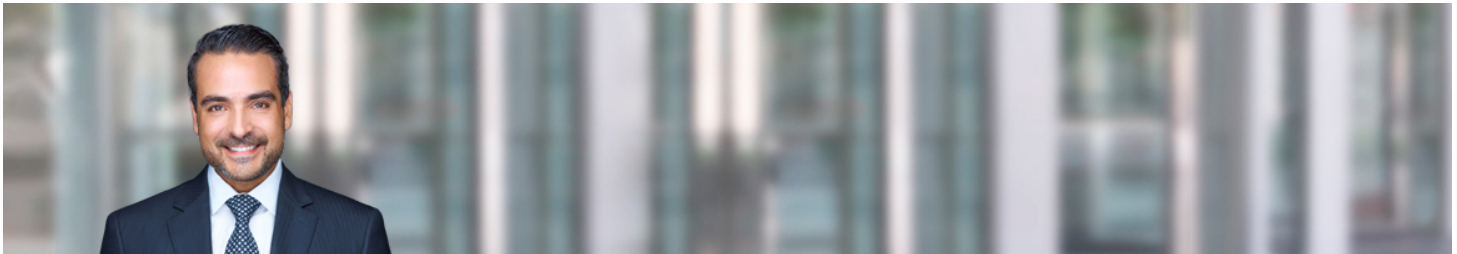


## Rene F. Ruiz



Shareholder

Coral Gables Office

rruiz@stearnsweaver.com

Phone: 305-789-3292

### PRACTICE AREAS

Labor & Employment

Education Law

Arts, Sports & Culture

Hospitality & Leisure

### LANGUAGES

Spanish

### OVERVIEW

For over two decades, Rene Ruiz has partnered with private and public sector employers to formulate strategies for achieving effective labor relations and other business goals. He has been honing his craft as a labor & employment attorney in Miami since his admission to the Florida Bar in 2001, at the age of 23. Rene has helped save his clients millions of dollars through negotiation and labor management relations.

#### Areas of Concentration:

##### Labor Management Relations

Collective Bargaining

Administering Union Grievances

Handling Arbitrations

Defending unfair labor disputes before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the Public Employees Relations Committee

Managing union certifications and elections

Training employers on union avoidance and strike preparation

Navigating through actual and threatened strikes and other work stoppages

##### Employment Litigation

Wage and hour disputes

Discrimination, retaliation, whistleblower and harassment cases

Matters arising under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Hiring local management for school sites and subsequent school oversight  
~~Planning,~~  
~~Opening,~~ Conducting governmental authorization and charter approval process  
and  
Land acquisition, construction and maintenance of each school facility  
~~Operation.~~  
of Compliance with local ordinances and permitting issues  
~~Public~~ Trademark and copyright protection  
~~Charter~~  
~~Schools.~~ Advertising and marketing in each local community  
Vendor negotiation  
Establishing partnerships with local businesses  
Recruiting students  
Obtaining high student achievement

Rene partners with private and public sector employers to formulate winning strategies for achieving effective labor relations and other business goals. A skilled negotiator, Rene has helped save his clients millions of dollars through collective bargaining, administrating union grievances, handling arbitrations, defending unfair labor disputes before the National Labor Relations Board and the Public Employees Relations Committee, and managing union certifications and elections. In addition, Rene trains employers on union avoidance and strike preparation, and has successfully navigated through actual and threatened strikes and other work stoppages. Rene also litigates wage and hour disputes, discrimination, retaliation, whistleblower and harassment cases, and matters arising under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Rene serves as chief labor counsel for Florida Crystals, American Sugar Refining, and their related affiliates and counsel to various other international and national clients. He has successfully negotiated numerous collective bargaining agreements for his unionized clients that were ratified by the respective labor unions without a work stoppage. These labor agreements have helped save his clients costs by expanding their management rights, restructuring pensions and other future liabilities, and attaining numerous union concessions.

Rene also serves as General Counsel for Armando Christian Perez, the artist known internationally as "Pitbull," and helps direct his business affairs. Rene negotiated the naming rights agreement for "Pitbull Stadium" at Florida International University. Along with Pitbull, Rene was a part of former Florida Governor JEB Bush's bid to purchase the Miami Marlins in 2017.

Rene  
serves  
as  
the  
Chairman  
and  
President  
of  
Pitbull's  
philanthropic  
SELF  
1  
st  
Foundation.  
SELF  
1  
st  
seeks  
to  
"strengthen  
education  
and  
level  
the  
field"  
(SELF)  
by  
bridging  
the  
educational  
gap  
for  
disadvantaged  
communities  
by  
creating  
and  
enhancing  
educational  
programs  
on  
all  
levels  
of  
education,  
from

elementary and middle school to high school and trade schools. SELF 1<sup>st</sup> empowers young minds, fosters academic excellence, and cultivates future leaders.

Rene and Pitbull also co-founded the Sports Leadership Arts and Management (SLAM!) network of public charter schools. SLAM! serves an overwhelmingly minority and underserved student population and unlocks seemingly unattainable opportunities within the sports industry for its students by preparing them for a myriad of sports-related careers including broadcasting, sports medicine, media production, physical therapy, marketing, nutrition, entertainment, entrepreneurship and management. This has allowed Rene to develop extensive experience with the process of opening charter schools in many different states. Rene has used this experience to successfully assist clients in navigating the regulatory procedures of differing school districts and establish new charter schools and their supporting foundations.

Rene continues to serve on the Board of Directors for the national SLAM! network of schools, which currently has campuses in Miami, Las Vegas, Palm Beach, Orlando, Tampa, Apollo Beach, Atlanta, Miami Beach, Boca Raton, San Antonio, and Phoenix serving approximately 10,000 students nation-wide. Rene also serves on the Board of Directors for the SLAM! Foundation, which helps direct the network's growing list of corporate partnerships and supports the network's current campuses, as well as the upcoming replications of its successful model throughout the country.

With Pitbull's dedicated support, SLAM! has garnered significant national attention through features on *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The Tonight Show*, *the Katie Couric Show*, *National Public Radio*, *The Washington Post*, *ABC Nightline*, and *CNN*, among countless others. SLAM!'s journey from "305 to Worldwide" took an important step in 2016, when it was awarded a channel on Sirius XM Satellite Radio to be produced by students of the SLAM! network, the first and only school to receive such an honor. SLAM! Radio delivers award-winning student generated and produced content every day on Sirius XM Channel 145.

Rene began his career at a prominent national law firm, and was mentored by John-Edward Alley, a titan in the labor law field. Rene was voted into partnership at the age of 30, becoming the youngest equity partner in the history of that law firm.

Rene Ruiz also serves as a member of the Firm's Board of Directors.

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## REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Represents a leading international sugar producer and refiner in negotiating in all labor-related matters, including negotiating collective bargaining agreements with their farm and industrial employees, handling union grievances, and defending arbitration hearings and unfair labor practice charges.

Represents a leading national provider of food, beverage, and retail services throughout airports and service plazas in all

labor matters, including collective bargaining.

Represents an international aircraft manufacturer in negotiating collective bargaining agreements with flight simulator technicians.

Represents a national clothing retailer with employment litigation and disability access under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Represents numerous local and national restaurants with disability access under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Represents numerous municipalities in Florida in negotiating collective bargaining agreements with members of their police and fire departments and general employees.

Successfully defended the broad application of the “agricultural exemption” under the Fair Labor Standards Act by winning summary judgment collective actions challenging the application of the overtime exemption for various agricultural employees.

Is this the same as this? Which language do you prefer? Successfully defended numerous restaurant and retail clients throughout Florida against cases alleging barriers to disabled access.

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## PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SELF 1<sup>st</sup> Foundation

Founder, Chairman of the Board, and President, 2024-Present

Sports Leadership Arts and Management (SLAM!)

Founder, Chairman of the Board, and President, 2009-2024

Board of Directors, 2024-Present

SLAM! Foundation

Founder, Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive, President, 2013-2024

Board of Directors, 2024-Present

Miami Children’s Charter School, Chairman of the Board, President, 2006-Present

St. Thomas University, Athletic and Sports Administration Board, 2015-2020

Dress for Success, Men’s Advisory Board, 2015-2018

Mercy Hospital, Board of Ambassadors, 2008-2011

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## RECOGNITION

*The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2008-Present

*Benchmark Litigation*

Future Star, 2017-2022, 2024-Present

40 & Under List, 2016-2022, 2024-Present

*Florida Super Lawyers*, 2017-2022; "Rising Star," 2010-2016

*South Florida Business Journal*, "40 Under 40," 2014

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, "40 Under 40 Outstanding Lawyers," selected for inclusion, 2014

*Daily Business Review*, "Rising Stars: Top 40 Under 40," 2013

*Florida Trend's Legal Elite*, selected for inclusion, 2006-2011

*Areas USA*, Labor and Employment Counsel of the Year Award, 2013-2014

*Law & Politics*, "Florida Rising Star," 2009

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## PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

### **Publications: [Look to Your Left...It's the New NLRB](#)**

BeLabor the Point Blog | March 2023

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### **Publications: [The NLRB Joint Employer Pendulum Swings Back Again...](#)**

BeLabor the Point Blog | August 2022

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### **Publications: [Bottom of the Ninth](#)**

BeLabor The Point Blog | February 2022

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### **Events: [Breaking Through the Noise: Labor & Employment Issues Post-Pandemic](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller News Program Special || June 2021

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### **Events: [Meet the Gang Part I – NLRB Workplace Rules, What's Up at the EEOC, Immigration Update](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 29th Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar || May 2019

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### **Events: [Nose Out of Joint? What's the Law on Joint Employer Status?](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 28th Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar || April 2018

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### **Publications: [Baseball's Winter of Discontent](#)**

BeLabor The Point Blog | February 2018

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### **Publications: [Employment Law Changes Likely Ahead](#)**

BeLabor The Point Blog | December 2016

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### **Events: [Off The Rail Policies and Approaches That Can Help You to Stay on the Right Track](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 26th Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar || May 2016

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### **Publications: [Happy New Year from the NLRB!](#)**

**Publications: [It's Unbelievable! – Bill Introduced Into Congress Would Turn Labor Relations On Its Head](#)**

BeLabor the Point Blog | September 2015

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**Events: [Secret Union Tactics Employees Can't Resist](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 25th Annual Labor & Employment Law Seminar | | May 2015

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**Publications: [Wrestling with Independent Contractors](#)**

BeLabor the Point Blog | November 2014

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**Publications: [SLAM Academy: Disrupting Poverty Through Education](#)**

BeLabor the Point Blog | July 2014

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**Events: ["The Art of the Deal": Negotiation and Psychology In The Workplace](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 24th Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar | | May 2014

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**Events: [Public Sector: Hunting for Hidden Employment Treasures](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 23rd Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar | | May 2013

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**Publications: [Florida Employment Law Manual](#)**

Florida Chamber of Commerce | January 2013

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**Events: [The New Dynamics in Public Sector Bargaining](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 22nd Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar | | May 2012

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**Events: [Hitting the Reset Button: How New Fiscal Realities Demand a Different Approach for Public Sector Bargaining](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller Labor & Employment Breakfast Series | | September 2011

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**Publications: [The NLRB Requires More From Employers](#)**

BenTrust Financial Employment Newsletter | September 2011

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**Events: [Cheesehead Fallout: What is the Future of Public Sector Bargaining and Pensions in Florida?](#)**

Stearns Weaver Miller's 21st Annual Labor & Employment Law Seminar | | May 2011

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## NEWSROOM

**Firm Announcements: [Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in 2021 Florida Super Lawyers](#)**

| June 2021

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**In the Media: [Hear from Marlins, Fisher Island and EEOC leaders about post-COVID labor issues](#)**

Miami Herald | | June 2021

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in 2020 Florida Super Lawyers**

| June 2020

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in Florida Super Lawyers 2019**

| June 2019

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Named Among Benchmark Litigation's 2018 "Under 40 Hot List"**

| July 2018

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in Florida Super Lawyers 2018**

| June 2018

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**In the Media: SLAM Miami Charter School Class of 2018 Becomes First Class to Achieve 100% Graduation Rate**

SLAM Miami | | May 2018

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**In the Media: Launch of SLAM Radio Signals Radio History in the Making**

Radio Facts | | December 2017

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Receives Top Ranking in Benchmark Litigation 2018**

| October 2017

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**In the Media: Pitbull's SLAM Academy opening in Tampa**

FOX 13 News | | August 2017

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**In the Media: Project Baltimore goes inside Pitbull's charter school**

Fox News | | June 2017

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in Florida Super Lawyers 2017**

| June 2017

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Receives Top Ranking in Benchmark Litigation 2017**

| October 2016

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**In the Media: Pitbull attends opening of Vegas-area SLAM! school**

7 News Miami | | September 2016

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**In the Media: 2 charter schools, 1 planned for Huntsville, move ahead with plans to open in Alabama**

WHNT News 19 | | September 2016

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**In the Media: Rapper Pitbull celebrates grand opening of his new SLAM charter school in Henderson**

KSNV NBC Las Vegas | | September 2016

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**In the Media: SLAM student's dreams do come true**

CBS 12 | | August 2016

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Named Among Benchmark Litigation's "Under 40 Hot List" 2016**

| August 2016

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**In the Media: SLAM Charter School**

CBS 12 || August 2016

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**In the Media: Under 40 Hot List - 2016**

Benchmark Litigation || August 2016

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**In the Media: SLAM charter school coming to Palm Beach County**

CBS 12 || June 2016

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in Florida Super Lawyers 2016**

| June 2016

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Presents 26th Annual Labor & Employment Law Seminar**

| March 2016

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**In the Media: Pitbull attends charter school groundbreaking in Henderson**

Las Vegas Review Journal || October 2015

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Presents 25th Annual Labor & Employment Law Seminar**

| April 2015

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**In the Media: Pitbull Spends Birthday With Miami Mayor At SLAM To Announce Expansion**

CBS Miami || January 2015

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**Firm Announcements: Rene F. Ruiz Named Among 40 Under 40 Outstanding Lawyers of Miami-Dade County By Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**

| November 2014

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**In the Media: SFBJ 40 Under 40 Awards**

South Florida Business Journal || August 2014

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**Firm Announcements: Rene F. Ruiz Named Among South Florida Business Journal's 2014 40 Under 40**

| July 2014

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Lawyers Recognized in Florida Super Lawyers 2014**

| June 2014

---

**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Presents 24th Annual Labor and Employment Law Seminar**

| April 2014

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**Firm Announcements: Sixteen Stearns Weaver Miller Shareholders recognized by South Florida's Best Lawyers**

2012

| November 2011

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**Firm Announcements: Stearns Weaver Miller Expands Labor and Employment Department**

| March 2010

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## EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, University of Miami School of Law, 2001

B.A., *magna cum laude*, Florida International University, 1998

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## ADMISSIONS

Florida

United States District Courts for the Middle and Southern Districts of Florida