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25**

**PRO BONO  
REPORT**

GIBSON DUNN



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**135**

Celebrating 135 Years  
of Excellence and Impact



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## Letter from our Chair & Managing Partner

Dear Colleagues, Clients, Alumni, and Friends of the Firm,

Each year, I am inspired by our attorneys' shared commitment to providing legal representation to individuals and organizations in need.

In 2025, attorneys across the Firm dedicated more than 240,000 hours to pro bono work—surpassing all prior Firm records. More than 2,000 attorneys took on pro bono work firmwide, which is truly extraordinary. What makes this achievement particularly meaningful is how broadly it was shared: across practice groups, offices, and seniority levels, pro bono has become a defining part of who we are as a firm.

The breadth of our work this year reflects the full scope of our commitment. Our attorneys fought to protect civil rights, pursued justice for women and girls around the world, represented immigrants seeking safety and a fresh start, defended religious liberties, counseled small businesses and nonprofits, secured protection orders for survivors of domestic violence, helped veterans access critical benefits, advanced LGBTQ+ rights, and assisted low-income clients in obtaining life-changing assistance—among other meaningful initiatives.

The pages that follow tell these stories in greater depth, highlighting the important work of our attorneys, legal service organizations, and corporate partners who are making a tangible difference in our communities around the world. I am deeply proud of this work, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together in 2026 and beyond.

Barbara L. Becker



## Letter from our Pro Bono Chair

As the chair of the pro bono practice at Gibson Dunn, I have a unique view into the incredible breadth and scope of our attorneys' pro bono work. I also have the privilege of helping to celebrate our wins, and helping to respond when our clients encounter difficult moments in their lives and cases. That experience allowed me to see firsthand that 2025 was a remarkable year for our pro bono practice, in which we achieved life-changing results for our clients across the globe. It also provided a window into the immeasurable challenges that 2025 brought for many of the communities we serve. I was incredibly proud of the way our firm and our attorneys met that moment, with kindness and unflagging determination in the face of fear and uncertainty. This reflects the core ethos of our pro bono practice and of Gibson Dunn more broadly: a commitment to professional excellence matched with a tireless pursuit of justice.

As is always the case, our pro bono practice reflected the diverse passions and backgrounds of our attorneys. Our Justice for Women and Girls initiative advanced the cause of equality for all by fighting for equity for women and girls around the world. We upheld core constitutional rights of freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech. We helped immigrants, veterans, and small business owners. We launched a groundbreaking initiative aimed at combatting anti-Semitism across the United States, relying in part on our experience building similar initiatives to combat anti-Black and anti-Asian hate. We expanded access to safe and sanitary housing. And we demanded that our criminal justice system live up to the principles on which it was built.

Challenging circumstances have always brought out the best in Gibson Dunn, and in 2025 we found unity in aiding the broad array of causes and communities that motivate us. More of our attorneys participated in pro bono work than ever before, contributing more attorney hours to the causes and clients we all hold dear. For that, we thank the pro bono clients who entrusted us with their most pressing legal needs, the legal aid organizations with which we partnered, and the corporate clients who joined us in our mission.

I hope this report fills you with a sense of optimism, while also reminding all of us of how much work there is still left to be done. I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward with 2026 and beyond.

Katie Marquart

# PRO BONO STATISTICS

Pro Bono Hours in 2025:

# 240,000+

Value of Pro Bono Hours in 2025:

# \$321M+

Participating Attorneys:

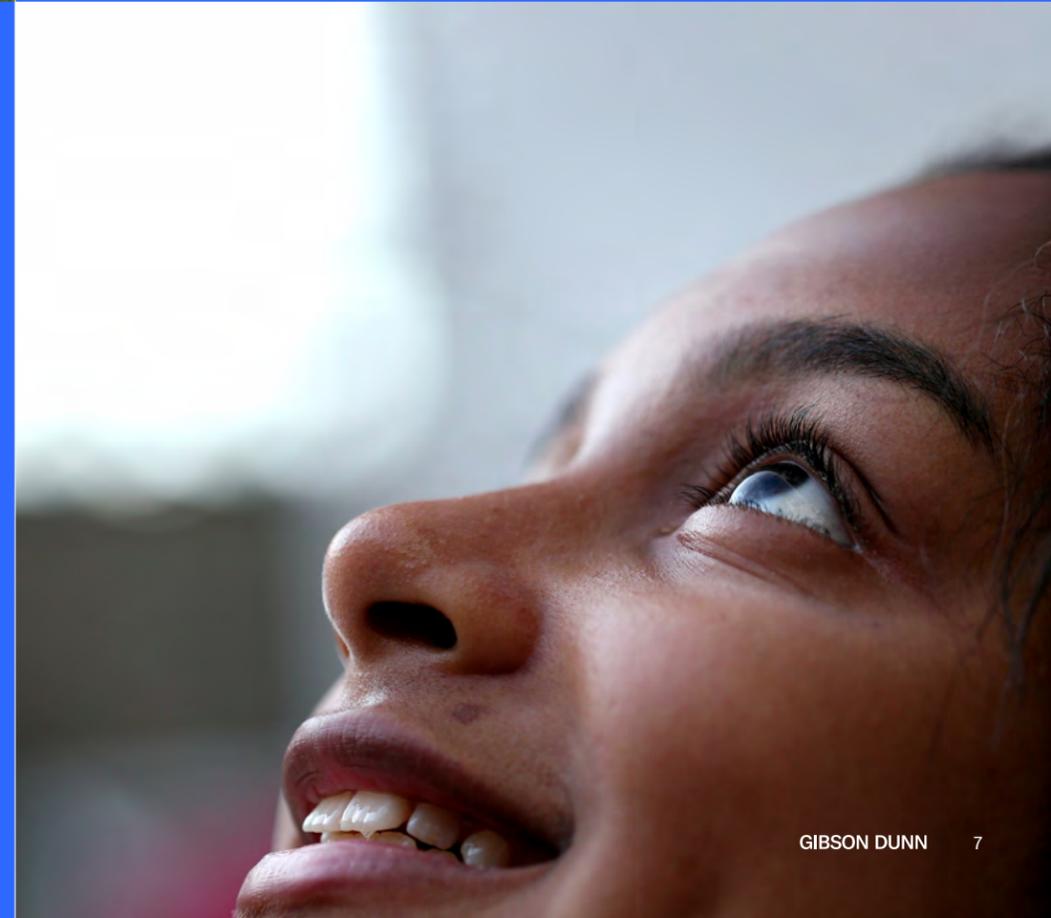
# 2,000+

New Pro Bono Matters Opened in 2025:

# 750+

Average Pro Bono Hours per Attorney:

# 106



# JUSTICE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

In 2024, Gibson Dunn's Pro Bono Practice launched its Justice for Women and Girls initiative, a celebration of the Firm's longstanding commitment to pursuing equality and equity for women and girls and a recognition of the important work that remains to be done. Our work in this initiative spans five key pillars: (1) educational equity; (2) access to healthcare; (3) legal and social equity; (4) economic empowerment; and (5) prevention of violence against women.

In 2025, we redoubled our pro bono efforts in support of this initiative, continuing successful programs and launching new projects to advance the cause of women and girls in our communities and around the world.





## Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

Each year, our attorneys dedicate thousands of hours to providing zealous representation to survivors of domestic violence. In 2025, we were proud to launch a partnership with the Survivor Justice Center’s CLASP Project, to expand access to justice for survivors of domestic violence. Gibson Dunn also provides full-scope representation to survivors of domestic violence, helping them draft, file, and litigate petitions for restraining orders against their abusers. Most recently, we had the privilege of representing Ms. C in her case against an abusive ex-partner who subjected her to years of sexual and financial abuse—and also committed acts of sexual abuse against her daughter. Although Ms. C had previously obtained a temporary order of protection, she needed legal support to secure a permanent restraining order to safeguard herself and her children. She also needed legal support to resolve debts the abuser coerced her to incur. A team of Gibson Dunn attorneys worked diligently with Ms. C to prepare for an evidentiary hearing on her case. On the eve of the hearing, Gibson Dunn successfully negotiated a favorable settlement, which included a three-year restraining order protecting Ms. C and her children, along with crucial financial remedies and the return of property belonging to Ms. C. The court approved the agreement and issued a final order of protection.

“ This case was not easy and tested [Gibson Dunn’s attorneys] in many different ways. Yet, [they] overcame these challenges with [their] tenacity, bravery, and grit. We are thankful to [them] for all their hard work and patience! .... We are so appreciative ... for [their] zealous advocacy for survivors of domestic violence, for taking this particular case on, and for seeing it through to its magnificent conclusion. ”

Survivor Justice Center



In another case we represented Ms. T, who had been abused by her former partner for more than a decade and filed a domestic violence restraining order (“DVRO”) request. Despite abuse ranging from physical and verbal violence to psychological violence, including threatening to kill himself if Ms. T did not stay with him, the trial court repeatedly cut off Ms. T’s testimony, limited its questions to incidents that occurred in the few months before her DVRO request, and ultimately denied her request without even hearing from her former partner because it found her allegations insufficient as a matter of law to constitute abuse. We appealed to the California Court of Appeal, arguing the trial court’s ruling was erroneous and should be reversed. Following a contentious oral argument, the Court reversed and vacated the trial court’s decision. On remand, the trial court conducted a new hearing, granted Ms. T’s DVRO request, and granted Ms. T sole legal and physical custody of her child.

“ Over the last 10 years, the family court system has felt like my own personal nightmare. I have never felt that I was given an opportunity to speak my truth and be seen, heard, or have my experiences validated. Yesterday that changed for me and it was such an amazing, and ultimately very healing, experience. I wanted to reach out to you to once again extend my eternal gratitude . . . I would never have been able to get here if it wasn’t for you all. ”

Ms. T

## Access to Healthcare

In 2025 we also used our pro bono practice to expand women and girls' access to healthcare.

Our attorneys used their transactional expertise to advise 4th Trimester, a nonprofit organization committed to improving the postpartum experience for new parents and caregivers by providing economic assistance, resources, emotional care, and advocacy to help parents during the critical months following birth. The organization serves new parents and caregivers, particularly those from underserved communities such as low-income, immigrant, asylum-seeking, and disaster-impacted families. As 4th Trimester's programs and reach have expanded in recent years, our team has provided comprehensive governance and structural updates to help position the organization for its next phase of growth and development.

We also fought for access to healthcare through affirmative litigation. Gibson Dunn, along with Wyoming counsel, has continued to represent a group of women, OBGYNs, and abortion providers in challenging Wyoming's anti-abortion legislation. On January 6, 2026, the Wyoming Supreme Court ruled in

a landmark decision that two total abortion bans—one prohibiting nearly all abortions with limited exceptions, and another imposing a complete ban on medication abortion—are unconstitutional under the Wyoming Constitution. The Supreme Court's decision arises from the State's appeal of a November 2024 ruling by a Teton County district court, which had reached a similar conclusion and enjoined enforcement of the laws. In a 4-1 decision, the Supreme Court held that Article 1, Section 38 of the Wyoming Constitution, a 2012 voter-approved amendment guaranteeing competent adults the right to make their own health care decisions, protected a "woman's fundamental right to make to make her own healthcare decisions," which includes the decision to have an abortion. Because the laws burdened a fundamental constitutional right, the court applied strict scrutiny, requiring the State to show the bans were narrowly tailored to serve a compelling interest. The Supreme Court concluded that the State failed to meet that standard, rendering the bans unconstitutional and unenforceable. The firm remains actively engaged in ongoing litigation challenging Wyoming's TRAP (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) laws, which were preliminarily enjoined in April and June 2025.



And we made sure that women's organizations had their voices heard in the most important cases impacting women's healthcare, like *Medina v. Planned Parenthood of South Atlantic*. That case involved an executive order by the governor of South Carolina, prohibiting any clinic that provides abortion care from participating in the state's Medicaid program. As a result, Planned Parenthood was notified that it could not continue as a Medicaid-designated provider for any of the healthcare services it provides. Planned Parenthood challenged that action in *Medina*, arguing that it violated a provision of the Medicaid statute allowing recipients to receive care from "any qualified provider." Gibson Dunn filed an amicus brief on behalf of the Women's Bar Association of DC that explored the challenges female Medicaid recipients face in receiving primary care and preventative health services in both rural and urban settings—even without arbitrary limitations on what is considered a "qualified provider"—and the negative implications South Carolina's actions have for women's health in America. The case was argued on April 2, 2025, and is currently pending with the Supreme Court.

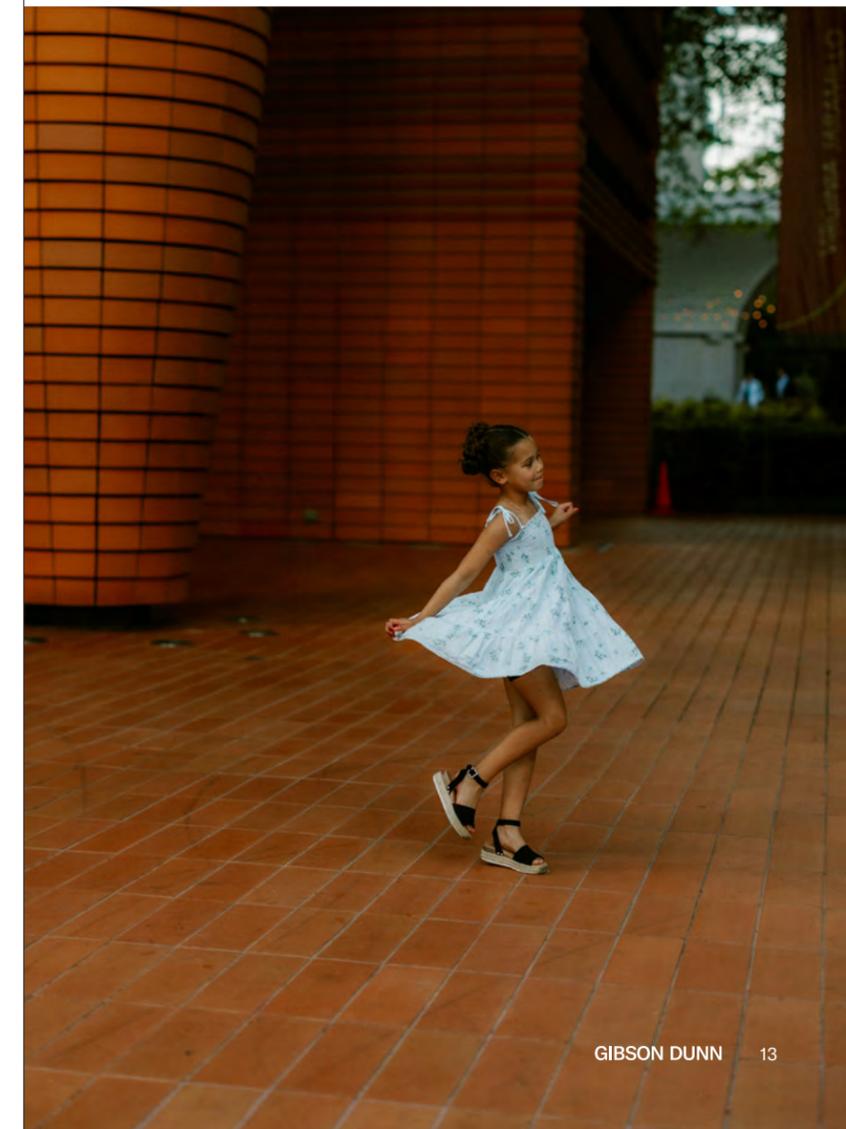
“ Having been deeply invested in public health and access to care throughout my education and work, having the opportunity to represent the Women's Bar Association of DC in submitting an amicus brief in the Medina case was a career highlight. This case will be a turning point in women's access to healthcare—particularly women in rural areas, working women, and women on Medicaid—and it was an honor to present the substantial impacts that the Supreme Court's ruling in this matter will have on the future of that access. ”



Heather Richardson  
Partner, Los Angeles

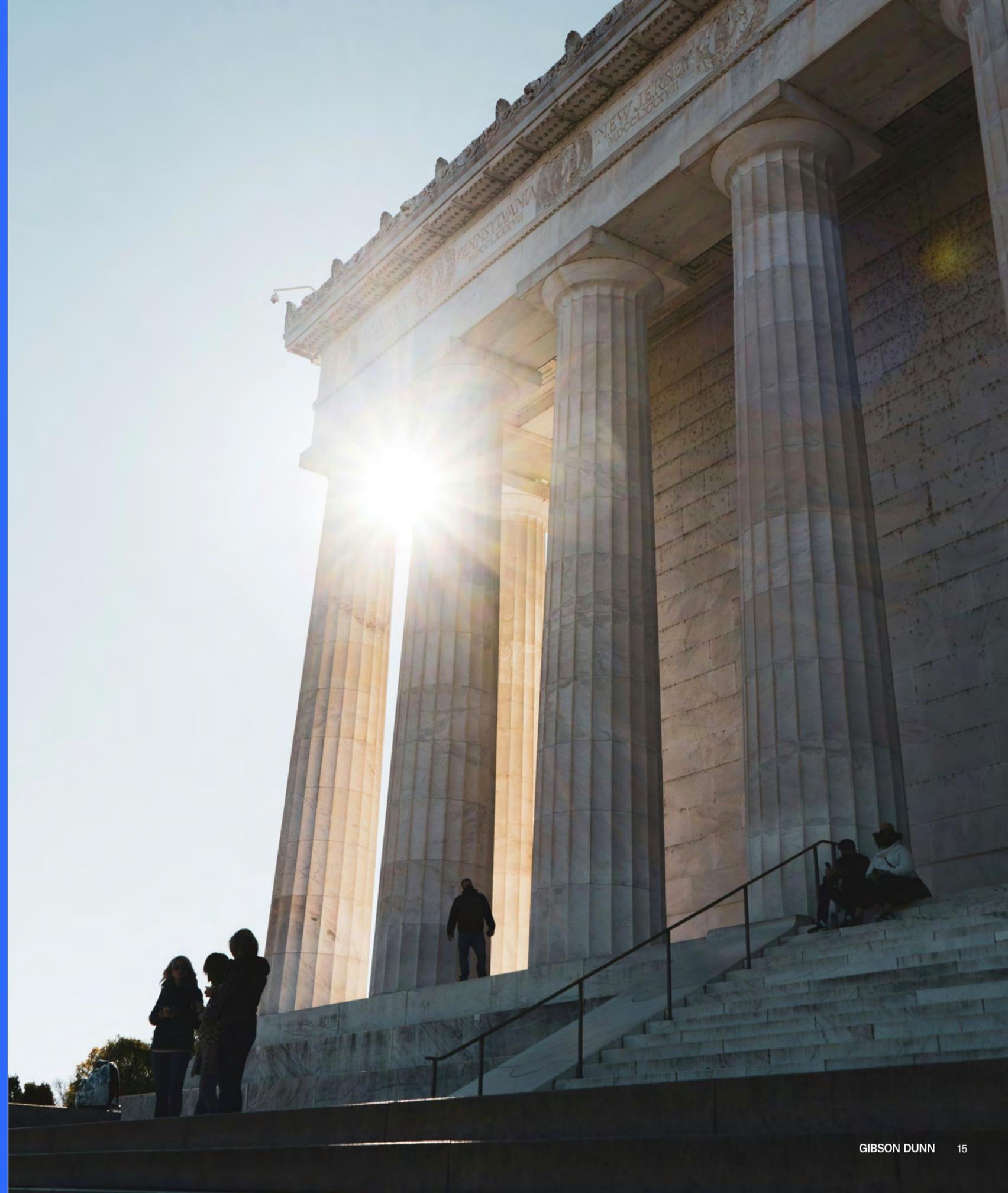
## Legal and Social Equity

The Firm's Justice for Women and Girls Initiative has an international scope that matches the Firm's international reach. This is exemplified by the pro bono advice our attorneys are providing *Landesverband Frauenlisten Bayern e.V.*, a Bavarian nonprofit association dedicated to promoting women's equal political participation, on the legal and practical avenues for securing state funding, among other things. Gibson Dunn's work for the organization aims to address the significant financial barriers faced by non-partisan women's political groups, which currently face obstacles to obtaining public funding, and could have a transformative impact by enhancing the visibility, sustainability, and inclusivity of women's political engagement across Bavaria.



# FIRST AMENDMENT

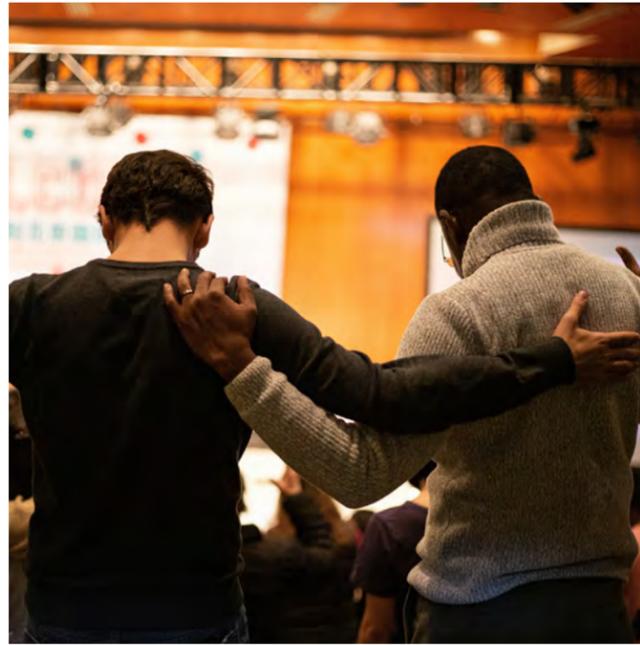
In 2026, Gibson Dunn launched a First Amendment Practice Group—a development that honors the Firm’s decades-old, topflight First Amendment practice. The Firm’s expertise and passion in this area have been and continue to be put to good use for its pro bono clients. Each year, Gibson Dunn attorneys defend religious liberties, freedom of the press, freedom of speech and the right to assemble before federal and state courts around the country. By bringing the same level of excellence that has made Gibson Dunn a First Amendment powerhouse to our pro bono practice, our attorneys uphold and advance the core liberties enshrined in the Bill of Rights that make our country great.



## Religious Liberty

Gibson Dunn has a long and proud history of fighting to protect religious liberties around the world, helping communities with diverse religious beliefs worship without interference. Often, we represent faith institutions whose ability to worship according to their beliefs has been threatened. This year, for example, we represented a church in Bryan, Ohio, called Dad's Place. Local authorities were directing hostility at the church's ministry for homeless individuals. In 2023, Dad's Place formally began offering a place at the church for people with nowhere else to go to worship, rest, and, if necessary, sleep overnight. Although local officials initially appreciated Dad's Place's ministry, they later became determined to shut it down, insisting that Dad's Place was violating the fire code by failing to install an automatic sprinkler system—even though that would cost far more than the church could afford. Bryan's fire chief sought and obtained a preliminary injunction just before Christmas in 2024. The injunction required Dad's Place to end its overnight ministry, which would have forced worshippers staying overnight outside into below-freezing temperatures. In a separate criminal proceeding, the City of Bryan also prosecuted the church's pastor for the same alleged violation of the fire code and secured a fine and 60-day suspended jail sentence.

That's when Gibson Dunn stepped in. Gibson Dunn immediately appealed and sought an emergency stay of the preliminary injunction—arguing that Dad's Place was likely to succeed in establishing that its ministry is protected by both the Ohio Constitution and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The appellate court granted a stay of the preliminary injunction pending appeal. Gibson Dunn presented oral argument on the merits of the preliminary injunction on April 30. In the parallel criminal proceedings, Gibson Dunn achieved a stay of the execution of the pastor's sentence pending appeal on state and federal constitutional grounds. Gibson Dunn then presented oral argument in the criminal appeal on September 17, challenging the pastor's conviction as a violation of his free exercise rights under the United States and



Ohio Constitutions. On November 21, 2025, the court of appeals unanimously reversed the trial court in the civil matter and vacated the preliminary injunction. The parties continue to await a decision in the criminal matter.

In another case, the Firm represents Gabriel Olivier, a man who seeks to exercise his Christian beliefs by engaging in the longstanding tradition of sharing those beliefs by preaching in public areas. But after he shared his faith on sidewalks in the public park near an amphitheater in Brandon, Mississippi, the city enacted an ordinance restricting “protests” and “demonstrations” to a designated area away from pedestrian traffic during the hours surrounding events at the amphitheater. The area that the city restricted Mr. Olivier to was too isolated for him reach his audience, so he decided to preach in the same place that he had before. This prompted the city to bring a criminal charge against him for violating the ordinance.

After Mr. Olivier pleaded no contest to the charge, he sued the city in federal court under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 to enjoin it from violating his First Amendment rights in the future. The federal district court, however, held that his lawsuit was barred under *Heck v. Humphrey*—a Supreme Court decision that suggests that the only

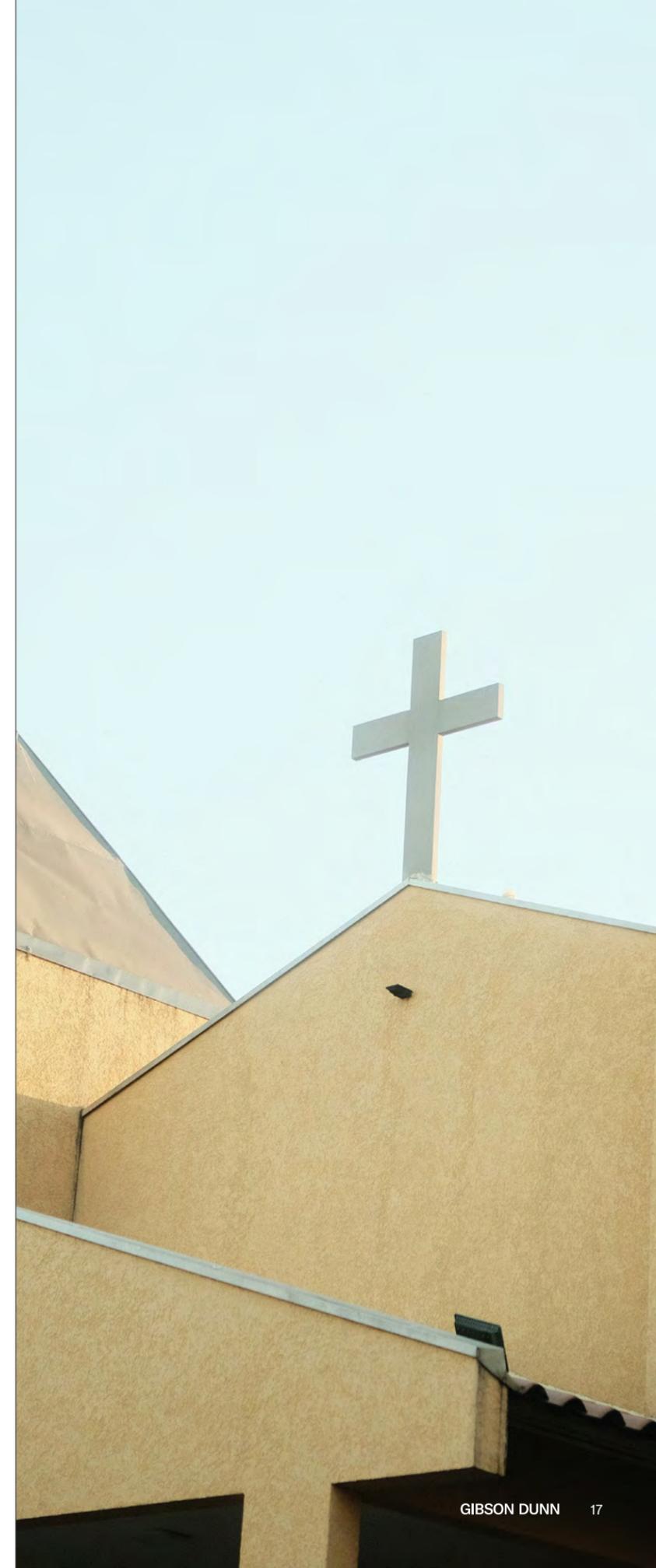
means of collaterally challenging a criminal conviction is a federal habeas petition—even though Mr. Olivier sought only prospective relief against the enforcement of the ordinance and never had access to federal habeas relief following his conviction. A panel of the Fifth Circuit affirmed that decision, and the full court narrowly denied rehearing en banc over several dissents.

Mr. Olivier then retained Gibson Dunn. We filed a petition for a writ of certiorari, asking the Supreme Court to hear the case because *Heck* does not apply to claims seeking prospective relief against the enforcement of an unconstitutional law or when a plaintiff never had access to federal habeas relief. The Court granted our petition and heard argument on December 3. Success in this important civil-rights case will help all persons—including those most likely to be prosecuted under unconstitutional state laws—access federal courts to vindicate their constitutional rights. The Gibson Dunn team was granted the Firm's 2025 Frank Wheat Award in recognition of their outstanding work on this case.

“ Our team is proud to be representing Mr. Olivier in this case, which will safeguard vital freedoms of speech and religion and help ensure that the courthouse doors remain open to those whose rights are threatened with unconstitutional prosecution. ”



Allyson Ho  
Partner, Dallas



## Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Speech, and the Right to Assemble

Gibson Dunn also fought to uphold freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and the right to assembly. In one recent case, we combatted excessive force and due process violations suffered by our client, Mr. C. Mr. C was attending a Black Lives Matter protest on June 1, 2020, when he was violently assaulted by a group of NYPD officers and detained without medical treatment, causing him debilitating psychological and physical injury. Gibson Dunn filed legal claims on behalf of Mr. C, conducted a factual investigation, and fought a yearslong campaign to force the City to comply with its discovery obligations, culminating in a motion for discovery sanctions against the City for its repeated failure to produce responsive documents. The Court said it would grant Mr. C's motion for sanctions and held an immediate settlement conference where Gibson Dunn succeeded in obtaining a settlement of \$42,500 on behalf of Mr. C. Following the settlement, the Court wrote by email, "Your professionalism and dedication in advocating for your respective clients have been exemplary throughout this case. The hard work and cooperation displayed by all parties serve as a model of what can be achieved when attorneys work with such diligence and integrity." Mr. C was elated with the settlement. He is now back at work and living in a new home with his wife and growing family.

In addition to our direct representations, we regularly file amicus briefs in support of First Amendment freedoms. This year, we filed an amicus brief on behalf of PEN America at the U.S. Supreme Court in support of Petitioners' writ for certiorari in *Little v. Llano County*. The case involves the removal of 17 books from the shelves of the public library in Llano County, Texas, based on objections to the viewpoints expressed in those books. Our brief highlighted the importance of allowing judicial challenges where books are removed from public libraries. It argued that removing books based on viewpoint harms authors in many ways, including by curtailing free expression, chilling speech in future writings, and promoting government orthodoxy through censorship. In addition, our brief argued that authors have a longstanding First Amendment right to speak through their work and to be protected from viewpoint discrimination. The Supreme Court denied review of this particular case and these issues are likely to arise again in courts around the country.

**“ It was a privilege to work on a brief in support of authors and against the growing nationwide movement to remove books that have stories or viewpoints that people disagree with. I grew up in an immigrant household. Libraries were an important window into my family's new world here—they gave me access to perspectives that I simply wouldn't have had the chance to learn about otherwise. It's important that books cannot be removed simply because an administrator or government doesn't agree with the characters, themes, or viewpoints in that book: that's the key foundation of the First Amendment, and a critical aspect of liberty enshrined in the constitution. ”**



Apratim Vidyarthi  
Associate, New York



# IMMIGRATION

For decades, Gibson Dunn has been honored to provide pro bono representation to immigrants leaving their own countries to build new homes and become productive members of societies elsewhere. Our community of clients includes those seeking refuge from religious persecution, safety from physical and sexual violence, and the chance to lead a life that offers the possibility of safety and freedom.

This past year saw dramatic changes and rapid developments in the U.S. immigration landscape. In anticipation of this, the Firm launched an Immigration Task Force in January 2025, bringing together the firm's expertise in humanitarian immigration law, employment law, appellate and constitutional law, and administrative law and policy to provide clients with timely, thoughtful updates on immigration developments. As ever, we also continued to provide direct representation to immigrants grappling with the legal hurdles of the United States' and other countries' immigration systems. We have also engaged in high stakes litigation to ensure that those immigrants and the legal services organizations that serve them receive the process and justice they are entitled to. As this work makes clear, the Firm remains steadfast in its commitment to promote safety, freedom, and justice for immigrants.



## Direct Representation in the United States

The Firm represents hundreds of immigrants, each with different stories but all chasing the promise of America. Having legal representation can make all the difference for immigrants seeking lawful pathways to remain in the United States, making our attorneys' work on these cases equally impactful as our larger-scale litigation work. Attorneys across the Firm represent clients seeking all forms of humanitarian immigration relief: we work with refugees seeking to resettle in the United States, asylum seekers who fled persecution in their home countries, crime victims and domestic violence survivors, and children who were abused, abandoned, or neglected by their parents.

Attorneys across our U.S. offices also represent dozens of children as they apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status ("SIJS"). SIJS enables children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both parents to apply for lawful permanent residency in the United States. In recent months, attorneys at Gibson Dunn helped a young man named "Adan" obtain a state court order enabling him to pursue SIJS with USCIS. Adan's father abandoned his family 15 years ago, and Adan had to start working at age 12 to help keep food on the table. Adan came to the United States all by himself when he was 17. In California, children seeking SIJS must have a caretaker in the state—usually, a relative plays this role. But Adan was alone and did not know anyone in the United States, making it difficult for him to pursue SIJS despite being otherwise eligible. Luckily, Adan enrolled in school and developed a close friendship with a classmate whose mother volunteered to serve as Adan's guardian so he could apply for SIJS. After she was awarded guardianship, our team helped Adan apply for SIJS with USCIS. He was recently granted SIJS and is now attending school and improving his English. Soon, he will be able to apply for a work permit and (eventually) a green card, enabling him to support the family he was forced to leave behind.

In recent years, the Firm has provided thousands of hours of pro bono assistance to Afghans fleeing persecution and reprisals at the hands of the Taliban. Across the Firm, many teams helped families who were still in Afghanistan apply for humanitarian parole to travel to the United States, where they would be eligible for asylum. Several families were approved for parole and traveled to the United States, where our teams continued representing them as they began a new chapter of their lives. In other cases, we represented Afghans who had already evacuated to the United States in their applications for asylum and Temporary Protected Status. Our clients included advocates for women's equality, religious and ethnic minorities, civil servants and champions of democracy, and even children who arrived in the United States alone after being separated from their families during the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces.

For example, we recently obtained asylum for Sayeed, an Afghan man whose father provided vital security services to U.S. forces, was an outspoken advocate for women, free speech, and minority rights—and who was assassinated by the Taliban just weeks before receiving approval to resettle in the United States. Sayeed, who shared his father's political views, refused to be silent and publicly shared his father's story with international news outlets. As a result, he was forced to flee to the United States to avoid Taliban reprisals. A Gibson Dunn team helped Sayeed obtain asylum and reunite with his brother and grandmother, who had been in hiding in Pakistan. Now, Sayeed works as a case manager at a refugee resettlement agency and supports his mother, grandmother, and siblings in the United States. This is just one of hundreds of cases the Firm has taken on for Afghan clients. As our clients become eligible for more permanent forms of immigration relief, we are proud to help these families put down roots in the United States by applying for lawful permanent residence (i.e., green cards) and look forward to working with them as they take the next steps toward U.S. citizenship.

Often, teams of Gibson Dunn attorneys stand beside their clients for many years as their cases evolve to include different forms of immigration relief. In one recent case, a team of attorneys in the New York office represented "Rocio" throughout her nearly fifteen-year journey to U.S. citizenship. Rocio first came to the Firm in 2011, when a team of attorneys helped her apply for a visa available to non-citizen survivors of violent crimes and terminate a previous order of removal. With help from the team, Rocio received work authorization papers and gained lawful permanent residence for herself and her daughter. Most recently, Gibson Dunn helped Rocio apply for naturalization. On April 17, Rocio passed her naturalization exam with flying colors. The interviewing USCIS officer remarked that Rocio's test performance was among the best he had seen in his 32 years of service. Following Rocio's success, Gibson Dunn also advised and supported her daughter in her own naturalization process. Rocio's daughter was sworn in as a United States citizen on July 10, marking the culmination of the family's long journey supported by the firm. We are honored to have played a role in Rocio and her daughter's path to citizenship.



Associate Angela Coco and Rocio celebrate her naturalization as a U.S. citizen



Associate Priya Datta celebrates her clients' green card approvals (and newborn baby!)

In another case, we helped Sumaya Nanteza, a political activist in Uganda who organized peaceful protests against the country's ruling party, obtain asylum. As a result of her activism she was abducted, tortured, and held captive for weeks. After escaping from captivity, she managed to arrive in the United States and immediately applied for asylum, which was granted after two interviews and supplemental briefing. After Ms. Nanteza was granted asylum, Gibson Dunn worked with her to help her young children join her in the United States. Over several years, Gibson Dunn worked with Ms. Nanteza to submit the proper information, respond to additional requests, obtain an interview at the U.S. Embassy, liaise with the Embassy, and contact her congressman. After years of advocacy, Ms. Nanteza was finally reunited with her children earlier this year.

“ What you and your law firm Gibson Dunn have done for me over the years in helping with my asylum case and eventually reuniting with my children makes me speechless, because there's nothing that I can say that would match the benefits my family and I have received. Please accept our sincere gratitude for each and every thing you have done for me, my children, and my family back in Kenya and Uganda who are also so happy on my behalf. ”

Sumaya Nanteza

## Federal Court Litigation

The Firm has a long history of defending the rights of immigrants. Over the years, we have filed lawsuits challenging rules that would have made it dramatically more difficult for asylum seekers to obtain employment authorization or drastically increased fees related to immigration proceedings, as well as litigation protecting Dreamers from attempts to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”) program. These cases are emblematic of the Firm’s longstanding commitment to standing alongside the most vulnerable members of our communities—work that continues to this day.

In January, we filed suit in *Amica Center v. DOJ*, challenging the government’s termination of congressionally appropriated funding for a variety of legal orientation programs for immigrants in detention and in removal proceedings. These programs often are the only form of legal information immigrants receive, and they play a critically important role in providing some modicum of due process for immigrants navigating the immigration system. When the government moved to terminate these programs in early 2025, the Firm immediately filed suit on the nonprofits’ behalf, seeking to reinstate access to basic legal information services and “Know Your Rights” presentations for immigrants facing deportation. The case is currently pending before the D.C. Circuit. We also represent the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in *USCCB v. State*, a case challenging the State Department’s suspension of funding for refugee resettlement activities, which have long been a cornerstone of the Catholic Church’s work in the United States. After months of intense litigation, featuring multiple arguments and oral arguments, the Conference has been able to negotiate new agreements with the government, allowing for it to receive critical funding for its refugee programming, even as it winds those programs down.

Gibson Dunn also filed litigation, *CLSEPA v. HHS*, on behalf of a group of nonprofit organizations that provide legal representation to unaccompanied immigrant children through the Unaccompanied Children Program.

In March 2025, the government abruptly cut funding for legal representation, leaving more than 26,000 children to face the immigration system alone. This lawsuit seeks to ensure the organizations are able to continue their important work, which safeguards the rights of vulnerable children navigating the immigration system alone and protects children from trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. Our team secured a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction ensuring unaccompanied children continue receiving legal representation as required by law, and the preliminary injunction is currently on appeal to the Ninth Circuit. The parties have agreed to stay district court proceedings pending the Ninth Circuit’s ruling.

Finally, we represent the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (“ASAP”) in *ASAP v. USCIS*, a lawsuit challenging a new \$100 fee imposed on asylum seekers each year their asylum application remains pending. The announcement of the fee included unclear and conflicting instructions, resulting in widespread confusion and fear among asylum seekers. We challenged the agencies’ implementation of the fee and sought emergency relief, arguing the agencies’ retroactive and inconsistent implementation of the fee violated the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”). The court agreed in part, finding the agencies acted arbitrarily and capriciously, and entered a nationwide stay to temporarily halt enforcement.



“ It has been our pleasure to represent ASAP and its members in challenging the government’s unlawful implementation of the annual asylum fee. This case has been a fantastic opportunity for our team to help people in the real world. ”



Matt Gregory  
Partner, Washington, D.C.

In addition to our direct impact litigation work, Gibson Dunn ensured that subject-matter experts had their voices heard in cases with national import. We recently filed an amicus brief on behalf of 51 former Immigration Judges (“IJs”) and Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA”) judges in *Urias-Orellana v. Bondi*. There, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether IJ and BIA “persecution” determinations are factual findings (reviewed with deference by federal courts of appeals) or questions of law (subject to non-deferential review). These determinations are critical because they inform whether a noncitizen in removal proceedings is eligible for asylum.

Our amicus brief drew on the judges’ extensive experience within the immigration courts, and argued that determining whether an asylum applicant experienced past persecution within the meaning of the Immigration and Nationality Act is an inherently legal question that requires applying a legal standard to established facts—not merely compiling and weighing evidence. The former judges also noted that non-deferential judicial review from federal judges is vital to providing IJs important guidance as they work through the growing backlog of almost 4 million immigration cases and to correcting legal errors resulting from inevitable mistakes in that overburdened system. The Supreme Court heard oral argument in *Urias-Orellana* on December 1, 2025, with a decision expected in 2026.



“ Our amicus brief in *Urias-Orellana* was my first filing before the U.S. Supreme Court—a milestone for me personally and professionally. The brief also provided me the chance to learn about a unique area of immigration law and develop my writing skills with a wonderful team of attorneys from the New York and D.C. offices. Most of all, I deeply valued the opportunity to work with Gibson’s long-time clients, a coalition of former immigration judges and Board of Immigration Appeals judges, to help provide an institutional perspective on a pressing issue of immigration law. ”

Jake Sherman

## International Immigration Work

The Firm also maintains an active immigration practice outside the United States. For example, a Paris-based team recently obtained French visas for an Afghan family. One of the family's children fled from Afghanistan at the age of 14, following death threats due to his father's resistance to the Taliban regime. He fled alone, passing through Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Italy before finally arriving in France as an unaccompanied minor. Once there, he faced the challenges of navigating a new language, complex administrative procedures, and the deep pain of being separated from his loved ones. But he persevered and was granted asylum in France two years later. A Gibson Dunn team worked with the child, his two parents, and his seven siblings for over a year to help them apply for family reunification in France. Finally, after more than five years apart, the family reunited at Charles de Gaulle Airport in September 2025.

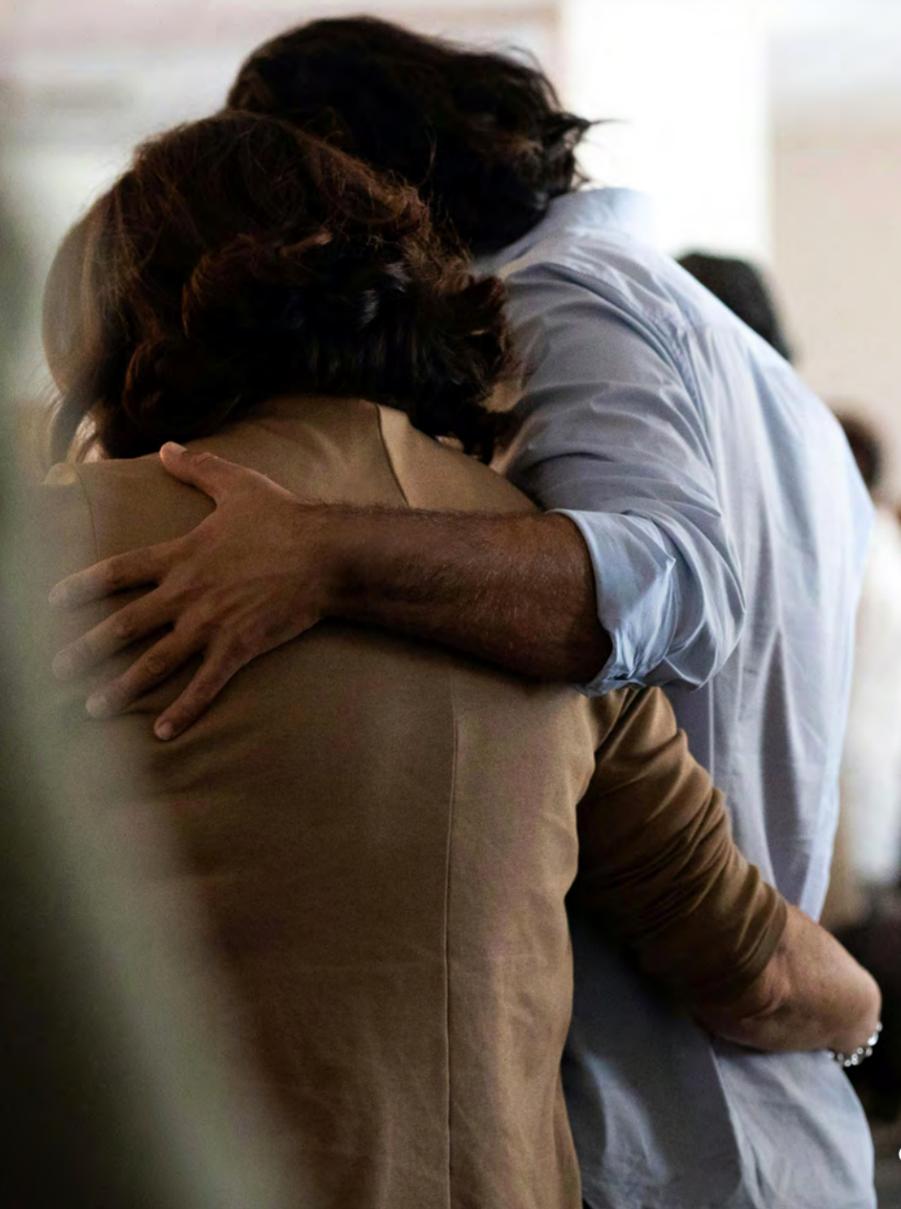
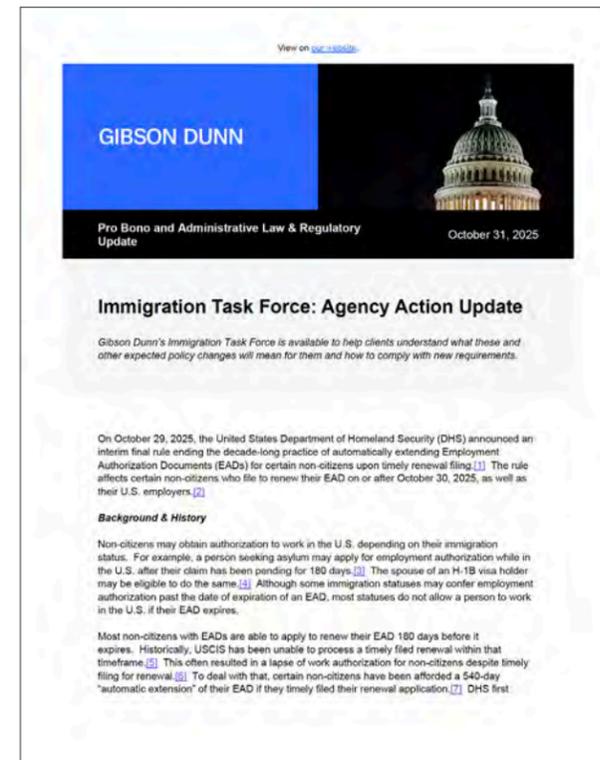
“ Witnessing the family's reunion after so many years apart was an unforgettable moment that gave real meaning to our efforts. The collaboration with Safe Passage was crucial throughout, and together we helped navigate a complex process that ultimately brought a family back together. ”



Alex Bluett  
Partner, Paris

## Immigration Task Force

In January 2025, we launched an Immigration Task Force, bringing together the Firm's expertise in humanitarian immigration law, global crisis response, employment law, appellate and constitutional law, and administrative law and policy. The Task Force's goals are to provide clients—corporate, nonprofit, and individual—with timely, thoughtful updates and advice on immigration developments, including newly issued executive orders, court decisions, and other developments across both the business and humanitarian immigration sectors. This work dovetails with our robust pro bono immigration practice, which has long stood for the belief that lawyers have a responsibility to promote safety, freedom, and justice for those seeking refuge from persecution, safety from physical and sexual violence, and the chance to build a better life.



# STANDING AGAINST HATE

Discrimination comes in many forms—whether it be based on race, religion, sexuality, or some other protected characteristic—from many sources—whether it be societal norms or government action—and with many consequences—from an infringement on a person’s pursuit of happiness to loss of life. At Gibson Dunn, we have always been committed to using our pro bono practice to combat the full spectrum of discrimination to achieve equality under the law for all. In 2025, this included fighting antisemitism and filing litigation on behalf of people of color who were discriminated against by the police and private citizens alike. Together, our attorneys stand firm against all manner of hatred.





## Antisemitism

To help fight the scourge of antisemitism, Gibson Dunn was proud to partner with the Anti-Defamation League, Hillel International, and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, in launching the Campus Antisemitism Legal Line (“CALL”), a free legal protection helpline for students and professors on college campuses who have experienced antisemitic violence, hate, and discrimination.

CALL invites any student or professor who experiences an antisemitic incident on campus to submit an incident report at [www.legal-protection.org](http://www.legal-protection.org). Anyone who submits an incident report will receive an intake call from a volunteer lawyer within 24 hours. After each intake, attorneys conduct in-depth information-gathering interviews and draft detailed memoranda summarizing the relevant information. CALL uses those memoranda to assess the potential for legal action, and, if appropriate, arrange for pro bono representation for students and other impacted individuals.

Since its founding in November 2023, CALL has received more than 830 incident reports from students and faculty at over 260 college campuses across

the country. More than 50 attorneys from Gibson Dunn have participated in CALL’s important work, volunteering thousands of hours to providing critical support and guidance to students and faculty in the face of rising threats and acts of antisemitism. Over 350 attorneys, ranging from partners and associates at large law firms to solo practitioners across the country, have volunteered to join our efforts. We are committed to continuing to support the fight against antisemitism through CALL and other similar initiatives.

In 2025, building on CALL’s foundation, we also helped launch the ADL Legal Action Network. This unprecedented, coordinated network of law firms provides free legal assistance to victims of antisemitism. Gibson Dunn, alongside a steering committee of additional law firms, has brought in more than 40 firms across the United States to receive client referrals or provide support as co-counsel through this initiative. The ADL Legal Action Network provides victims with access to a national response system and a nationwide network of law firms who will assess relevant reports and, where warranted, conduct in-depth information-gathering interviews to help assess whether to provide pro-bono representation for victims.

## Anti-Black Racism

Fighting for racial justice has long been an integral aspect of our pro bono practice. In one such case, we are representing Keith Puckett, a Black resident of the City of El Segundo, in a lawsuit against the City for racial profiling and unlawful detention by the El Segundo Police Department (“ESPD”) after he directly experienced racial profiling by ESPD twice in a two-month span in 2021. In one incident, six ESPD officers arrived outside Mr. Puckett’s home in the middle of the night and questioned him after having seen a Black man (a guest of Mr. Puckett’s) outside his home. The officers eventually said it was a simple misunderstanding and left. In the second incident, Mr. Puckett was pulled over after an ESPD officer drove past him in the opposite direction, did a U-turn, and falsely claimed the light above Mr. Puckett’s rear license plate wasn’t working. When the officer failed to discover any evidence of wrongdoing, he let Mr. Puckett go.

In April 2025, the Firm won a significant victory on behalf of Mr. Puckett when the Torrance Superior Court rejected an effort by the City to dismiss the case. The Court also denied the City’s motion to strike certain allegations in the complaints—including the City’s long history of racial discrimination and incidents of racial profiling of others by ESPD. The Court recognized the complaint was well pleaded and permitted the case to move forward, finding that Mr. Puckett “adequately identifie[d] a custom, policy, and/or practice of racial profiling by the City.”





## Anti-Asian Hate

When COVID-19 led to a surge in anti-Asian hatred, Gibson Dunn immediately stepped up as a leader in the national response. After co-founding the Alliance for Asian American Justice, an initiative to provide pro bono legal representation to victims of anti-Asian hate, Gibson Dunn teams across the Firm assisted individuals and families who had faced attack merely for having Asian heritage. Through these cases, we sought to amplify our clients' voices, ensure accountability for wrongdoers, and reduce bigotry in our communities.

Earlier this year, we secured a settlement on behalf of Dr. Bidisha Rudra, who was the victim of an unprovoked and violent assault unleashed on a group of Indian American women. The suit arose from an August 24, 2022, incident in which Esmeralda Upton began an unprovoked and violent assault on Dr. Rudra and three other Indian American women in the parking lot of a Plano, Texas restaurant. The attack lasted several minutes, during which Ms. Upton screamed racial epithets, struck the women, and threatened to shoot them. The Alliance for Asian American Justice referred the case to Gibson Dunn, which represented Dr. Rudra in a civil suit against Ms. Upton for assault, battery, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. Ms. Upton separately pleaded guilty to three criminal counts of assault and one criminal count of making terroristic threats, with each count accompanied by hate-crime enhancements as a result of her attack.

“ While this settlement offers a measure of closure, the deep scar left by the racial hate crime I endured remains with me. The pain and trauma are not easily erased, and they fuel my resolve to keep fighting. This crusade against racism is far from over. I will stand as an ally and a voice for those who are too afraid or hesitant to speak out. I am also grateful to Gibson Dunn and The Alliance for Asian American Justice for their support and legal expertise in the fight against racism and bigotry. Together, we must continue the fight to eradicate racial hate and build a more just and equitable society. This journey toward justice continues—for me, for all of us. ”

Dr. Bidisha Rudra

“ It was my honor and privilege to represent Dr. Rudra throughout the course of her civil litigation; her strength and courage in coming forward and litigating this matter are inspiring. This matter is a shining example of how Gibson Dunn's pro bono efforts can make a meaningful and substantial difference to an individual client and in the broader fight against racism. ”



Poonam Kumar  
Partner, Los Angeles

# VETERANS

After they have given so much in service of our country, it is our collective responsibility to support and uplift veterans. Gibson Dunn is honored to have the chance to use its pro bono practice to do just that, showing our appreciation of veterans by providing them with legal representation as they reenter society and, often, learn to live with conditions they have developed as a result of their service. This year, we were proud to assist veterans in securing benefits that they are entitled to, including litigating appeals of benefits denials and advocating for discharge upgrades to ensure they receive the support they deserve. We also assisted veterans with resolving outstanding legal issues, allowing them to build stable and happy lives as civilians.



## Veterans Benefits

After serving their country, veterans are entitled to depend on the Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) for healthcare, necessary disability compensation, and other essential support. But far too many veterans are wrongly denied benefits even when they meet eligibility requirements—often because of bureaucratic errors, misapplied regulations, or inadequate consideration of service-connected conditions. The consequences can be severe, leaving veterans without critical resources and forcing them to navigate a confusing and burdensome appeals process alone. Through our pro bono practice, Gibson Dunn attorneys can make a decisive difference for veterans forced through this process. We help veterans challenge improper denials, secure fair review of their claims, and obtain the care and compensation needed to live healthy, safe, and stable lives.

One of our clients served honorably in the U.S. Navy from 2003 to 2007. His service caused him to develop serious medical conditions, including a back injury that was determined to be service connected. Despite this, the VA denied his claim for benefits in connection with nerve pain in his legs related to his back injury. After the Board of Veterans’ Appeals upheld that denial, Gibson Dunn filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (“CAVC”). Based on our briefing alone, the VA conceded our argument and agreed to file a joint motion to remand our client’s case to the Board for further consideration without the need to proceed further. Ultimately, after spending months developing a factual record, including an independent medical report used to support our arguments, we persuaded the VA to grant our client’s benefits claim—a life-changing result for our client.

Another client served a combined ten years in the U.S. Army and National Guard, assigned to duties that required him to regularly work with heavy artillery, firearms, and tanks. He often did this work without protective headgear or even ear plugs. This led to a persistent ringing in his ears and hearing loss that has gotten progressively worse since exiting the military. Although he was able to obtain benefits for the ringing

“ This matter provided excellent hands-on experience, including the opportunity to develop a comprehensive factual record and align it with an overall litigation strategy. Most importantly, it is a privilege to support veterans in pursuing meaningful relief on matters of profound personal importance. ”



Veronica Altabef  
Associate, Dallas

in his ears, the VA denied him benefits for his hearing loss—reasoning that he had not established his service was the ultimate cause of the disability. The Board of Veterans Appeals upheld this decision. A Gibson Dunn team appealed the Board’s decision to the CAVC. Our briefing convinced the VA to forego additional merits briefing in favor of agreeing to a remand with instructions consistent with that briefing.

In yet another case, a Gibson Dunn team successfully represented an 87-year-old veteran in connection with his veterans benefits appeal, resulting in the veteran receiving tens of thousands of dollars in backpay and an additional \$2,000 in monthly benefits going forward. The veteran, who served in the Army, had previously been awarded a 100% disability rating for his service-connected neurocognitive behavior. In 2022, the VA unilaterally reduced the veteran’s disability rating to 50%. Gibson Dunn successfully negotiated with the VA to agree to remand the veteran’s claim because the VA had not provided an adequate statement of the reasons for its decision. Gibson Dunn continued to represent the veteran on remand and persuaded the VA to grant the veteran a new disability rating equivalent to a 100% rating.

In some cases, veterans face such debilitating injuries that they are unable to care for themselves. In these cases, we have been honored to help our clients obtain additional, life-changing compensation. For example, a Gibson Dunn team helped Mr. O, a Gulf War Navy Veteran, obtain VA benefits after nearly two years of

“ I have always had a deep respect and admiration for those that put their health and bodies on the line in service of defending our country. So, when the opportunity arose for me to pay an individual back for that sacrifice, it was a no brainer on my end. I am honored to have had the chance to collaborate with Andrew Kilberg to secure a favorable result for our client in his benefits appeal. And I’m proud the Firm has been supportive as we continue to dedicate the time necessary on remand to ensure he obtains the benefits he’s earned. ”

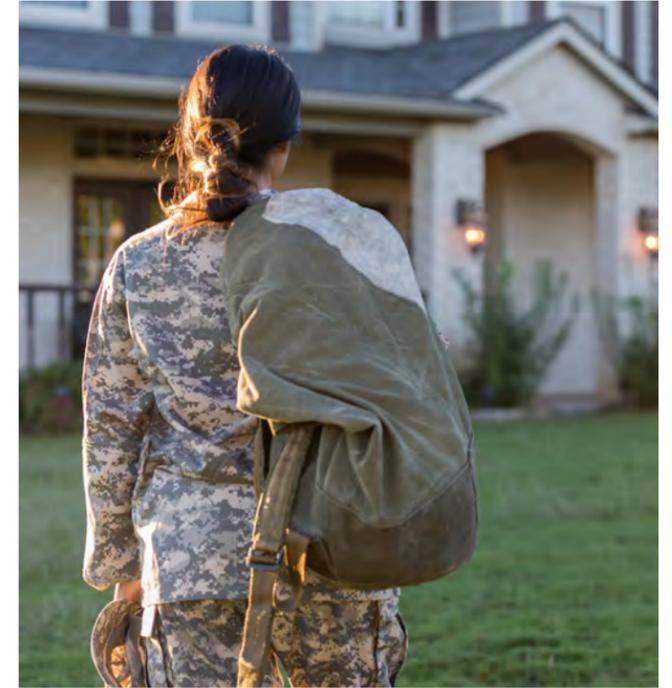


Marquan Roberston  
Associate, Washington, D.C.

advocacy. Our client suffers from significant service-related injuries that render him unable to perform activities of daily living, but he was receiving very limited benefits and living on a shoestring budget. Following multiple appeals and hearings, our team persuaded the VA to increase our client’s disability rating from 70% to 100%, to grant a special monthly compensation for his caregiver spouse under the Aid & Attendance Program, and to provide assistance through the Dependents’ Educational Assistance program. These decisions more than tripled the amount of benefits our client and his family will receive each month. Notably, the benefits were also paid retroactively, resulting in a lump sum of previously withheld benefits.

“ I cannot express how much I appreciate all the hard work you have all put into helping us. We are so very grateful. ‘Thank you’ doesn’t communicate how I am currently feeling. ”

Mr. O  
Pro Bono Client



## Supporting Veterans’ Reintegration

Transitioning back to civilian life can be extremely challenging for many veterans, especially those who have endured the physical and emotional impacts of combat. This process can be further complicated by mental health issues, substance use disorders, and involvement with the criminal justice system. These difficulties can serve as major obstacles to securing employment, stable housing, and essential services, trapping some veterans in a cycle of hardship and marginalization.

To help address these issues, in May 2025, attorneys from Gibson Dunn partnered with the Los Angeles County Bar Association to staff a legal clinic dedicated to supporting veterans in clearing outstanding warrants and addressing expungement of low-level criminal records. Attorneys offered their time and expertise to guide veterans through the process of record expungement and warrant resolution, providing meaningful assistance to those striving to rebuild their lives. By tackling these legal challenges, the initiative aims to support veterans in overcoming obstacles and building a more stable, hopeful future.

# ADVISING SMALL BUSINESSES & NONPROFITS

Our local communities and the world at large are made more vibrant, equal, and efficient through the work of small businesses and nonprofits. Small businesses help create jobs, fuel economies, and address the needs of the communities they exist within. And nonprofits pursue a vast array of missions that focus on pursuing the public good in lieu of profits. Each year, Gibson Dunn attorneys provide pro bono representation to small businesses and nonprofits in underfunded and underserved communities. This representation includes advice directed to all stages of a business's or nonprofit's operation, from advising fledgling organizations on their initial entity formation and corporate governance to assisting organizations with their day-to-day needs like contract drafting and lease negotiations. Through this work, our pro bono practice plays a small role in furthering organizations that are spreading light around the globe.



## Entity Formation

Selecting the appropriate organizational structure is a critical first step to building a strong foundation that will enable an organization to succeed. We are proud to work with small businesses and nonprofits as they take that all-important leap from an idea to a reality. For example, a Gibson Dunn team recently worked with a client who creates vibrant murals and artwork rooted in her Mexican-American heritage. Her business offers both products, such as art prints, canvas paintings, and portraits, and services, such as mural design, custom portraits, and illustrations. We were honored to advise this client in selecting the right legal entity for her business, which was critical to transforming her passion project into a sustainable business that continues to uplift her community through art.

Another team is helping a new nonprofit, the Scooby Foundation, obtain 501(c)(3) status. The Foundation seeks to alleviate the financial burden on pet owners during emergencies by helping them cover the cost of emergency vet care. By creating a sustainable fund, the organization is seeking to foster the bond between pets and owners and make a lasting impact on the community.



## Compliance and Corporate Governance

We also regularly advise clients on general corporate matters after their businesses are already up and running. For example, a team of Gibson Dunn attorneys is working with two sisters who own a specialized medical wig company that provides customized cranial prostheses for women experiencing medical hair loss from cancer, alopecia, lupus, burns, and other conditions. The company sources ethical human hair, provides textured and curly options that are not always otherwise available, and focuses on offering products that are covered by insurance. Our team is advising the sisters regarding California LLC, California Public Benefit Corporation, and 501(c)(3) compliance, as well as other corporate matters.

“ Pro bono work provides a chance for all attorneys at the Firm to use our skills to make a meaningful difference. As corporate lawyers, we bring strategic thinking and problem-solving to the table. When we apply those same tools to help individuals or communities in need, the impact is powerful. ”

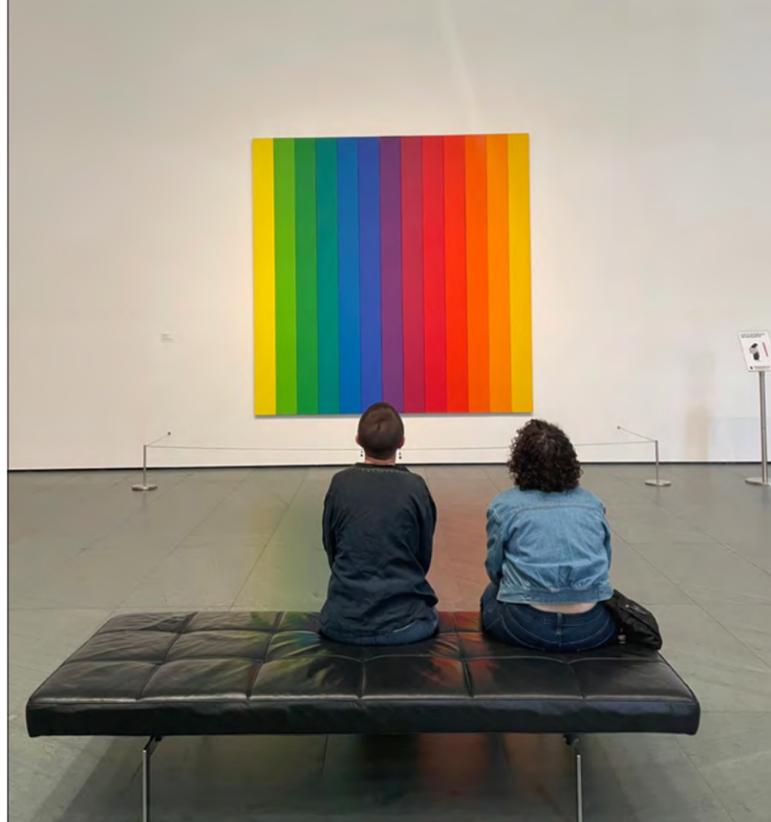


Melanie Neary  
Partner, San Francisco



## Contracts and Doing Business Online

As small businesses grow, they often find that doing business online is both imperative to their continued success and full of potential pitfalls. Our attorneys work closely with small businesses trying to navigate these considerations as they expand into doing business online. We have a longstanding partnership with Start Small Think Big, an organization that connects small business owners with pro bono legal and other services, to help small businesses draft and update their privacy policies and terms of use to reflect current best practices. Our clients range from ceramics studios to electrical contracting companies, and everything in between. One recent client, for example, runs a business that brings a carefully curated and individually selected range of authentic African products to U.S. consumers. As the client worked to formalize her business, gain brand visibility, and host in-person sales events, doing business online was a critically important aspect of her business strategy. Our team was proud to help this client pursue her passion of making authentic African textiles, accessories, and home goods available to customers in the United States.



## Real Estate and Leasing

Of course, many small businesses and nonprofits operate not only online, but also in brick-and-mortar locations that are part of the fabric of their communities. Gibson Dunn attorneys regularly advise pro bono clients on a range of real estate matters, from commercial leasing to site selection and land acquisition. Currently, for example, a team of attorneys in San Francisco is assisting the GLBT Historical Society Museum with its negotiations with the City of San Francisco to establish a permanent home for the museum in the city. The GLBT Historical Society Museum, which opened in 2011, is the first standalone museum of LGBTQ+ history and culture in the United States. The museum mounts wide-ranging exhibitions with an emphasis on diversity and social justice, including both long-term exhibitions and temporary shows. We are proud to help the GLBT Historical Society as it seeks to find a more permanent home for its museum.

## Global Transactional Advice

As with the Firm's overall pro bono practice, our work with nonprofits transcends borders. We regularly advise charities, NGOs, and international nonprofits on a wide range of matters. Currently, a team based in our Riyadh office is providing legal advice to Alwaleed Philanthropies, a Saudi Arabian NGO with a mission to build the bridges necessary for cultural understanding, community development, female and youth empowerment, and disaster relief in times of crisis. Over the course of four decades, it has donated and spent more than \$4.4 billion, launched over 1,000 projects, and reached more than 1 billion beneficiaries in over 190 countries worldwide. Gibson Dunn's Riyadh office is providing corporate advice to Alwaleed Philanthropies as they navigate a new partnership. Previously, we supported Alwaleed Philanthropies in reviewing contracts associated with grant-funded projects, including assessing key terms and helping streamline the contracting process to align with Alwaleed's strategic objectives.



# LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

For decades, Gibson Dunn has been a leader in the push to provide LGBTQ+ individuals with equality under the law; the firm's pro bono advocacy before the Supreme Court in invalidating a California ballot measure that banned same-sex marriage remains one of our proudest accomplishments. Since then, LGBTQ+ individuals in certain parts of the globe have seen real, tangible improvements in their treatment. But for far too many, equality remains nothing but a distant dream.

Because oppression of LGBTQ+ individuals comes in many forms and in many places, our work is multifaceted. We provide direct representation to LGBTQ+ individuals seeking to flee persecution or to have their authentic selves respected in their communities. We fight against discriminatory state actions and laws that harm members of the LGBTQ+ community. And we support small businesses and nonprofits that empower the LGBTQ+ community.



## LGBTQ+ Asylum Initiative

In recent years, our attorneys have assisted hundreds of LGBTQ individuals seeking refuge in the United States from persecution in their home countries. This initiative has become a cornerstone of our pro bono practice, bringing together attorneys from across the Firm to pursue the shared goal of helping our clients live safely as their authentic selves, free from the risk of persecution on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

As part of this initiative, we recently secured asylum for a gay Jamaican man who had endured years of persecution and violence because of his sexual orientation. Jamaica remains one of the most dangerous places in the world for gay men, marked by widespread homophobic violence, police complicity, and government inaction. In a deadly mob attack in 2008, our client and three gay friends were brutally beaten and stabbed by more than a dozen men who broke into their home. This incident—reported by The New York Times and local outlets highlighting the severity of homophobic violence—left one of the victims missing (and presumed dead) and forced our client to flee Jamaica in fear for his life. We first filed an asylum application on our client’s behalf in 2019, but it was denied and referred to immigration court without explanation. A merits hearing scheduled for 2021 was postponed indefinitely, leaving the client in limbo throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. After several agonizing years of uncertainty, the hearing was finally rescheduled for October 2025. After hearing the extensive evidence of our client’s past persecution, his fear of future harm, and the dangerous conditions in Jamaica, the Immigration Judge granted asylum, finding our client’s account credible and fully corroborated by the record. The government waived appeal, ensuring that our client can now safely build a new life in the United States. Some of our clients in our LGBTQ+ Asylum Initiative initially came to us seeking different

“ I was constantly reminded that, ultimately, it is our client’s life at stake. Due to the nature of the facts involved, we carefully balanced the need for meticulous preparation against the heavy emotional toll imposed on the client by revisiting past traumatic events. Maintaining this balance was key to developing a close and trusting relationship with the client, which allowed us to efficiently develop a strong defense. It is extraordinarily rewarding to know that we helped avert a potentially fatal outcome. ”



Sung Bin Lee  
Associate, New York

legal help, including with name and gender marker changes. For example, we were first connected with Ms. P, an LGBTQ+ Mexican immigrant, to assist with her name change. This marked a foundational moment in her life, helping her be legally recognized as the woman she is. After obtaining her name change, we then submitted asylum applications on behalf of Ms. P and her husband, who is also an LGBTQ+ Mexican immigrant. In summer 2025, after years of waiting, Ms. P and her husband finally received their asylum interview date. Finally, in October 2025, Ms. P and her husband were officially granted asylum in the United States, putting them on a path to lawful permanent residence and, ultimately, citizenship.

“ When I received the notice that Ms. P’s asylum application was granted, I immediately became emotional. I dropped everything I was doing and called Ms. P, used every bit of Spanish I’d picked up in the last three years to tell her the news, and we cried tears of joy together on the phone. It is humbling to have someone’s livelihood entrusted to you the way we were entrusted with Ms. P’s. We all are breathing easier knowing she now has legal status in the U.S., that she is safer here than she was in Mexico, and she won’t be forced to return to that place and leave behind this beautiful new life she has started here with her husband in New York. This has honestly been one of the most rewarding projects I have ever, and likely will ever, work on in my career. I am honored to have played a role in this. ”



Jacqueline Malzone  
Associate, New York

We have been fortunate to obtain asylum on behalf of dozens of LGBTQ+ clients from around the world. Many of these clients are eligible to continue their immigration journeys by applying for green cards, and we are proud to have assisted many of our clients in this process. In one recent representation, for example, Gibson Dunn attorneys assisted Mr. S, an LGBTQ+ man who fled severe persecution in India due to his HIV-positive status. Through their efforts, the team helped Mr. S secure a green card, continuing his path to citizenship. The team supported Mr. S through the adjustment of status process, advocating for his right to security and stability in the United States. Now, with his green card, Mr. S can live and work in the U.S. without fear of deportation, marking a life-changing milestone. The team felt privileged to represent Mr. S and to get to know the inspiring, resilient person he is throughout his journey.





## Legal Name and Gender Marker Changes

We also represent transgender and gender nonconforming individuals who hope to secure legal name and/or gender marker changes outside the immigration context. This process, which can be intimidating to unrepresented individuals, ensures that individuals receive the respect of being called their true names when dealing with employers, government agencies, hospitals, and more. It also comes with huge emotional significance for our clients. But for some individuals, achieving a name or gender marker change is only half the battle. They may feel unsafe if the fact of that change occurring is public record. To help those individuals, Gibson Dunn has launched a project to help name change recipients in California to seal the records of their name change. In doing so, our attorneys have the ability to help clients attain not only respect, but security.

“ Sealing name change records has been incredibly rewarding for our clients and our teams. It’s a small act in the grand scheme of things, but it means the world to these families to have an extra layer of protection for their children in a time where trans rights are under fire. ”



**Katherine Smith**  
Partner, Los Angeles



## Chiles v. Salazar Amicus Brief

In addition to our representation of members of the LGBTQ+ community in the immigration system, we also regularly seek to protect LGBTQ+ rights through the judicial system. In 2025, Gibson Dunn and Pallas Partners filed an amicus brief at the U.S. Supreme Court in *Chiles v. Salazar* on behalf of The Trevor Project, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness in support of Colorado’s narrowly tailored ban on conversion therapy.

Colorado’s ban prohibits licensed therapists from using conversion therapy on minors to attempt to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. The case concerns whether the ban violates the First Amendment. Gibson Dunn’s clients provided important perspective on the ban, including

that it prevents a practice that causes serious harm to LGBTQ youth. The Trevor Project’s data and experience confirm that conversion therapy delivered under the guise of professional care is dangerous and causes significant harm to LGBTQ youth, including increasing their risk of attempting or dying by suicide. The Colorado legislature properly considered this data and competing positions and ultimately concluded that a ban was necessary to mitigate the established serious harms arising from conversion therapy. In passing the ban, under *United States v. Skrmetti* and a long line of precedent, Colorado exercised its traditional authority to protect minors and its authority to regulate medical treatments and standards of care offered by licensed professionals.

# HOUSING

A person's ability to secure safe, habitable housing is often determinative of his or her ability to survive and thrive. Far too many people in our communities or around the world are attempting to subsist in the reality of homelessness or uninhabitable conditions, or to get by living in the shadow of the threat of homelessness. The causes of these challenges are myriad and complicated. Frequently, dealing with these challenges involves addressing complicated interplays of local, state, and federal laws and navigating through systems like housing court where there is no right to counsel.

Pro bono attorneys can make a real difference in these situations, by offering representation and counsel to individuals who are dealing with new legal challenges at a time when they have less time and energy than ever to confront those challenges. In 2025, Gibson Dunn expanded its role in combatting homelessness and uninhabitable housing to new levels. The results are tangible and fundamental: a roof over a head, a dry bed, and a clean place to call home. We are pleased to share some of those results below.





## Responding to the Los Angeles Wildfires

In the wake of the devastating wildfires that swept through Los Angeles in January 2025, many Angelenos were suddenly and unexpectedly dealing with homelessness. Our Firm mobilized its pro bono resources to support some of our most vulnerable community members. Attorneys from multiple offices came together to address the urgent legal needs emerging in the wake of the disaster. A core focus of this effort has been assisting low-income renters displaced by the fires with urgent lease negotiations, remediation cost recovery, and other landlord disputes—critical interventions at a time when housing insecurity is at its peak.

Gibson Dunn lawyers have also provided essential support on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) appeals. Many of those impacted by fires were initially denied FEMA assistance due to technical errors, missing documentation, or confusion about eligibility. Our attorneys have helped clients understand the reasoning behind denials, gather supporting evidence, and prepare strong written appeals. By guiding clients through a complex and often opaque process, we're working to ensure that disaster relief reaches those who need it most.

The Firm has also supported local organizations that are designed to assist Angelenos in times of crisis. For example, Gibson Dunn has played a key role as pro bono counsel to Fourth Trimester, which quickly pivoted in the wake of the Los Angeles fires to help pregnant and postpartum mothers who had suffered from the fires. And we have also provided pro bono support to Builders Alliance, an organization that operates to speed up and reduce the cost of rebuilding homes lost in the fires.

This coordinated response reflects the entire Firm's deep commitment to community engagement and our belief in the power of pro bono work to bring stability, clarity, and hope during moments of crisis.



## Defending the Vulnerable from Eviction

Preventing vulnerable, impoverished, and often disabled individuals from being evicted is a major component of Gibson Dunn's housing work in the United States.

A team of attorneys recently secured a victory on behalf of a mentally and physically disabled client who was a tenant of a Section 8 subsidized apartment on Los Angeles' Skid Row. Thanks to the subsidy, our client was able to maintain housing at a rate that she was able to afford: approximately \$50/month in rent. When the apartment's Section 8 voucher lapsed, due in part to the landlord's failure to submit certain required documents, our client faced a significant risk of homelessness.

The team stepped in to the case shortly before a scheduled trial date, so time was of the essence. First, they defeated a motion that would have required the client to pay nearly \$1,000 in attorneys' fees. They also coordinated with various third parties involved in Section 8 housing in Los Angeles—the client's case worker, the Housing Authority for the City of Los Angeles ("HACLA"), the Los Angeles Housing Department, and the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health. Collectively, that group was able to ensure that the client's Section 8 recertification was submitted and approved by HACLA, prior to the scheduled trial date. Once the recertification was processed, the rent owed by our client was paid by the Housing Authority, and the landlord dismissed the case in full.

“Gibson Dunn has a long history of partnering with public interest organizations to represent indigent tenants subject to unlawful detainer actions, a tradition we continue to this day. Most attempted evictions of lower income individuals are without merit and the numbers bear this out at a staggering level. Whereas an unrepresented individual in this situation stands less than a 5% chance of prevailing, a tenant with representation obtains a favorable outcome 95% of the time. So having a lawyer is literally outcome determinative. And Gibson Dunn has been fortunate and proud to represent all manner of deserving individuals in these cases, including veterans, single parents, and those with mental health challenges.”



Jay Srinivasan  
Partner, Los Angeles

Another Gibson Dunn team successfully represented an Angeleno, Mr. S., a man who was rendered permanently disabled after suffering a stroke. After his stroke, Mr. S.'s landlord made repeated remarks that Mr. S. was unfit to live alone and should be in a nursing home. In an attempt to evict Mr. S., the landlord alleged that Mr. S. breached the lease by making unauthorized alterations in the unit despite having known about the alterations for years. A Gibson Dunn team working with Bet Tzedek Legal Services secured a dismissal without prejudice on May 27, 2025, ensuring Mr. S.'s continued ability to reside in his longtime residence.

## Housing Repair

While avoiding eviction is a critical part of fighting homelessness, ensuring that apartments remain habitable is equally important. To accomplish this goal, Gibson Dunn routinely represents tenants seeking to require their landlords to make repairs that are required under local, state, and federal law. In one such case, Gibson Dunn represents Gurdial Pardesi, a retired New York City corrections officer with a disability, who lives on the fifth floor of a walkup in a rent-stabilized apartment. He has lived in the same apartment for over forty years, but he has become less mobile after undergoing several knee surgeries and living with a congenital foot defect. His medical conditions have made it nearly impossible for him to climb the stairs to and from his apartment, rendering him unable to leave his apartment to attend medical appointments. His isolation in his apartment has taken a toll on both his mental and physical well-being. He cannot go to his Sikh temple and connect with his community. And he cannot go to the gym, which prevents him from doing the limited exercises he can do.

The standard reasonable accommodation in these circumstances would be for his landlord to transfer him to a first-floor unit, maintaining his rent-stabilized status. Yet after nearly a year of negotiations with Mr. Pardesi's landlord, the landlord has denied that Mr. Pardesi has a disability and refused to consider a reasonable accommodation. Gibson Dunn has filed a lawsuit in the Southern District of New York on behalf of Mr. Pardesi for disability discrimination under the Fair Housing Amendments Act.

Gibson Dunn also worked to uphold the ability of nonprofit organizations to continue providing pro bono legal services to impoverished New Yorkers seeking to secure housing repair. The firm represented Section 8 tenants in New York, including a family seeking a reasonable accommodation for their disabled son and the occupants of apartments made uninhabitable by

fire, in two sets of appeals. Both sets of plaintiffs were represented by the Legal Aid Society in housing court proceedings. In the appeal arising from the proceedings to restore the tenants to their homes, the court awarded only a fraction of the requested attorneys' fees—reasoning that nonprofit counsel should not receive market-rate compensation despite prevailing on the underlying motions. The decision threatened to undermine the ability of legal services organizations to advocate for tenants' rights. Gibson Dunn appealed, arguing that this reduction misapplied the legal standard for fee awards and failed to include essential costs such as process server fees. The appellate court agreed, emphasizing a long-standing precedent that lawyers' fees must reflect prevailing market rates, regardless of whether representation is provided by a nonprofit or a private firm, and remanded for a new determination of reasonable fees.

“ It was a privilege to advocate for tenants whose homes and stability were at stake, and for the nonprofit advocates who are indispensable in protecting fundamental rights. For many unhoused and low-income New Yorkers, housing is a daily concern. Ensuring that nonprofit advocates are supported and fairly compensated allows them to continue representing the most vulnerable populations. ”



Vanessa Ajagu  
Associate, New York

## London and New York Housing Disrepair Advocacy Projects

In light of the scale of the problem of landlords refusing to remedy fundamental defects in the apartments they are offering to tenants, Gibson Dunn has been proud to play a leading role in dedicated pro bono initiatives in London and New York aimed at providing sweeping access to counsel for those most directly impacted by these practices.

In London, Gibson Dunn has been participating in a new project that works directly with individuals living in accommodations plagued with disrepair. In one case, a family with small children are living in an elevated flat with windows that do not close securely; in another, a family suffered such bad damp that it caused an insect infestation. Although these individuals had previously tried to approach their landlords, no remedial action had taken place. Volunteer lawyers from our London office have stepped up to strategize various approaches with the clients, explored commencing court action, and have written to various oversight bodies with powers to compel landlords to remedy disrepair.

Similarly, low-income New Yorkers are regularly forced to live in apartments that are in states of shocking disrepair: with insufficient heat, infestations with mold and vermin, and lacking working appliances. Gibson Dunn regularly partners with Legal Services NYC to host housing repair clinics to provide pro bono representation to individuals living in unlawful, dangerous conditions, filing housing repair actions in New York housing court. When landlords refuse to comply with the law even then, our attorneys pursue enforcement proceedings to ensure their clients homes are habitable. The complexity of the housing repair process only underlines the importance of providing legal representation to those who cannot afford it and would otherwise be forced to live in unsafe conditions—and Gibson Dunn is proud to help address that need.



# CRIMINAL JUSTICE

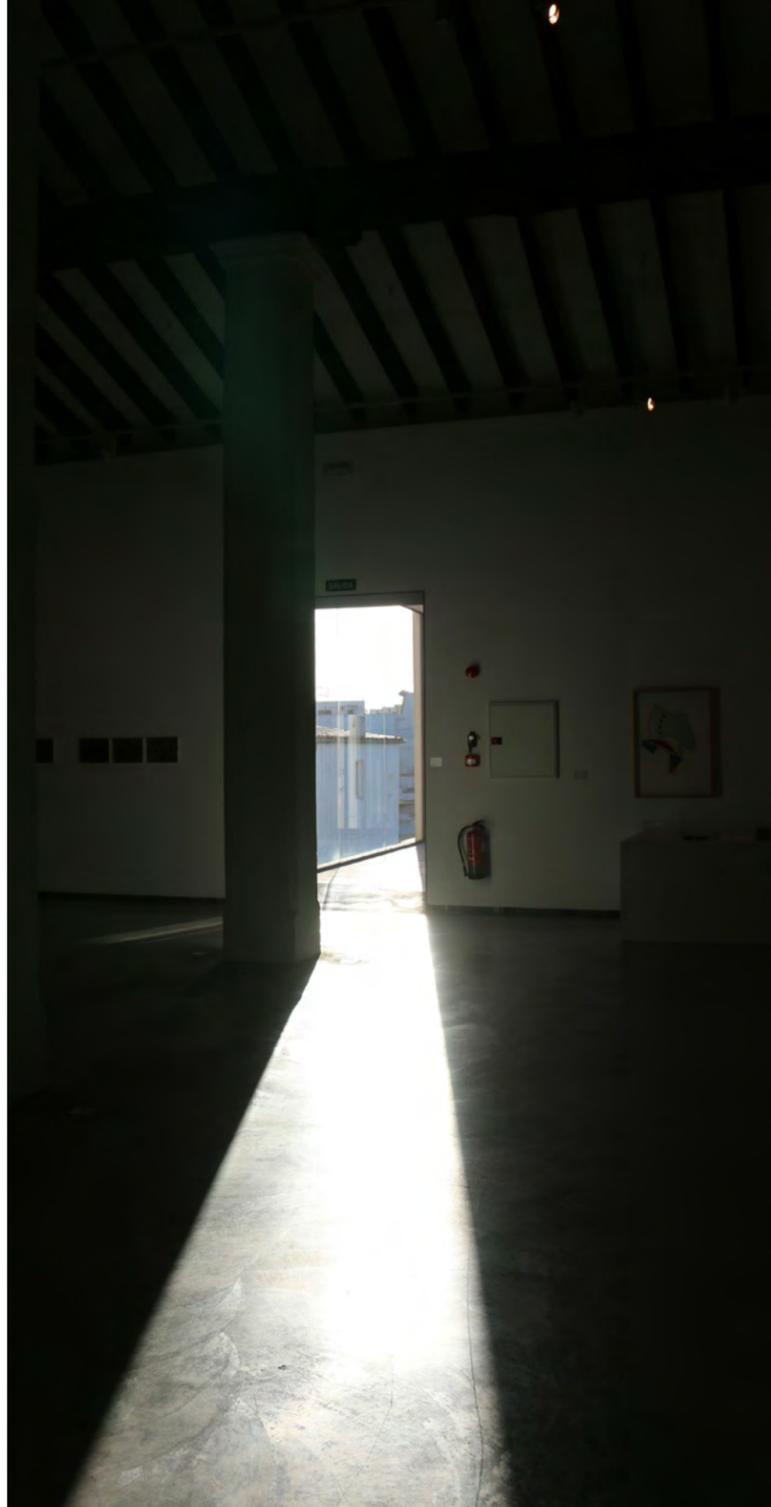
Our society depends on the criminal justice system to provide accountability for those who violate the law and some measure of justice to victims. But the system must accomplish those goals while respecting the rights of the accused and the convicted, while also respecting the rights of those more ancillary to a proceeding, including witnesses and victims. This delicate balancing act requires careful policing of the criminal justice system itself, a service that lawyers have a duty to provide. Gibson Dunn is proud to uphold that duty through its pro bono practice. We work to protect the accused and ensure fair trials by identifying and challenging wrongful convictions. We ensure humane treatment of the convicted by representing incarcerated people who have suffered violations of their constitutional rights. And we fight to limit the carceral system to that which serves the goals of a just society by pursuing compassionate release for the sick and dying. In providing pro bono representation at multiple levels of the criminal justice system, Gibson Dunn strives to make sure that the rights of victims, the accused, and the convicted do not fall by the wayside.



## Incarceration of the Innocent

On occasion, the criminal justice system malfunctions at a monumental level, resulting in the jailing of a person who is not only innocent, but against whom no lawful basis for incarceration exists. This year, Gibson Dunn partnered with the ACLU and Americans for Immigrant Justice in one such case. We represented Peter Sean Brown, a U.S. citizen who was improperly detained by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office ("MCSO") in 2018 after being misidentified as a deportable Jamaican immigrant. Mr. Brown, who was born in Philadelphia and had lived in Florida for more than 15 years at the time of his detention, has no ties to Jamaica. Nonetheless, the MCSO ignored Mr. Brown's repeated attempts to provide evidence of the misidentification, opting instead to detain him for weeks. Finally, after weeks of emotional trauma and uncertainty, Mr. Brown was released upon review of his birth certificate.

We filed suit in December 2018, arguing that MCSO Sheriff Richard Ramsay violated Mr. Brown's Fourth Amendment rights. After years of litigation, a federal court in the Southern District of Florida agreed. In June 2025, the court granted Mr. Brown's motion for partial summary judgment and ruled that his Fourth Amendment rights were violated. The court explained that there was no probable cause to issue the Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainer in the first place, and that MCSO could not "abdicate its legal responsibility and turn a blind eye" to the obvious evidence that Mr. Brown was a citizen. In the wake of this positive decision, our team negotiated a favorable settlement for Mr. Brown, ensuring he is compensated justly for the trauma and lost wages he suffered. The Gibson Dunn team that represented Mr. Brown was awarded the Firm's 2025 Frank Wheat Award in recognition of their exceptional work on Mr. Brown's behalf.



## Prisoners' Rights

The work of the criminal justice system does not stop when it rightly convicts an individual: the system must then ensure that the individual's punishment is lawful. When a detained person's constitutional rights are violated during their incarceration, litigation is often required to seek meaningful redress.

Amin Booker's story is a particularly tragic instance of the rights of the incarcerated being violated. Mr. Booker is an inmate in New York state prison who was placed in solitary confinement in 2015 as retaliation for complaining about abuse by the prison staff at Green Haven Correctional Facility. Prison employees claimed they placed Mr. Amin in solitary because he organized a peaceful protest. But the charges were fabricated; Mr. Booker was not involved in a protest at all. Prison officials deprived him of due process during the hearing that resulted in his solitary confinement, and during the periodic review hearings he received over the years. During the more than six years Mr. Booker was in solitary confinement, he spent 23 hours each day alone. Visits and phone calls with loved ones were forbidden. Gibson Dunn represented Mr. Booker in a \$1983 suit against those who carried out the scheme against him, alleging they violated his First Amendment right to free speech, Eighth Amendment right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment, and Fourteenth Amendment right to due process. In 2024, a court in the Southern

District of New York issued a favorable summary judgment ruling, holding Mr. Booker never should have been put in solitary confinement at all. Following that ruling, Gibson Dunn negotiated a favorable settlement on Mr. Booker's behalf, helping him obtain some modicum of justice for the abuses he suffered.

Gibson Dunn also represented Marquis Land, an inmate in California convicted of non-violent crimes who filed a pro se lawsuit in 2018 alleging excessive force in violation of the Eighth Amendment. Gibson Dunn was later appointed to represent Mr. Land.

The team successfully moved to amend Mr. Land's complaint and added state law claims against the officers for sexual assault, battery, assault, and intentional infliction of emotional distress, as well as a new failure-to-train claim against the prison's warden. When the defendant officers and warden moved to dismiss all the newly added claims, Gibson Dunn filed opposition briefing. Oral argument was held on April 15 and, on June 16, the court issued an opinion denying the motions to dismiss in part. As a result of the successful amendment, we helped Mr. Land negotiate a favorable settlement.



## Compassionate Release

Sometimes, convicted individuals develop conditions that render their continued incarcerations both unnecessary and inappropriate, such as when a person becomes so sick that they do not pose a danger to the public and cannot be adequately cared for by the prison. In those situations, compassionate release offers a path for convicted individuals to be released from prison before their sentences are fully served.

This year, Gibson Dunn obtained compassionate release on behalf of Mr. E, an elderly man who was serving a 30-year sentence for a non-violent drug crime and who had not seen his family for more than 20 years. Mr. E was more than 70 years old and suffering from a host of medical problems, the most serious of which being a progressive state of dementia. Gibson Dunn attorneys, working in partnership with the Federal Defender's Office for the Middle District of Florida, filed a motion seeking Mr. E's immediate release pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3582 and Section 1B1.13 of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines. The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida granted that motion, finding that Mr. E's physical and mental health had deteriorated to the point that he could no longer care for himself and posed no threat to the community. The Court converted Mr. E's sentence to time served and ordered his immediate processing for release. Mr. E consented to his immediate deportation and returned to his native Colombia, where he was greeted by his wife of more than 40 years and their six children, who had never given up on bringing him home.



## Criminal Law Amicus Briefs

Gibson Dunn also uses its pro bono practice to amplify the voices of subject matter experts in the deciding of critical cases touching on criminal law around the country.

In June 2025, a team of Gibson Dunn attorneys submitted an amicus brief in the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of six retired state and federal court judges in support of the criminal defendant in *Villarreal v. Texas*. The case concerns whether a trial court violated the defendant's Sixth Amendment right to counsel by prohibiting the defendant and his counsel from discussing the defendant's testimony during an overnight recess while allowing them to discuss trial strategy and other matters. Our amicus brief argued that this sort of line drawing is bad for criminal defendants and judges. Because there is no straightforward way to distinguish discussions about the defendant's testimony from discussions about trial strategy, the court's prohibition would be impossible to administer and require arbitrary distinctions between impermissible and permissible attorney-client discussions. The amicus brief argued that the resulting patchwork of Sixth Amendment rights would undermine the criminal justice system and create a chilling effect on attorneys' ability to advise their clients. The case was argued in October 2025 and is currently pending before the Court.

Gibson Dunn also represented the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers in filing two amicus briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of granting review over cases involving the constitutional right to trial by jury in criminal cases. In *Lesh v. United States*, we urged the Supreme Court to grant review to the case to reconsider the "petty offense" doctrine, an atextual exception that denies the jury-trial right to defendants accused of offenses punishable by up to six months in prison. Our brief in *Lesh* argued that so-called "petty" offenses carry the similar grave consequences and implicate the same interests motivating the broader jury-trial right. In *Parada v. United States*, we argued that the Supreme Court should grant review to overrule *Williams v. Florida*, the Court's 1970 decision holding that people may be convicted by criminal juries of fewer than twelve members. The *Parada* brief contends that the jury-trial right was always understood to require trial by twelve and that permitting conviction by fewer than twelve substantially undermines the purposes and effect of the right.



# INTERVIEW WITH SANCTUARY FOR FAMILIES





## SANCTUARY FOR FAMILIES

Sanctuary for Families is New York's leading service provider and advocate for survivors of domestic violence, sex trafficking, and related forms of gender violence. Every year, Sanctuary for Families empowers thousands of adults and children to move from fear and abuse to safety and stability, transforming lives through a range of services and advocacy. Sanctuary for Families is dedicated to the safety, healing, and self-determination of victims of domestic violence and related forms of gender violence. Through comprehensive services for its clients and their children—and through outreach, education, and advocacy—Sanctuary for Families strives to create a world in which freedom from gender violence is a basic human right. Each year, Sanctuary for Families works with hundreds of pro bono lawyers from law firms, in-house legal departments, and law schools.



## INTERVIEW WITH NICOLE FIDLER



Nicole Fidler is Pro Bono Director at Sanctuary for Families and, in this role, works closely with pro bono attorneys on direct representation matters including family law, immigration, and Hague Convention cases. She is also a valued thought leader and partner in Gibson Dunn's Justice for Women and Girls Initiative.

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**Sanctuary for Families tackles a large number of issues as part of its mission to end gender violence. How do you approach pro bono placements for such a wide-ranging pro bono program?**

To truly provide comprehensive legal services to survivors, Sanctuary for Families has a variety of projects and initiatives that address a wide range of legal issues. These include immigration, criminal

justice and advocacy, family and matrimonial law, international child abduction and relocation, campus sexual assault, housing, and public benefits. While the scope of work is broad, we remain focused on the individual needs of each client, and this client-centered approach very much guides our pro bono program as well. Although we are a small team collaborating with many stakeholders, we operate most effectively by approaching each case with intention and inquiry. We take it one referral at a time, learn about the unique needs of the client and case, and tailor our approach to placement so that we can find the best possible match for the client.

**How does Sanctuary for Families utilize pro bono attorneys / How does pro bono collaboration help advance the mission of Sanctuary for Families?**

Pro bono partners are essential to achieving our goal of providing comprehensive legal services to as many survivors as possible. They expand Sanctuary's capacity by assuming full representation of survivors, supporting our staff attorneys on discrete aspects of a case, and lending their expertise on certain cases that big law firms are intimately familiar with, like federal litigations, for example.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to creating a world free from gender violence through outreach, education, and advocacy. Pro bono collaboration is a powerful form of this outreach and education. By working directly on a survivor's case, pro bono attorneys develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the barriers survivors face, including challenges navigating a complex legal system that is often neither trauma-informed nor responsive to their needs. They bear witness to survivors' difficult journeys toward safety, stability, and justice. When attorneys are part of that journey, the mission to end gender violence becomes personal. In that moment, Sanctuary's mission becomes their mission, and that shared commitment is incredibly meaningful. I believe it is one of the reasons pro bono attorneys keep coming back to work with Sanctuary for Families.

**When did you start working with Gibson Dunn, and how has that partnership evolved over time?**

Sanctuary for Families' partnership with Gibson Dunn dates back many years, so by the time I joined Sanctuary in 2015, we already benefitted from a deep partnership with the firm. Since joining Sanctuary, it has been immensely gratifying to see the relationship between Sanctuary and Gibson grow and flourish. This past fiscal year, Gibson was the second-highest contributor of pro bono hours to Sanctuary's Legal Center, donating nearly 4,000 hours of service to survivors.

While the numbers are impressive, I am equally impressed by the type of work the firm takes from Sanctuary. Gibson has represented survivors in some of our most challenging and complex immigration and family law matters on behalf of both domestic violence survivors and sex trafficking survivors. A powerful example of Gibson's strong commitment to serving survivors is the firm's representation of mothers in Hague Convention International Child Abduction cases, which are complex, fast-moving, and demanding federal litigations. Knowing that we can entrust Gibson with tough cases and rely on the full depth of the firm's expertise is an extraordinary source of support for our clients and our staff.

**What do you see as the keys to a successful pro bono collaboration?**

Legal service organizations and law firms operate in very distinct environments, with vastly different resources and pressures. Successful pro bono collaborations therefore require clear expectation-setting at the outset, honest communication throughout the partnership, and a foundation of mutual respect. Ultimately, when the shared priority is what it should be—providing clients with the most compassionate and skilled representation possible—partners can approach their work together with understanding and grace. When that happens, pro bono collaborations can be truly transformative for everyone involved, attorneys and clients alike.

**Sanctuary for Families' clients often come to your organization at profoundly challenging moments in their lives. How do you ensure your pro bono attorneys are equipped to work with their clients in a thoughtful, trauma-informed manner?**

Trauma-informed lawyering is essential to providing effective legal representation. Sanctuary for Families is committed to equipping pro bono attorneys with the tools needed to build these skills, including tip sheets on trauma-informed lawyering and interpretation, articles on interviewing survivors, and live trainings that law firms can request. I also encourage attorneys to watch the trauma-informed lawyering, trauma-informed interpretation, and vicarious trauma trainings available on Practising Law Institute's website, some of which I co-chair.

Equally important to developing these skills is mentorship. Thoughtfully observing how experienced mentors interact with clients can be invaluable, so Sanctuary attorneys provide ongoing mentorship on pro bono matters. They do this not only to support substantive legal work but also to model compassionate, client-centered representation. Some of the ways trauma manifests can affect memory, communication, and presentation and may be misunderstood without appropriate context and a trauma-informed interpretation. We encourage pro bono attorneys to ask questions about their mentors' approach and to be curious before drawing conclusions about client behavior.

**Does Sanctuary for Families have any new or upcoming pro bono projects that you are particularly excited about?**

We continuously develop new initiatives to meet the evolving needs of our clients. One such effort is a new matrimonial pilot project funded by City Council. There is no right to counsel in divorce actions, and contested divorces are often too complex for clients to navigate on their own, particularly when a survivor is confronting an abusive spouse in the divorce. Sanctuary has maintained a strong matrimonial practice for years,

built through the pioneering leadership of Amanda B. Norejko, former Director of our Matrimonial and Economic Justice Project. In her memory, the Amanda B. Norejko Matrimonial Initiative will expand this important work, with a particular focus on underserved communities in Brooklyn and Staten Island.

Although law firms sometimes approach contested divorces with caution, divorces involving contested financial issues are precisely the type of complex, high-stakes matters in which law firms' commercial litigation experience, resources, and judgment can make a decisive difference. They also offer meaningful opportunities for attorneys to gain hands-on litigation experience.

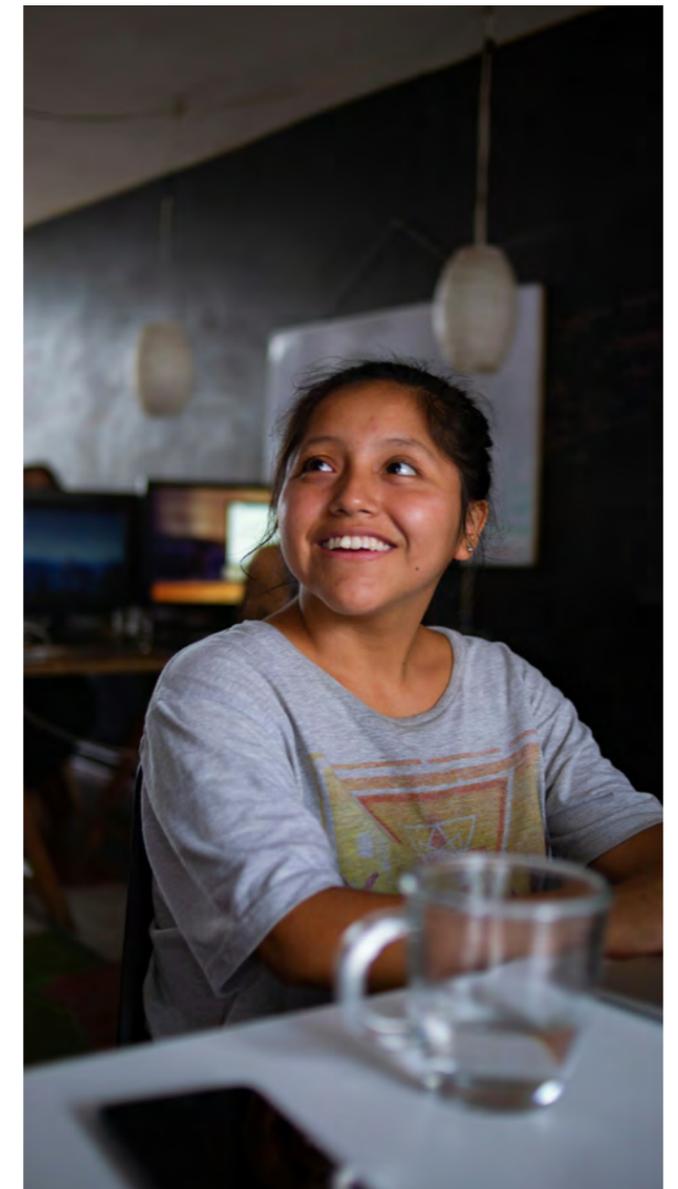
As part of our matrimonial expansion, we aim to demystify matrimonial litigation for pro bono attorneys and demonstrate the substantial impact they can have by partnering with Sanctuary's experienced team to help survivors permanently and safely sever legal ties with their abusers.

**As we move into 2026, what do you see as the greatest areas of need for the clients you serve? How can pro bono attorneys help address these needs?**

Sanctuary's immigrant survivor clients are suffering extraordinary hardship under the current immigration system. Many have endured severe abuse and/or exploitation and risked a perilous journey to the United States in search of safety for themselves and their children. They seek only the immigration relief they are entitled to under international or federal law. Yet they face countless punitive, harsh, and unnecessary barriers to obtaining this critical, often lifesaving, protection. As they navigate the procedural and substantive obstacles, they simultaneously live with the constant fear of detention and transfer to facilities that routinely fail to provide even the most basic standards of humane care, including adequate food and medical treatment.

The best line of defense against this deeply unjust and unconscionable immigration system is the commitment

of skilled attorneys who stand in partnership with immigrant clients to ensure that the system does not swallow them whole. Sanctuary—and the entire legal services community—urgently needs pro bono counsel to help clients build strong immigration applications, provide zealous representation in Immigration Court, pursue challenging appeals, accompany clients to ICE check-ins, be prepared to file habeas petitions when clients are detained, and challenge inhumane detention conditions and deportations carried out in violation of due process rights. This moment requires sustained and collective action from the entire legal community.



# INTERVIEW WITH GREGG COSTA



# INTERVIEW WITH GREGG COSTA



**Gregg Costa**, a partner in the Houston office, is Global Co-Chair of the firm's Trials Practice Group and a former federal trial and appellate judge. Gregg focuses on civil trials and white collar matters in Texas and across the country. He combines deep subject matter expertise, having written precedential opinions in almost every area of the law, with first-hand understanding of the arguments that convince judges and juries.

Since you joined Gibson Dunn in 2022, you have joined the firm's Global Pro Bono Committee and become very active in multiple pro bono litigations. Why was it important to you to incorporate pro bono into your practice right out of the gate? How have you worked to build your pro bono practice here at the firm?

Leaving the public sector after years as a federal judge and prosecutor, I still wanted to contribute to the public good. Gibson's pro bono program has allowed me to do that. When I swore lawyers into the bar as a judge (something I still do for the Gibson Houston associates), I would always remind the new lawyers how fortunate we are to practice law for a living. And a great way to show our gratitude for that good fortune is to do pro bono work, which helps people who can't afford legal services, the justice system, and our communities.

I've tried to build a pro bono practice that builds on my judicial experience with federal court and constitutional issues. For example, I am currently defending a longstanding Texas law that bans guns at bars, stadiums, and racetracks. A federal judge appointed me and a law professor as amici to defend the law against a Second Amendment challenge after the State of Texas refused to defend the law enacted by the representatives of the People of Texas. In defending the law, we have argued that the original understanding of the Second Amendment as it applies to the States should be determined from the lens of 1868, when the Fourteenth Amendment applying the constitutional guarantee to the States was ratified, as opposed to 1791, when the Second Amendment was ratified.

Working on pro bono matters has also been a great way to mentor associates. I had a wonderful experience supervising two associates who tried a federal civil rights lawsuit on behalf of a prisoner.



Your years on the bench must have given you unique insight into the benefit that pro bono representation can have for litigants who would otherwise proceed pro se. Could you speak to that?

It's hard to convey how many pro se litigants are appearing before courts, often raising what are some of the most procedurally complex claims in the federal system: civil rights, habeas, and immigration claims. It was about 1/3 of my docket on the district court. Every once in a while, you'd see a pro se litigant whose filings were better than some lawyer's! But for the most part there is a reason lawyers need three years of schooling and years of on-the-job training to do what we do. Pro bono work thus helps not just the clients but also the court system that is trying to efficiently handle very busy dockets. Indeed, a number of the pro bono matters I've handled at the firm are ones in which a federal judge reached out seeking to appoint counsel.

How would you describe the firm's pro bono practice?

Life changing and law changing. Our pro bono practice has incredible impact on individuals—helping those who can't afford legal service during their most trying times. The firm helps veterans dealing with economic hardships, refugees whose families have fled war-torn countries, and parents dealing with difficult divorces. While helping clients overcome challenging situations, our pro bono practice also changes the law, with pro bono cases being argued at the Supreme Court on issues like religious liberty.

Could you share a particularly meaningful anecdote about a pro bono case or client?

I was hooked on pro bono from my first year as a law firm associate. I represented a prisoner who had been convicted in an infamous drug sting orchestrated by a corrupt officer in the tiny Texas Panhandle town of Tulia (a book—*Tulia: Race, Cocaine, and Corruption in a Small Texas Town*—was written about this injustice). It was more than twenty years ago, but I still vividly remember calling the client to tell him that Governor Perry had pardoned him—still to this day the best phone call of my legal career.

What advice would you give to a new attorney about how to incorporate pro bono work into their practice and career?

First, start doing pro bono right away in your career—we give new Houston associates a pro bono case as their very first matter—so it becomes a habit.

Second, treat pro bono work with the same professionalism and high standards with which you handle every matter.

Third, make your pro bono docket your own—find pro bono matters that further the interests and causes you are passionate about.

# FRANK WHEAT AWARD WINNERS

Each year, Gibson Dunn acknowledges the exemplary pro bono work done by its lawyers that has changed lives and, in some cases, changed laws. To that end, we created the Frank Wheat Memorial Award. Frank Wheat, a former Gibson Dunn partner who passed away in 2000, was not only a giant in the legal community—a superb transactional lawyer, an SEC commissioner, and president of the Los Angeles County Bar—but a giant in the nonprofit community as well. He founded the Alliance for Children’s Rights, was a founder and trustee of the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, a leader of the Sierra Club, and a former board member at the Center for Law in the Public Interest, which established a fellowship in his name to train young lawyers in public interest litigation. The Frank Wheat Memorial Award is given annually to lawyers who have demonstrated leadership and initiative in their pro bono work, obtained significant results for their pro bono clients, and served as a source of inspiration to others through their pro bono work.

## Individual Winners



**Alison Pereira Martins**  
Associate, Paris

“ Supporting this family, whose child fled Afghanistan alone as a minor while the entire family was in danger, before eventually finding safety in France, has been deeply meaningful. Witnessing their reunion at the airport in Paris after more than five years apart, and after all the hardships they endured, was a powerful reminder of why pro bono work matters. Using legal skills to help rebuild lives and reunite families is profoundly rewarding, and I am grateful to work in a firm that values and encourages this commitment. ”



**Laura Sturges**  
Of Counsel, Denver

“ It is impossible to overstate the personal and professional benefits of working on impact litigation in the immigration arena, particularly at this critical time of such great need. But to name just two of the highlights: working with gifted and dedicated attorneys across the Firm whose paths might not otherwise cross, and learning from some of the very best practitioners in the field by partnering with incredible nonprofits across the country. The firm’s recognition here is ‘individual’ in name only, and I share this with the incredible teams who have worked on these cases with me both inside and outside the firm. ”

## Team Winners

**Gabriel Olivier Team**

**Peter Sean Brown Team**

## Staff Winners



**Dora Moran**  
Orange County, CA



**Candie Trainor**  
Los Angeles, CA

# PRO BONO AWARDS & ACCOLADES

## Law 360 Pulse

Gibson Dunn is among the top Pro Bono firms and Social Impact Leaders ranked by Law360 Pulse. The Pro Bono rankings rank firms by the percentage of lawyers meeting the American Bar Association's recommended annual minimum of 50 pro bono hours per lawyer. Gibson Dunn placed #6 in 2024, up from #11 the previous year. Among Social Impact Leaders, our firm ranked #9, a significant jump from #41 in 2023. The Social Impact Leaders ranking, which recognizes the 100 firms making the greatest strides in social responsibility in 2024, is built on five pillars: racial and ethnic diversity, gender equality, employee engagement, pro bono service, and responsible business.

## Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland - 2025 Law Firm Award

Gibson Dunn has been honored by the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland (PBRC) with the 2025 Law Firm Pro Bono Service Award. The award recognizes "innovative approaches to the delivery of free legal services and the encouragement of participation by the greatest number of attorneys relative to that firm's size." In announcing the award, the PBRC commended our firm for its commitment to ensuring that "all people, regardless of their income level, could access zealous legal representation and vindicate their rights through the courts."



## National Legal Aid & Defender Association ("NLADA") - 2025 Beacon of Justice Award

Gibson Dunn has been honored by the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) with a 2025 Beacon of Justice Award for our "critical and essential" pro bono work in 2024 "to advance equal justice for families and communities." "Through innovative pro bono work, the 2025 Beacon of Justice honorees have demonstrated how legal advocacy can create meaningful, lasting change for individuals, families, and communities," the NLADA stated in announcing the recipients of the award.

## National Women's Law Center - 2025 Pro Bono Honor Roll

Gibson Dunn has been named to the 2025 National Women's Law Center Pro Bono Honor Roll. This special designation is given to exemplary NWLC pro bono partners who meet certain annual qualifying criteria set by the Law Center. Over the past decade, Gibson Dunn has dedicated over 1.4 million hours valued at more than \$1 billion to pro bono work across the United States and around the world.

## Amica Center - 2025 Defender of Due Process Award

Amica Center for Immigrant Rights honored Gibson Dunn with its Defender of Due Process Award in recognition of the firm's dedication to supporting the mission of Amica Center through litigation excellence. The Award specifically mentioned Gibson Dunn's work in *Amica Center v. DOJ*, litigation to reinstate access to basic legal information for immigrants facing deportation, and in *CLSEPA v. HHS*, litigation to preserve legal representation for unaccompanied immigrant children across the country.



## The Legal Aid Society

Gibson Dunn lawyers were honored by The Legal Aid Society at its annual Pro Bono Publico Awards for their work as co-counsel with the Housing Unit on two New York State appeals advancing tenants' rights. In *Gomez v. Yang*, argued by associate Vanessa Ajagu, the Appellate Term reversed a lower court's order and concluded that, consistent with longstanding precedent, courts must award attorneys' fees to nonprofit organizations at prevailing market rates. In *Union Street Houses LLC v. Levinson*, also argued by Vanessa before the Appellate Term, we advocated for low-income tenants seeking reasonable accommodation for their son's disability.

Our New York pro bono teams included Christopher Joralemon and associates Vanessa Ajagu, Sanjay Nevrekar, Amanda Bello, Melissa Murphy, Molly Teague, and Jake Sherman. Gibson Dunn is proud to partner with The Legal Aid Society in protecting housing rights for vulnerable New Yorkers.

## Litigation Daily - Litigator of the Week

*Litigation Daily's* Litigator of the Week recognized a pro bono team of Gibson Dunn lawyers for their precedential appellate win in a New Jersey anti-SLAPP case that protected both religious liberty and free speech rights. Since 2023, the team has represented a Jewish news outlet, a rabbi, and a synagogue facing claims in New Jersey state court related to flyers and posts they allegedly disseminated containing a picture of pro se plaintiff Allen Satz and urging him to grant his wife a get (a Jewish bill of divorce). After Mr. Satz voluntarily dismissed his case, Gibson Dunn filed a motion to reopen the case for the limited purpose of allowing our clients to seek attorneys' fees under the Uniform Public Expression Protection Act ("UPEPA"), New Jersey's recently enacted anti-SLAPP law. Gibson Dunn argued that failure to reopen the case would be irreconcilable with UPEPA's statutory purpose and would reward Satz's strategic dismissal of his lawsuit to avoid liability for attorneys' fees. In the first published decision under UPEPA, New Jersey's Appellate Division unanimously reversed the denial of Gibson Dunn's motion to reopen the judgment and directed the lower court to hear Gibson Dunn's order to show cause under UPEPA. The court reasoned that "[p]ermitting the dismissal of defendants' order to show cause to stand would contravene legislative intent and create a loophole in the UPEPA allowing SLAPP plaintiffs to financially harm New Jersey residents who are the subject of their lawsuits and then strategically dismiss their suits, depriving our residents of the statutory right to seek recompense." The Gibson Dunn team includes partner Akiva Shapiro (argued) and associates Stephanie Silvano, Brian Yeh (argued), Apratim Vidarthi, Beshoy Shokralla, and Ahin Lee.



## DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice - Champions of Democracy Award

The DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice recently awarded a Gibson Dunn team its Champions of Democracy Award in recognition of their pro bono work on a DC Appleseed project regarding election reform in the District of Columbia. The goal of the project, which produced a final report titled "Improving Voter Representation in DC's Elections," was to objectively assess whether various changes to D.C. elections could encourage greater participation and produce elected officials who better represent the electorate. The team included partner Courtney Brown and associates Abby Dugan and Kareem Ramadan.



# PRO BONO CHALLENGE

Gibson Dunn is honored to be a signatory to the Pro Bono Institute's Pro Bono Challenge, which requires us to use our "best efforts" to perform 60 hours of pro bono work per lawyer each year. We are proud to recognize the nearly 1,000 attorneys who individually billed 60 or more hours to pro bono in 2025.

## A

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Amer S. Ahmed  
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Jackson A. Akselrad  
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