

# Introduction

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When I first began representing Louisiana employers more than thirty years ago, “employment law” was not a distinct area of study or practice. An employer generally dealt with its employees as it saw fit and, usually, the only disputes that resulted in litigation were those involving workers’ compensation or unemployment benefits.

In recent years the simple and revered “employment-at-will” doctrine has been qualified by an explosion of legislative and jurisprudential activism which is both the cause and result of a changing workplace. No longer can an employee count on his employer for lifetime employment. No longer can an employer count on lifetime allegiance from its employees.

The employment contract, like most other contracts in this era of contentiousness-resolved-through-litigation, is not the handshake deal it once was. No longer is the aggrieved employee relegated to simply searching for new employment. The employee has been given a myriad of other rights and the stubborn employer that refuses to acknowledge those rights is doomed to suffer adverse consequences, as would any party to a contract who refuses to recognize the rights of his counterpart.

This text attempts to identify, organize, and, to a lesser extent, analyze the statutory and jurisprudential developments which govern the employment relationship in Louisiana. Most chapters could easily have been expanded to separate volumes. However, my primary purpose was to consolidate and cross reference in order to provide a functional tool to the practitioner.

Annually I will endeavor to update and, undoubtedly, correct this volume. I welcome correspondence from those who have comments, suggestions, or criticism.

