

Aalia T. Menes

Associate | San Francisco

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Aalia T. Menes represents clients in public pensions, complex commercial disputes, insurance recovery and appellate litigation in both federal and state courts across California. Her practice focuses on providing litigation, governance, and/or special projects counsel to a number of retirement systems governed by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL) and several city retirement systems in California. Aalia litigates disputes over all aspects of the administration and governance of public pension systems, including disputes over benefits, fiduciary obligations, retirement system funding and expenditures, and public transparency rules.

Prior to joining Nossaman, Aalia was a litigation associate at a Northern California litigation boutique where she worked on all aspects trial and appellate litigation. She is a contributing author to *The Wagstaffe Group Practice Guide: Federal Civil Procedure Before Trial*, published by Lexis Nexis. As a law student, Aalia also served as Online Editor for the *Emory Law Journal*.

EXPERIENCE

San Joaquin County Employees Retirement Association. Member of team defending public retirement system “SJCERA” in a complex class action concerning benefits under settlement agreement. Assisted on successful motion for summary judgment, which included over 600 public records covering 17 years of board decisions. The team represented SJCERA through the appellate and Supreme Court proceedings, and received a favorable ruling from both courts. Also assisted on concurrent federal court insurance coverage action and obtained a favorable ruling from the Ninth Circuit on appeal resulting in a full defense under the carrier’s policy.

Sonoma County Employees Retirement Association. Member of team representing public retirement system “SCERA” in appellate proceeding affirming the superior court’s determination that plaintiff’s challenge to SCERA’s payment of increased public employee pension benefits granted by the County of Sonoma in or about 2002 was barred by the statute of limitations.

San Bernardino County Employees Retirement Association. Member of team representing public retirement system “SBCERA” in numerous administrative appeal proceedings challenging SBCERA’s calculation of members’ retirement benefits in the wake of the California Supreme Court’s July 30, 2020 decision, *Alameda County Deputy Sheriff’s Association, et al. v. Alameda County Employees’ Retirement Association, et al.* (State Of California) (2020) 9 Cal.5th 1032, which upheld legislative changes to the statutes governing the calculation of benefits paid by state and local pension plans.

Various Public Retirement Systems. Part of team providing fiduciary and/or complex litigation counsel to at least 13 public retirement systems on various matters involving fiduciary obligations, governance, benefits, open meetings, and public records laws.

San Joaquin Hills & Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency. Member of team representing policyholders seeking reimbursement of defense and indemnity expense under Special Liability Policy, in connection with complex class action for privacy violation.

Healthcare for Dialysis Patients. Member of team representing dialysis center which was routinely underpaid by its health insurance provider for services to patients with kidney disease. Prevailed on cross-motions for summary judgment and obtained settlement from insurance provider, resulting in a recovery of \$1.1 million.

California Wildfires Insurance. Successfully obtained insurance coverage for numerous survivors who were denied coverage after losing their homes in the Northern California wildfires.

INSIGHTS

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Speaker, "Litigation Against Public Retirement Systems: What Are The Trends & How Do Fiduciaries Prepare?," Nossaman's 2022 Public Pensions & Investments Fiduciaries' Forum, Los Angeles, CA, 10.17.2022 – 10.18.2022

Speaker, "Litigation Impacting the Operation of Public Pensions Systems," Nossaman's 2021 Public Pensions & Investments Fiduciaries' Forum, 12.06.2021 – 12.07.2021

Speaker, "Litigation Impacting the Operation of Public Pensions Systems," Nossaman's 2020 Public Pensions & Investments Fiduciaries' Forum, 09.30.2020 - 10.02.2020

PUBLICATIONS

Author, "First Amendment Rights: Defining the Boundaries of Free Speech in an Abortion Context," *14 Dartmouth Law Journal*, 12.2017

COMMUNITY & PROFESSIONAL

Bar Association of San Francisco, Member

Association of Business Trial Lawyers, Member

National Association of Public Pension Attorneys, Member

National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems, Member

South Asian Bar Association of Northern California, Member

PRACTICES

Litigation

Public Pensions & Investments

Insurance Recovery & Counseling

Pension Plan Litigation

INDUSTRIES

Government & Public Sector

EDUCATION

Emory University School of Law, J.D., 2017, Online Editor, *Emory Law Journal*

Florida State University, B.A., 2014, *cum laude*

LANGUAGES

Arabic

Urdu

ADMISSIONS

California
U.S. District Court, Central District of California
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California