

Thompson Hine Absorbs Litigation Boutique to Form West Coast Office

By Samson Amore

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What You Need to Know

- Eleven attorneys are joining Thompson Hine from Conkle, Kremer & Engel, which will cease operations following the deal.
- All three founding name partners will be partners at Thompson Hine's newly established Los Angeles office.
- Demand for employment litigation in California was one factor motivating Thompson Hine's westward expansion.

Am Law 200 firm Thompson Hine has established its first office on the West Coast to capitalize on growing demand for employment law, hiring 11 lawyers and 14 other staff members from Southern California litigation firm Conkle, Kremer & Engel, the firm announced Wednesday.

The team will be based out of Conkle Kremer's current Santa Monica office until Thompson Hine determines a location for its California outpost. Thompson Hine managing partner Anthony White told The Recorder on Monday

that the firm is evaluating locations in both downtown Los Angeles and Century City.

White said the aim is to determine a central office location for Thompson Hine in Southern California that can house the firm's growing head

count "within the next six to eight months." He added that the locations the firm is evaluating are "where most attorneys we're looking to target as laterals are already working ... it'll be easier for us to recruit them."

Conkle added that his firm previously recruited heavily from the University of California law school system and Loyola Law School, both of which are expected to act as feeders to the new Thompson Hine office in LA.

"We see this as a transformative event for us," White said. "We've had a lot of demand



**John A. Conkle of
Thompson Hine**

Courtesy photo

for employment litigation in California, there's a number of employers and employees that are grappling with the California laws that make it a little more difficult for employers to operate out there."

White added that Thompson Hine has seen "a lot of construction activity in California," and that the firm hopes to take advantage of that uptick with its new LA office.

In addition to name partners John Conkle, Eric Engel and Mark Kremer, the lawyers joining the new Los Angeles office include partners Zach Page, Evan Pitchford and Amanda Washton; senior counsel Jeffrey Pearlman, Mark Riedel and Kim Sim Sandell; and associates Chelsea Bernard and Kelly Peterson.

Conkle said that "virtually all of our lawyers are coming over, it's not that we're splitting up and going someplace else. ... This is very much a strategic move by our entire group."

"The Thompson people have done a fantastic job over the last 15 years or so in transforming the legal service delivery model to emphasize predictability and transparency for clients in billing and efficiency in the delivery of legal services," Conkle said. "That's one of the things that impressed us about Thompson right from the get-go was

the various tools that they have in place to to work with those expectations that clients have," he said, adding, "we are looking forward to having the resources of a much larger platform."

Thompson Hine and Conkle Kremer have worked together in the past; Conkle said he worked with White on a trial in a Los Angeles Federal Court about six years, adding, "We're very comfortable with the relationship."

Conkle said that his firm was previously focused mainly on litigation but noted, "That's really not going to be sustainable, I don't think. Moving forward, there's a lot more need for specialized knowledge in representing folks, especially in the regulatory area."

He added, "Thompson, we believe, brings us the opportunity to have people with that kind of specialized knowledge in various areas that we haven't really focused on in our litigation model."

Thompson Hine ranked No. 146 on the 2024 Am Law 200 list, up from 141 the year prior. The firm received about \$263.1 million in revenue in 2023, with about \$758,000 generated per lawyer. It operated with 190 partners and 347 total lawyers, prior to the addition of the attorneys at Conkle Kremer.