



Justin E. Tepe

Of Counsel

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Justin E. Tepe focuses his practice in the areas of cannabis law, business and corporate law, and commercial litigation

Mr. Tepe is of counsel in the Baltimore office and a member of the Firm's Business Department.

His practice focuses on representing operators and ancillary businesses in the cannabis industry. Mr. Tepe serves as outside general counsel and regulatory advisor to clients on a broad range of matters, including employment law, contract negotiations, commercial disputes, and transactions. He assists cannabis clients with writing applications for licenses and through all stages of the business lifecycle. Mr. Tepe helps his clients with developing compliant operating procedures, drafting management agreements, and in corporate governance and formation. He also regularly represents clients in investigations and enforcement actions brought by cannabis regulatory bodies.

Mr. Tepe has extensive experience in all areas of commercial litigation, including investigations, depositions, motions practice, discovery disputes, and trials. He has first-chaired dozens of trials to judgment.

Prior to entering private practice, Mr. Tepe served as a Judicial Law Clerk to the Honorable Shannon E. Avery of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

Representative Matters

- Represented a cannabis operator in the acquisition of a pre-approved dispensary, including resolution of an ownership dispute amongst the sellers that halted operations for over six years.
- Represented the sellers of a Maryland dispensary license in an asset sale involving the consolidation of three independent dispensaries.
- Assisted the sixth dispensary to become operational in West Virginia with regulatory oversight, corporate formation and governance, and raising capital.
- Represented partners of the first Maryland social-equity processor to become operational in the state of Maryland.
- Served as buyer's counsel for a Maryland cannabis company in the acquisition of a dispensary in West Virginia.
- Represented a Maryland management company in drafting, negotiating, and applying to the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC) to approve a managed services agreement. Prepared an MSA that was approved without revision or amendment by the MMCC and permitted for management fees payable by either cost and hours or by gross revenue calculation at the management company's election.
- Prepared the first ancillary business application for a secure transport and security guard agency in Maryland.
- Represented a dispensary in a regulatory enforcement action brought by the MCA and prevailed in negotiating a consent order prior to formal charges being filed. Guided the client through navigating the terms of the consent order, ensuring continued regulatory compliance, and successfully petitioning the MCA to terminate the dispensary's probationary period early.
- Represented a Maryland dispensary in a lawsuit against the client's former general counsel and board member. The dispensary alleged that the former member improperly obtained and

misappropriated equity in the company. Successfully negotiated a settlement in which all of the equity was returned to the dispensary.

- Represented a West Coast cannabis cultivator in acquiring a cultivator's license in Washington, D.C., providing assistance with writing the application, as well as managing all corporate formation and structuring to comply with D.C. regulations.
- Wrote a winning courier license application for a national logistics and delivery operator in the first round of courier applications in Washington, D.C.



Professional Honors & Activities

- Member – Maryland Dispensary Association (MDDA)
- Member – Maryland State Bar Association
- Listed in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America*™ for Commercial Litigation (2021 – 2023)
- Selected to Maryland's Rising Stars in Business Litigation (2021 – 2022); Cannabis Law (2023, 2024)



Publications

- "D.C. Council Passes Emergency Legislation to Close "Gifting Shops" in the District" (January 2024)
- "Maryland Aims to Legislate Labor Peace," *Marijuana Venture* (December 2023)
- "How Cannabis Companies Can Shield Their Trade Secrets," *Marijuana Venture* (November 2020)
- "Yes, You CAN Trademark Cannabis Products and Services in Maryland" (August 2020)
- "Employer Liability for COVID-19 Exposure in the Workplace" (April 2020)



Speaking Engagements

- "Operating a MD Cannabis Dispensary – The Good, Bad, and Ugly," NECANN Maryland Cannabis Convention & Expo (May 2024)
- Maryland Office of Social Equity and Maryland Cannabis Administration Technical Assistance Seminar (November 2023)
- "Tips for Launching a Cannabis Business in Maryland," webinar (July 2023)
- "4 Legal Issues for Maryland Dispensaries: What Operators Need to Know" (February 2023)
- "Cannabis-Related Assets & Estate and Trust Considerations," Maryland State Bar Association Estate & Trust Law Section (November 2022)
- "Critical Cannabis Case Law Developments," 2022 Public Health Law Summit: Navigating the Fast-Changing Landscape of Equity and Cannabis Law and Policy, Network for Public Health Law (September 2022)
- "Maryland Legislative Process and Preview," Susquehanna Workforce Network and Hunt Valley Business Forum (2019)
- "Maryland Healthy Working Families Act," Susquehanna Workforce Network and Hunt Valley Business Forum (2018)



Education

- University of Baltimore, School of Law, J.D., 2015, cum laude
 - Editor-in-Chief, *University of Baltimore Journal of International Law*, Volume III
- St. Mary's College of Maryland, B.A., 2009



Admissions

- District of Columbia, 2020
- Maryland, 2016
- U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland
- U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia