Florida market. Flexible billing arrangements are available—including hourly rates, traditional, flat-fee, phase-based, and retainer billing methods—depending on the circumstances, volume, and the nature of the representation.

Clio® legal case tracking software is used to manage litigation files, invoicing, and reporting. Secure, cloud-based storage systems maintain the safety and accessibility of case files.

### Ethics and Professional Liability

Neither the firm, nor any of its attorneys, has been subject to any disciplinary action by a court of law or state bar association.

The firm maintains a professional liability policy with suitable levels of coverage. Details are available on request.

### Cybersecurity

Burruezo & Burruezo works with experienced technology advisors to implement and maintain data security policies, procedures, and standards that safeguard IT infrastructure and data. A cybersecurity program is in place to protect against internal and external risks that may threaten the integrity, confidentiality, or safety of confidential client files.

### References

References are available on request.

### Firm Contact Information

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