



Office of Inclusion and Engagement Alumni Advisory Board Member



Kalpana Kotagal L'05

Kalpana Kotagal is a Partner at Cohen Milstein, a member of the firm's Civil Rights & Employment practice group, and Chair of the firm's Hiring and Diversity Committee. Ms. Kotagal plays an active role in the investigation and development of new matters for the Civil Rights & Employment practice group.

Ms. Kotagal is co-author of the "Inclusion Rider," referenced by Oscar-winning actress Frances McDormand in her 2018 Best Actress acceptance speech, together with Dr. Stacy Smith of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative and Fanshen Cox of Pearl Street Films. Ms. Kotagal is also currently serving as an advisor to noted filmmakers on a film addressing issues of gender pay disparities.

Ms. Kotagal represents employees and other victims of discrimination. Currently, Ms. Kotagal represents female sales employees in a Title VII and Equal Pay Act case against one of the nation's largest jewelry chains in *Jock, et al. v Sterling Jewelers Inc.* Her clients have alleged a pattern of sex discrimination in compensation and promotions. Ms. Kotagal also represents female sales employees in a putative class action against AT&T Mobility in a case alleging pregnancy discrimination, in violation of Title VII, as well as violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Medical Leave Act in *Allen, et al. v. AT&T Mobility Services LLC*. Ms. Kotagal also represents transgender individuals who are challenging the denial of transition-related healthcare. Ms. Kotagal has also been involved in representing victims of sexual harassment.

Ms. Kotagal has been recognized for her work on the Inclusion Rider and her commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in her legal practice, including being listed in the Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America (2019), named Law360's "Employment – MVP" (2018), recognizing the top five most influential employment lawyers in the United States, named one of The National Law Journal's "Elite Women of the Plaintiffs Bar" (2018), and receiving Chambers Women in Law: USA 2018, "Outstanding Contribution to the Community in Advancing Diversity" Award, as well as A Better Balance's Distinguished Public Service Award. In 2017, Ms. Kotagal was also recognized by Law360 as a "Rising Star," an annual list recognizing lawyers under the age of 40 whose professional accomplishments transcend their age.

A noted public speaker, Ms. Kotagal is often called on to address issues of employment and civil rights law, class actions, mandatory arbitration, diversity in the workplace to a wide range of audiences, including TEDxLinz, Democratic Attorneys General Association, the American Constitution Society, the National Employment Lawyers Association, the Impact Fund, among many others. She also speaks regularly to law students and new lawyers. Ms. Kotagal has twice had the honor of being invited to deliver the commencement addresses to graduating law school classes, including University of Pennsylvania Law School in 2019 and the University of California, Irvine School of Law in 2018. In 2018, Harvard Law School named Ms. Kotagal a Wasserstein Public Interest Fellow at Harvard Law School.

Ms. Kotagal is a member of the Boards of Directors of Public Justice and A Better Balance and sits on the Advisory Boards of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, the People's Parity Project. She is also a member of the American Constitution Society's Task Force on Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession. Prior to joining Cohen Milstein, Ms. Kotagal served as a law clerk to the Honorable Betty Binns Fletcher on the United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit. Ms. Kotagal graduated cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 2005, where she was an Articles Editor of the University of Pennsylvania Law Review and a James Wilson Scholar. She received her B.S. from Stanford University with Honors, where she was Morris Udall Scholar.