Air Canada Ban on Cabin Personnel Tattoos and Piercings Goes Too Far



Air Canada adopted a personal appearance policy banning cabin personnel from having visible tattoos or piercings, except for a pair of matching stud earrings. Not surprisingly, the union claimed the policy was unreasonable and discriminatory. Air Canada has a valid interest in protecting its brand, especially since other airlines have similar policies. But, the arbitrator continued, the policy in its current form was overbroad and more than Air Canada needed to maintain its image in passengers' eyes. So, it ordered the airline to revise the policy to permit henna and discreet tattoos that are non-offensive, as well as nose piercings and up to 3 stud or tasteful hoop earrings per earlobe [*Canadian Union of Public Employees, Air Canada Component v Canadian Union of Public Employees, Air Canada Component*, 2021 CanLII 41471 (CA LA), May 13, 2021].