

PRO BONO REPORT

20
23



GIBSON DUNN



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Letter from the Chair & Managing Partner

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

I am incredibly proud of the work we have done together over the last year to expand access to justice and provide pro bono legal assistance around the world.

Gibson Dunn's pro bono platform provides important opportunities for our attorneys to use their considerable talents to serve the communities in which we live and work. For example, in 2023, we provided advice to corporate and nonprofit clients alike as they dealt with the changing legal landscape as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This included our representation of the Fearless Foundation—a nonprofit organization that uses its time and money to mentor and encourage Black women business owners.

Our attorneys also continued to provide vital legal assistance on immigration matters, including helping Afghan, Ukrainian, and Venezuelan refugees and LGBTQ+ asylum seekers. And we fought against racial injustice and discrimination, representing Latino professors and students seeking to maintain their right to teach and learn about their communities' histories. We worked alongside veterans to ensure they received the benefits they were entitled to. And we secured a groundbreaking win against the Los Angeles Police Department for a client who was shot in the face with a rubber bullet during the 2020 George Floyd protests.

Gibson Dunn lawyers dedicated nearly 170,000 hours to pro bono work in 2023. This represents the single greatest contribution of pro bono hours in the Firm's history, and was achieved with more Gibson Dunn attorneys participating in pro bono work than ever before.

This report reflects just some of the pro bono success stories that resulted from these efforts. I hope you will join me in celebrating these accomplishments, and in looking ahead to all we will continue to achieve together.

Barbara L. Becker



Letter from the Pro Bono Chair

The Firm's pro bono practice is a pillar of the unique culture that is Gibson Dunn. We are privileged to help hundreds of individual clients navigate the daily hurdles of the legal system, while also tackling the major social justice issues of our time. That approach has allowed us to have a phenomenal impact on the world around us. And, in turn, our pro bono work impacts each of our attorneys and the Firm as a whole—leaving behind a legacy of empathy, passion, and determination. It is our sincere privilege to represent our amazing pro bono clients, whose courage, resilience, and resolve is an inspiration to all of us.

In 2023, more Gibson Dunn lawyers dedicated more pro bono hours to more causes than ever before, reflecting the diverse interests of the lawyers I am privileged to call colleagues. Our attorneys helped an individual who had been wrongfully incarcerated for years regain his freedom. They provided aid to those seeking asylum in this country. Gibson Dunn attorneys helped veterans receive the honor and benefits to which they are entitled. They safeguarded civil liberties and religious freedoms and weighed in on pressing questions of constitutional law. They helped small businesses find their footing. They advocated for the LGBTQ+ community, domestic violence survivors, and marginalized communities around the globe. They did much more than I can list here, or than can be contained in this report.

This amazing work is made possible by the contributions of so many people: the legal aid partners who provide us with opportunities to do good in our communities; the corporate clients who have joined us in many of these endeavors out of a shared sense of purpose and a common set of values and beliefs; and, of course, the many Gibson Dunn attorneys and staff who dedicate their very precious time and seemingly boundless energy and talent to bettering the world we live in.

Thank you for taking the time to review our work—we are so proud of these accomplishments and look forward to another year of working together to make change, support the communities who need us the most, and provide access to justice to all.

Warm wishes,

Katie Marquart

PRO BONO STATISTICS

Pro Bono Hours in 2023:

169K

Value of Pro Bono Hours in 2023:

\$188M

Participating Attorneys:

1,800+

Attorneys with 20+ Pro Bono Hours:

1,290

New Pro Bono Matters Opened in 2023:

550+

Average Pro Bono Hours (United States):

91

Average Pro Bono Hours (Firmwide):

84

Pro Bono Hours Since 2014:

1.4M+

Value of Pro Bono Hours Since 2014:

\$1B+



GLOBAL CRISIS RESPONSE

Over the past decade, attorneys across Gibson Dunn have come together in moments of crisis to help some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Our global crisis response work has become a hallmark of our pro bono practice, from mobilizing to help Muslims affected by the 2017 Travel Ban and traveling to the U.S.-Mexico border to represent parents who had been forcibly separated from their children upon entering the United States, to helping small businesses navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and coming together to assist Afghan and Ukrainian families seeking safe harbor in times of civil unrest and war. Our attorneys never hesitate to volunteer in times of crisis, reflecting our mission to help people and communities around the globe facing the most urgent needs.

01





AFGHANISTAN

After the U.S. military withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, hundreds of Gibson Dunn attorneys quickly formed a firmwide task force dedicated to helping Afghans reach safety in the United States, United Kingdom, or other safe havens.

Over the last two and a half years, lawyers across the Firm have dedicated tens of thousands of hours to pro bono matters on behalf of Afghan clients, including filing hundreds of humanitarian parole applications on behalf of individuals and families facing imminent threats of Taliban reprisals, asylum applications on behalf of those who successfully evacuated to the United States, and family-based immigration applications to help those with permanent status in the United States petition for their family members to join them.

Although the road to success has been long and challenging, 2023 ushered in many significant victories in these cases. Perhaps most notably, several families were granted humanitarian parole—an exceptional and discretionary form of relief that allows individuals outside the United States to temporarily enter the United States when facing urgent humanitarian crises. We look forward to continuing to work with them as they build a permanent life in the United States.

Humanitarian Parole

In the months following the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) received tens of thousands of humanitarian parole applications (hundreds filed on behalf of Gibson Dunn clients alone) for Afghan individuals—exponentially more than had been typical. After years of waiting, in the waning months of 2023, several of our teams received approvals—and one family has arrived safely in the United States!



This family included “Faridah,” a young woman who played on an Afghan national sports team for women, and her sister. These women’s lives were upended when the Taliban seized power, then put on hold while they went into hiding in Pakistan to evade the Taliban’s clutches—all because they dared to excel in athletics and stand up as prominent women in their community. The Firm also worked with dozens of other individuals affiliated with this team, most of whom remain in hiding in Afghanistan and neighboring countries. For years, members of the team had been targets of the Taliban—both because the Taliban prohibits women and girls from participating in sports and because female

athletes are viewed as advocates for women. After the Taliban took power, these threats increased, and one young member of the team was horrifically beheaded by the Taliban. Finally, after months of waiting and ongoing advocacy to USCIS and the State Department, Faridah and her sister were approved to travel to the United States. We were thrilled to greet Faridah and her sister at the airport when they arrived in New York City to embark on the next chapter of their lives—the first of what we hope will be many members of the team resettling in the United States in the coming weeks and months.

“ I have been incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with Afghan individuals and families seeking humanitarian parole, specifically members of the team, as they seek safety and a new start in the United States. It is an honor to work with these impressive women, who are in danger for pushing the bounds of what women should be allowed to do, and a joy to be one of the first people to welcome and help get them situated in their new home. This work has also been a humbling reminder of the power, ability, and resources that attorneys have to do good in our communities—whether locally or globally—and I am very appreciative to be part of a team and a workplace that readily and eagerly contributes its time and resources to those in need. ”



Nadia Alhadi
Associate, New York

Unaccompanied Afghan Children

In the chaotic days immediately following the Taliban's seizure of power, thousands of Afghan families raced to the airport in Kabul seeking assistance from U.S. military personnel overseeing evacuations to the United States. Tragically, many families were separated in the chaos at the Kabul airport, and some young Afghans ended up alone—with no way of contacting their families—and eventually were evacuated to the United States and sent to live with foster families. Over the past year, Gibson Dunn has worked with several Afghan teenagers who were evacuated and ultimately resettled in Denver—thousands of miles away from their parents and families in Afghanistan. Our teams helped them complete their applications for asylum, collected supporting evidence for their claims, and accompanied them to their asylum interviews. Many of these clients now have been granted asylum, and some have been reunited with parents and siblings who were able to come to the United States as refugees.

“Mahmud” was one of these children. In August 2021, Mahmud was separated from his family after an attack on his hometown; he fled to Kabul with the help of a neighbor, and the U.S. military evacuated him and others to Qatar. After several months, Mahmud finally arrived in the United States and applied for asylum. He was only 14 years old at the time. Mahmud faced persecution in Afghanistan on multiple grounds, including his membership in an ethnic minority group, his anti-Taliban and pro-Western beliefs, and his close family member's status as a former Afghan police officer. Because this family member fought alongside the U.S. army against the Taliban, Taliban members had forcibly entered his family's home and threatened to kill the entire family. Fortunately, Mahmud had already left the country when this happened. While his asylum application was pending, Mahmud dedicated himself to his studies, joined the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), and dreamed of joining the U.S. military.

Finally, after months of waiting—and on his sixteenth birthday—Mahmud learned that his asylum application had been approved, and that he could remain in the United States with a pathway to citizenship and avenues to reunite with his family!



Central Bank of Afghanistan Employees

Following the Taliban's seizure of power in August 2021, individuals affiliated with the Central Bank of Afghanistan—which, working closely with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, previously had frozen accounts associated with the Taliban and ensured that members of the Taliban and other blacklisted individuals did not have access to U.S. dollars—came under threat due to this work.

One client, “Hakim,” worked alongside U.S. and European Union counterparts to identify terrorist groups and money launderers to ensure that U.S. and European bank notes would not make it into the hands of terrorists. Similarly, “Sami” worked with U.S. officials to prevent members of the Taliban from accessing U.S. dollars. And “Latif” helped ensure the accounts of blacklisted individuals, including members of the Taliban, remained frozen. As a result of this work, Taliban forces shot at Hakim and repeatedly threatened Sami and Latif. Fortunately, all three men were able to flee Afghanistan before being harmed. They knew they could not return to Afghanistan without risking serious harm—or even death—and quickly sought to rebuild their lives in the United States. With the help of Gibson Dunn, all three men obtained asylum, which will allow them and their families to remain in the United States and, eventually, become naturalized U.S. citizens.

“ You transformed what could have been an arduous and daunting experience into one filled with hope, support, and ultimately, success. You not only advocated for my legal rights but also provided me with a sense of comfort and assurance during a time of great uncertainty. This approval signifies not only a legal victory but a profound, life-altering change for me. I will carry the impact of your efforts with me always, knowing that you've played a pivotal role in shaping my future. Your dedication has not only changed my status, but it has changed my life forever. ”

Hakim

New York Times Employees

In 2021, The New York Times successfully evacuated a large group of Afghans who had worked in their Kabul Bureau. The evacuees included journalists, maintenance staff, cooks, interpreters, and many others, along with their families. It has been our privilege to represent these individuals and their families over the last several years in their effort to obtain asylum. And we are overjoyed that many of them have already received asylum grants.

One of our clients—who worked for The New York Times' Kabul Bureau for nearly 20 years—and his family were granted asylum in March 2023. Our client feared for his life following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, especially given his close affiliation with a Western media organization. He sought to flee Kabul with his wife and children (who, at that time, were between three and 14 years old), along with a large group of other Times' employees and their families. The Times group's escape from Kabul was incredibly dangerous and chaotic. It occurred over the course of around five days, during which they faced numerous attacks and threats from Taliban members. Ultimately, the group managed to escape, making their way to Qatar and then Mexico before settling in Houston. Now, the client and his family can live free from the fear of deportation back to Afghanistan and will be eligible to seek lawful permanent residence in one year. In time, they will be able to become U.S. citizens.



Afghan Female Tactical Platoon

Afghanistan's Female Tactical Platoon was an all-women security forces unit that fought alongside U.S. and Afghan special forces. In recent years, Gibson Dunn has been honored to help several members of the platoon and their families apply for asylum in the United States. Because these courageous women regularly joined high-stakes missions and helped gather information against the Taliban and ISIS, they would have been at the top of the Taliban's kill list. Fortunately, a group of U.S. soldiers who served alongside them helped the members of the platoon evacuate to the United States. We are proud to have played a part in helping members of the platoon obtain asylum and embark on the next chapter of their lives here in the United States.

One of these clients was "Sara," a member of the platoon who risked her life to work alongside the U.S. special operations forces in Afghanistan in their fight against the Taliban, often participating in joint U.S. and Afghan covert missions to gather information on Taliban whereabouts and activities. She distinguished herself with her dedicated service and skills, earning praise and support from U.S. Army commanders who vouched for her character and her work. During the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan, Sara fled to the United States alongside her mother and siblings.

A Gibson Dunn team submitted Sara's application for asylum and withholding of removal in August 2022, providing a robust account of her military activities in the fight against the Taliban and the undisputed evidence of the threat on her life should she return to Afghanistan. Sadly, several of Sara's fellow soldiers were captured, tortured, and killed by the Taliban on account of their work with Afghan and U.S. military operations; the team demonstrated that Sara's fate would be no different if she were forced to return to Afghanistan. In April 2023, after nearly seven months of waiting, Sara's asylum application was granted. She is relieved, overjoyed, and excited about her future life in the United States. She has settled in California with her family, found employment, and enrolled in intensive English classes. With her asylum application now granted, she hopes to one day enroll in nursing school.

UKRAINE

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, it set off the largest conventional military action in Europe since World War II. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are now approximately 6.5 million Ukrainian refugees worldwide. The vast majority of these refugees—more than six million individuals—are scattered across Europe, including more than one million in Germany. Hundreds of thousands more are living in the United States. Meanwhile, more than three million Ukrainians are internally displaced in frontline communities facing continued bombardment, and approximately 40% of the population still living in Ukraine is in need of humanitarian aid.

Gibson Dunn lawyers immediately mobilized to help those affected by the war. Since 2022, we have dedicated more than 4,000 hours to firmwide pro bono efforts on behalf of Ukrainian individuals and nonprofits supporting Ukrainians both in Ukraine and abroad. As the war continues, so too do our pro bono efforts.



Immigration4Ukraine

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting displacement of millions of Ukrainian civilians, attorneys from Gibson Dunn's Frankfurt and Munich offices helped launch Immigration4Ukraine, a pro bono initiative to help Ukrainian refugees in Germany. The Immigration4Ukraine platform's aim was to assist refugees from Ukraine who fled the war to Germany by helping them navigate the legal questions that commonly arose in the first weeks and months after their arrival in Germany. The platform offered both (1) basic legal information on many aspects of daily life in Germany in an accessible FAQ format (e.g., on residence in Germany, on work and taxes, on education and on social welfare) and (2) individual legal advice. Our Gibson Dunn team was closely involved on both work streams, and we were proud to contribute to an invaluable resource for Ukrainians displaced by the war.

In total, the German offices devoted approximately 550 hours to this matter, making this one of the largest pro bono matters on which the German offices ever worked. In recognition of the team's outstanding commitment to pro bono work, the Uniting4Ukraine team won Gibson Dunn's 2023 Frank Wheat Award.

“ I am proud of our Immigration4Ukraine Team. Each team member offered his or her expertise to refugees in urgent need and unable to afford legal services, thereby contributing to equitable access to legal advice and justice. ”

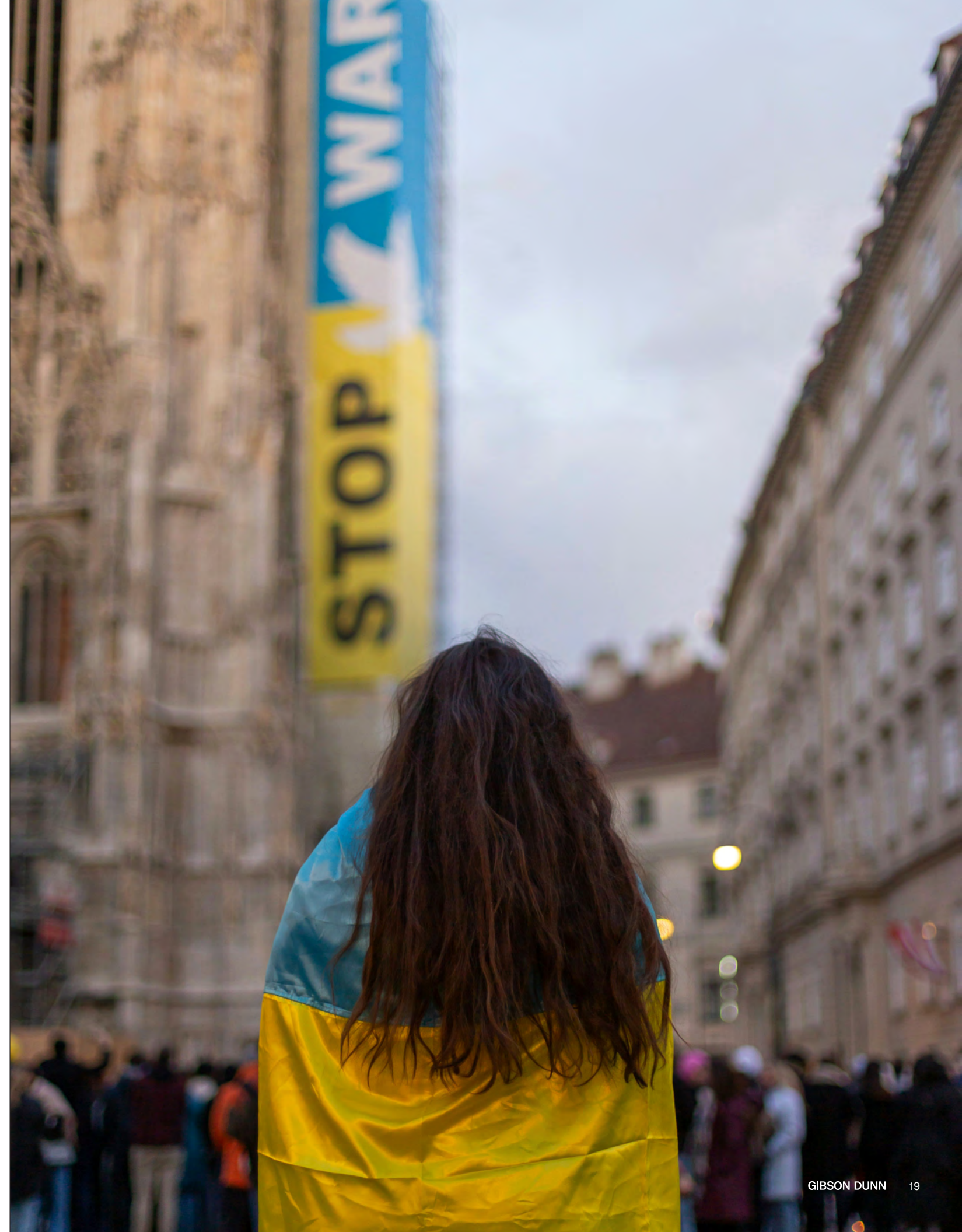
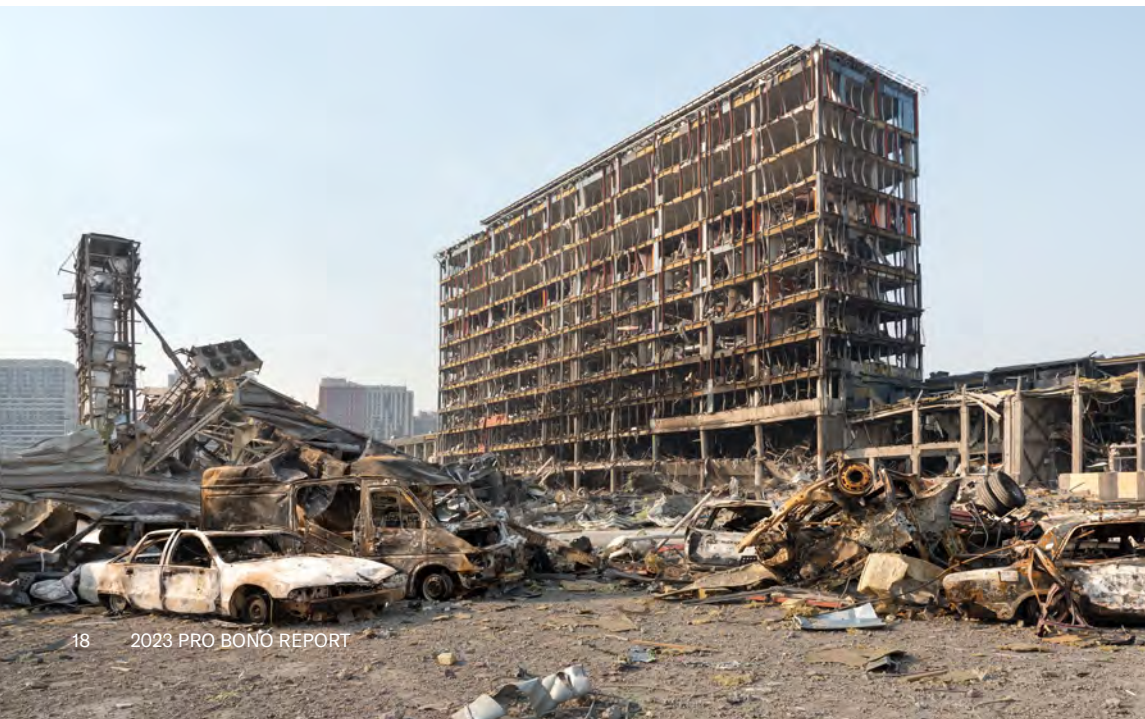


Jan Schubert
Partner, Frankfurt

Immigration Relief for Ukrainians

Over the last two years, Gibson Dunn has worked with a large number of individuals displaced by the war or otherwise seeking refuge in the United States. Together with experienced nonprofit partners across the country, our teams have advised Ukrainian clients on a variety of immigration matters, including Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”), asylum, and other forms of humanitarian relief.

TPS allows certain Ukrainian nationals to remain in the United States, avoid removal, obtain employment, and obtain discretionary travel rights. Over the last several years, Gibson Dunn has worked with dozens of Ukrainians applying for TPS. These applications allowed our clients to extend their time in the United States and continue living and working here while the war at home rages on. Many of our TPS clients are families with young children who were forced to flee their homes when Russia invaded; obtaining TPS status and work authorization has enabled these families to support themselves while seeing out the war from safety in the United States. We look forward to continuing to work with these clients as they make their way through the U.S. immigration system toward permanent status in the United States.



RACIAL JUSTICE & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Gibson Dunn's commitment to equality and equity for all remains a guiding light for our pro bono practice. In 2023, the Firm used our pro bono practice to fight against anti-Black, Latino, and Asian racism, and to battle antisemitic and Islamophobic hate. We also helped minority-owned small businesses and nonprofits fighting for racial equity establish themselves, in the case of some of our more fledgling clients, or expand their reach and impact and defend their programs.



02



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Counseling

The 2023 Supreme Court term brought sweeping changes to the legal landscape in numerous areas, perhaps none more discussed than its decisions in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina*. By a 6–3 vote, the Supreme Court held that Harvard’s and the University of North Carolina’s use of race in their admissions processes violated the Equal Protection Clause and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

SFFA asked the Court to overrule precedent established in 2003, which permitted schools to consider an applicants’ race as a “plus’ factor . . . in the context of its individualized inquiry into the possible diversity contributions of all applicants.” *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 341 (2003). The Court did so, adopting a rule that colleges cannot consider applicants’ race in making admissions decisions. The Court’s opinion employed broad language against racial preferences, reasoning that “[e]liminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it.”

Although the majority opinion did not explicitly modify existing law governing consideration of the race outside of the higher education context, or in the private sector generally, the decisions nevertheless have had broader strategic and atmospheric ramifications. In particular, the Court’s language in favor of race neutrality and harsh criticism of affirmative action in the college setting have accelerated the trend of reverse-discrimination claims against a wide array of other companies, organizations, and entities across the country. Conservative public-interest groups have sued venture capital funds, law firms, museums, military academies, nonprofits, financial institutions, and more, challenging race-conscious employment, funding, admission, and grantmaking decisions, as well as broader diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”) efforts. Some have adjusted their practices to account for a heightened risk that robust DEI programs may face litigation from employees, contracting parties, advocacy groups, and government agencies.

Gibson Dunn quickly emerged as a leader in this space, organizing a DEI Task Force focused on helping our clients—both billable and pro bono—develop creative, practical, and lawful approaches to accomplish their DEI objectives in the wake of the *SFFA* decisions. Over the past nine months, the Firm has represented clients in everything from full-scope litigation defense against federal court attacks to one-off advice and counsel sessions for small businesses and nonprofits, and everything in between. Gibson Dunn is proud to advise pro bono clients operating in this realm, including nonprofits seeking to advance educational equity for K-12 minority students, funding women’s human rights initiatives, and providing grants to low-income entrepreneurs, among many others.

Fearless Foundation

The Fearless Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that aims to increase access to capital for small businesses owned by women of color. Among other charitable endeavors, the Foundation awards a grant of \$20,000 and one-on-one mentorship to small businesses owned by one or more Black women, who represent the fastest-growing entrepreneurial demographic in the United States but received just 0.13% of all venture-capital funding last year.



In August 2023, the American Alliance for Equal Rights filed a suit against the Foundation and sought a preliminary injunction to force the Foundation to make its charitable grants available to female entrepreneurs, regardless of race. The Alliance’s suit included a single claim brought under one of the nation’s oldest civil rights laws: 42 U.S.C. § 1981. Section 1981 was passed after the Civil War by the Reconstruction Congress to secure economic rights to formerly enslaved people, including the “same right” to make and enforce contracts “as is enjoyed by white citizens.” The Alliance made the unprecedented argument that this civil rights law, which was created to prohibit discrimination against the formerly enslaved, prevents the Foundation from providing grants designed to remedy the disparity in funding black women owned businesses, turning the Civil Rights law on its head.

The Foundation retained Gibson Dunn to serve as its lead counsel in the Alliance’s suit. Gibson Dunn filed a brief, three fact declarations, one expert declaration,

and hundreds of pages of exhibits in opposition to the Alliance’s motion for a preliminary injunction. In its papers, Gibson Dunn argued that the motion failed for multiple reasons, including that a preliminary injunction would violate the Foundation’s First Amendment right to direct its charitable grants and mentorship to further its message of anti-discrimination and economic freedom. On September 26, after hearing oral argument from Gibson Dunn attorneys Jason Schwartz and Mylan Denerstein, Judge Thomas W. Thrash of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia denied the Alliance’s preliminary injunction, adopting Gibson Dunn’s arguments that the First Amendment bars the Alliance’s section 1981 claim and that the Alliance failed to show irreparable injury.

The Alliance has appealed the denial of its motion for a preliminary injunction to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Gibson Dunn represented the Foundation on appeal, including in oral argument held on January 31, 2024. The appeal is now pending before the Court.

“ Along with my partners and associates, we are deeply proud to serve as lead counsel to defend Fearless Foundation in this matter. Simply put, supporting economic freedom for women of color is not illegal, and this lawsuit turns civil rights law on its head. The disparities in the funding of Black women owned business is staggering. It is not illegal for Black women to offer grants to Black women small business owners. We stand with the Fearless Foundation. ”



Mylan Denerstein
Partner, New York

The Alliance for Asian American Justice

In August 2022, our client and three friends—all of whom are Indian-American—enjoyed an evening out, catching up over dinner. While standing in the parking lot and saying their goodbyes in the Bengali language, a local woman approached the group, unprovoked, and began yelling racial slurs and ethnically charged profanities at the group. When our client and her friends tried to record this assault, the woman physically attacked them and threatened to shoot them if they did not turn off their phones, while simultaneously putting her hand in her purse as if to retrieve a gun. In that moment, our client feared for her life and the lives of her friends. Although police arrived on the scene, the attacker was not immediately arrested. She was later arrested but has yet to face any criminal charges.

In coordination with the Alliance for Asian American Justice, Gibson Dunn immediately jumped into action by drafting a petition on behalf of our client. Our client and her friends consolidated their cases, and all four victims are now seeking relief in civil court. In addition to seeking legal remedies, our client voiced a desire to create more awareness of racial hate incidents in the hopes of combating such disgraceful actions. Gibson Dunn continues to seek relief for her, supports her goal of deterring similar racially and ethnically motivated assaults in the future, and continues to work with the Alliance for Asian American Justice to provide legal assistance to those who have faced anti-Asian violence across the country, including in civil litigation on behalf of a family in Orange County, California, as well as clients in Baltimore, Maryland. Gibson Dunn proudly coordinates with the Alliance to connect those in need of pro bono representation with law firms all over the country, as well as to facilitate educational efforts, training, and identification of additional specialized services, including social services, mental health services, and other community support.



Fighting Antisemitism

On November 6, 2023, Gibson Dunn, in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League, Hillel International, and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, launched 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. Anyone who submits an incident report will receive an intake call from a volunteer lawyer within 24 hours. After each call, the intake attorney drafts a memorandum to summarize the incident and analyze its potential for legal action.

CALL has emerged as the national one-stop shop for incident reporting, with the Department of Education urging victims of antisemitism to file reports with CALL. In three months, CALL received nearly 400 complaints from students and professors across the country, the vast majority of which were handled by Gibson Dunn attorneys for intake. Gibson Dunn attorneys have also teamed up with in-house counsel from several corporate clients for those intake calls. And Gibson Dunn has trained dozens of attorneys at other law firms help with screening.

The CALL hotline team has been working around the clock to provide Jewish students and faculty on college campuses across the country with support and guidance in the face of rising threats and acts of antisemitism. The intakes received through CALL have revealed serious antisemitic incidents on campus, including physical assaults, threats, and discrimination in the classroom. In responding to the intakes, Gibson Dunn and its partner organizations have been able to offer support, guidance, and help to these victims.





Fighting Islamophobia

In late 2023, a group of attorneys across the United States came together in a shared desire to promote inclusion in the legal industry and fight against Islamophobia and anti-Arab hate in the United States. Gibson Dunn helped form a nonprofit, the Alliance for Inclusion and Justice, which aims to bring together leading law firms to stand up against and educate on hate, bigotry, and discrimination affecting Arab and Muslim communities after the recent surge in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias and hate incidents across the country, and is a founding member of the Alliance.

The Alliance envisions a diverse, equitable, and inclusive legal profession that incorporates and respects the views and contributions of Arab and Muslim legal professionals, and is committed to fostering open dialogue and greater understanding in the legal community concerning issues related to anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hate. The Alliance will help provide resources for trainings and discussions on these topics, and will provide Alliance members access to a database listing pro bono opportunities from relevant organizations seeking legal support.

Stop W.O.K.E. Act

Gibson Dunn represented LatinoJustice PRLDEF, a national civil rights organization dedicated to advancing justice and equity for Latinx communities in the United States, in filing an amicus brief in support of a challenge to Florida's Stop W.O.K.E. Act. Florida enacted the Stop W.O.K.E. Act in April 2022, prohibiting the teaching of certain concepts relating to race and sex, including that unconscious racial bias continues to exist in society. Plaintiffs challenged the law on First and Fourteenth Amendment grounds later that year.

In the underlying litigation, the plaintiffs argued that the Stop W.O.K.E. Act was unconstitutionally vague and violated the First Amendment through viewpoint discrimination. A district court in Florida issued a preliminary injunction preventing enforcement of the law, which was then appealed to the Eleventh Circuit. Gibson Dunn filed an amicus brief before the Eleventh Circuit, arguing that the Stop W.O.K.E. Act would throttle academic freedom in higher education and prevent scholars and students from fully engaging in the study of Latinx culture and history.

The brief presented the voices and experiences of two students and four professors of Latinx culture and history in Florida, as they explained how the Stop W.O.K.E. Act would negatively impact their scholarship and ability to learn. The brief then analyzed how these students' and professors' experiences make clear that the Stop W.O.K.E. Act violates the free speech rights guaranteed to universities and professors in regulating higher education curriculum under binding Eleventh Circuit law. For example, the professors had canceled classes out of fear that they could no longer be taught, and they already had observed a chilling effect among students and faculty alike. And the students felt the quality of their education suffered as professors censored themselves to avoid running afoul of the law and students downplayed their Latinidad—leading them to consider completing their education out of state rather than in Florida under the Stop W.O.K.E. Act's restrictions. Enforcement of the Stop W.O.K.E. Act currently is enjoined while the case is pending before the Eleventh Circuit.

“ As a former LatinoJustice intern, it was a pleasure reconnecting and partnering with the LatinoJustice team. As a Florida native of Hispanic heritage, these issues hit particularly close to home. We were all moved by the students' and professors' willingness to speak candidly with us and the court about the impacts the Act has had on their passions, communities, families, and mental health. It was a privilege to be entrusted with their stories and with the task of conveying their importance to the court. ”



Katarina Delgado
Associate, New York

IMMIGRATION

In 2023, Gibson Dunn continued its long tradition of advocating for refugees from all over the world, with attorneys firmwide contributing more than 42,000 hours of pro bono services to immigration work in the last year alone. Our efforts in this space ran the gamut, from one-day clinics providing discrete legal advice to multi-year litigation battles, and everything in between.

Every year, our attorneys represent some of the most vulnerable new arrivals to the United States, including asylum-seekers from dozens of countries around the globe. Our clients' reasons for fleeing their home countries vary widely. Some fled persecution on the basis of their political opinions, religious activities, opposition to gang rule, or for simply living openly as an LGBTQ+ individual. No matter the reason our clients came to this country, Gibson Dunn lawyers are proud and honored to fight for their right to live a life of peace, safety, and security.

03



Gang Violence

Gibson Dunn has long represented refugees fleeing gang violence, domestic violence, and similar forms of persecution, including many from the Northern Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras). Nationals from these countries have experienced decades of instability and corruption, with unpunished, rampant violence from paramilitary groups, organized criminal enterprises, and street gangs. This reality creates unspeakable dangers for individuals who dare to stand up against the gangs and paramilitaries, and even for those who simply want to live in peace. Many of our clients are at even greater risk of persecution due to their gender and/or sexuality, which intersect with the risks of gang violence to create a potentially deadly situation for our clients. In 2023, we were proud to help many of these resilient clients secure asylum, bringing them closure and security.



“Eric” grew up in El Salvador and became a target of the notorious MS-13 gang after his half-brother “Juan” defected from the gang and led four other members to defect as well.

Armed MS-13 members threatened Eric’s life, and Eric was forced to stop attending school and to go into hiding in his grandparents’ home because of the threats. But gang members continued to stalk his home and harass his family for information on Juan’s whereabouts. With no options for safety in his home country, Eric fled to the United States in 2014, when he was just 15 years old. Eric’s brother, Juan, initially escaped to the United States as well, but Juan was deported to El Salvador and tragically murdered by MS-13 members mere weeks after his forced return.

Gibson Dunn first took on Eric’s case in October 2015. More than seven years later, after various twists and turns, Gibson Dunn attorneys represented Eric in a contentious immigration hearing. After more than two hours, during which time Eric testified in detail about the threats he faced in El Salvador, the judge decided that the remainder of his affirmative case, including expert testimony, would be unnecessary. The court’s written decision granting asylum was issued shortly thereafter.

Eric is thrilled with the outcome of his case and the opportunity he now has to continue building a successful life in the United States. Eric graduated from high school in Virginia on time—despite having to learn a new language and having missed a year of schooling in El Salvador—and received plaudits for his excellence in school. Since graduating, Eric has worked multiple jobs, including on nights and weekends, to support himself and his family. By coincidence, he even once picked up a catering gig for a cocktail reception hosted by Gibson Dunn’s D.C. office. After winning his asylum case, Eric was able to enroll in the Virginia Police Academy to fulfill his lifelong dream of joining the police force to keep civilians safe from bad actors like those who persecuted him in El Salvador. Now

happily settled in Virginia, Eric and his girlfriend bought a house together. With ongoing support from the Gibson Dunn team, Eric is looking forward to one day becoming a U.S. citizen.

As a teenager growing up in El Salvador, “Guadalupe” endured death threats and assault at the hands of one of El Salvador’s most prominent and dangerous gangs.

Her family was staunchly opposed to the gang’s control of their community: multiple members of Guadalupe’s family reported the gang’s activities to the police, leading to reprisals by the gang (including the murder of one of her cousins). As the gang’s persecution of the family escalated, Guadalupe agreed to meet with the gang’s local leader to try to negotiate an end to the gang’s torment of her family. Guadalupe was violently assaulted by the gang’s leader; she fled to the United States shortly thereafter.

Gibson Dunn represented Guadalupe through a challenging, seven-year asylum process. Finally, after having her case shuffled between three different immigration courts, Guadalupe had an opportunity to present her case to an immigration judge. On the day of her hearing, Guadalupe provided nearly two-and-a-half hours of powerful direct-examination testimony. Following approximately 20 minutes of cross-examination, Gibson Dunn secured DHS’s stipulation to refrain from challenging Guadalupe’s application for asylum. The court entered an oral grant of asylum from the bench. Guadalupe and the team of lawyers representing her were overjoyed.

“Lazaro” fled to the United States after enduring threats and attacks from the 18th Street Gang and the Salvadoran police.

He was only 15 years old when gang members attempted to abduct his cousin and make her a “gang girlfriend”—a euphemism for women whom gang members rape. After Lazaro intervened to protect his cousin, the gang threatened to kill them both. Together, they fled to the United States, where he was detained and placed in removal proceedings.

Lazaro sought withholding of removal and relief under the Convention Against Torture. His removal proceedings wound their way through the administrative review process for over five years, and he endured continuous civil detention for over 1,700 days. An Immigration Judge granted Lazaro relief on three separate occasions, including finding that he had been persecuted in El Salvador on account of his membership in the particular social group of “young male family members of his cousin” and was entitled to statutory withholding of removal. The judge also found that he was entitled to relief under the Convention Against Torture, as it was more likely than not he would be tortured if returned to El Salvador. Nonetheless, the Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA”) repeatedly reversed the judge—and Lazaro was deported from the United States.

Gibson Dunn, who has been representing Lazaro for years, appealed this reversal to the Fourth Circuit. In a 2-1 published decision with important ramifications for other asylum seekers, the Fourth Circuit reiterated that particular social groups of extended family members are legally cognizable, and it admonished the BIA for failing to apply the Court’s binding precedent on the issue. The Fourth Circuit remanded the case to the BIA, directing it to resolve the case “promptly” given Lazaro’s continuing danger. The Court also thanked Gibson Dunn—who has been representing Lazaro for many years, through various rounds before the agency, as

well as in separate conditions of confinement litigation tied to the COVID-19 pandemic—for its “admirabl[e]” pro bono service.

“Hector” and “Beatriz” are a husband and wife who endured persecution and torture at the hands of corrupt Mexican police officers.

Hector, a former federal police officer in Mexico, disrupted criminal activity and fought against police corruption. As a result, corrupt police officers tortured him and Beatriz, and framed him for a crime for which he was falsely imprisoned for four years. After Hector was exonerated by a Mexican appellate court, he and Beatriz fled for the United States.

Gibson Dunn represented them as they sought relief under the Convention Against Torture. We submitted over 1,000 pages of evidence and retained multiple experts. At the asylum hearing, the government conceded that the evidence Gibson Dunn had assembled demonstrated a clear likelihood of future persecution if our clients were returned to Mexico. The judge granted withholding of removal for each of our clients. Our clients are overjoyed to be able to rest secure in their new life in the United States.



Religious Persecution

Gibson Dunn lawyers also represent individuals forced to flee their homes and seek safety in the United States solely because of their religious beliefs, a practice grounded in one of this nation’s founding principles: **freedom of religion. These cases dovetail with our extensive pro bono practice defending religious liberty within the United States and help protect the rights of individuals seeking to practice their religions free from external interference.**

One of these clients is Sainan, a Chinese national who sought asylum in the United States after she was arrested, detained, and beaten for attending Christian house-church services in China.

According to Sainan’s testimony, the Chinese government detained her for several days and physically assaulted her. She was just a teenager at the time. As a result of her arrest, she was expelled from high school (as a freshman) and no longer attended church services in China because of the officers’ threats against her.

Gibson Dunn was appointed as pro bono counsel to represent Sainan before the Ninth Circuit after her application for relief from removal was denied. We argued that the immigration judge’s and the BIA’s adverse credibility determinations were based solely on speculation and conjecture and that, as a practicing Christian, Sainan faced a substantial risk of future persecution and torture in China. The Ninth Circuit agreed, granting her petition for review and vacating the agency’s decision.



Political Persecution

Every year, individuals and families across the globe are forced to flee their home countries for fear of persecution based solely on their political views or advocacy. Indeed, political asylum forms a bedrock of this country's immigration system. Our lawyers' work in this space is just one iteration of the Firm's overarching commitment to defending and advancing protections for individuals' rights to lawfully express their political opinions without fear of reprisal or retribution by government actors.

Our client, Yaine, was arrested by Cuban authorities after holding a “down with the Castro regime” sign on a national holiday meant to celebrate the communist regime.

Officers took her to the police station, beat her to unconsciousness, and left her on the floor of a cell without medical attention. Three days after she was released, officers arrested Yaine again, this time detaining her for three days and depriving her of water during that time. When she was released, Yaine fled Cuba for three months, hoping the officers would forget about her. But upon returning to Cuba, Yaine was met by officers waiting at her home, where they seized her belongings. Officers repeatedly threatened to imprison and murder her if she refused to change her political views, and Yaine ultimately fled Cuba for good.

Gibson Dunn was appointed as pro bono counsel to represent Yaine before the Ninth Circuit after her claims for relief from removal had been denied. The team argued that any reasonable adjudicator would be compelled to conclude that the harm Yaine suffered—a beating severe enough to render her unconscious, the deprivation of water for three days, and repeated threats of long imprisonment and death—constitutes past persecution, and that the record evidence compelled the conclusion that Yaine suffered this harm because of her political opinion. The Ninth Circuit agreed, holding “the record compels the finding that [Yaine] suffered past persecution” on account of her

political opinion, creating a presumption of future persecution. Following the win at the Ninth Circuit, the government agreed to dismiss Yaine's removal proceedings.

Throughout her life, “Gabriela” was a leader in opposition party groups in her home country of Venezuela.

She organized hundreds of rallies against the Venezuelan government, and, as part of her master's thesis, conducted extensive, critical research on the negative impact of the Venezuelan government's economic policies on the country. Due to her research and activities, Gabriela was subjected to serious physical attacks by the “colectivos,” Venezuela's state-sanctioned, armed militias, on three separate occasions. Fearing for her life, Gabriela sought protection in the United States.

Gibson Dunn took the case after her application was referred to immigration court and was thrilled to obtain a successful grant of asylum for her, enabling her to remain in the United States and ensuring she will be free to express her political views openly and without fear of violence.



LGBTQ+ Persecution

One of the Firm's flagship pro bono initiatives is a partnership with Legal Services NYC, a leading legal aid organization in New York, to assist LGBTQ+ individuals seeking asylum in the United States. We take on dozens of new LGBTQ+ immigration clients each year, and we are honored to have seen many of these cases through successful asylum applications and on the path to U.S. citizenship.

On October 31, 2023, Gibson Dunn attorneys waited at the airport in New York to greet pro bono client “Amina's” husband and three children.

Their arrival represented four years of work by Gibson Dunn attorneys to fight for Amina's right to stay in the United States and advocate for reunification with her family.

Amina fled Nigeria in early 2019, after facing life-threatening violence on account of her sexual orientation, tragically leaving her young family behind. Even though Amina had strong grounds for asylum and evidence of persecution, the team working on her case knew that Amina's identity as a cisgender bisexual woman, married to a cisgender man, would be heavily scrutinized. The team worked diligently to frame Amina's claims authentically and persuasively, and then prepare Amina for examination by an asylum officer. Amina was granted asylum in the fall of 2020.

In the subsequent years, the Gibson Dunn team worked with Amina to obtain derivative asylum for her three children and husband, a process that was fraught with travel bans, COVID delays, and remote proceedings. Ultimately, her family was granted derivative asylum status on February 14, 2023. Amina is one of the first Legal Services NYC clients in the LGBTQ+ asylum program to receive derivative asylum for her family members. Gibson Dunn continues to work with Amina and her family as they integrate into life in New York City and into family life after nearly five years of separation.

Impact Litigation

The Firm also brings its formidable civil litigation expertise to bear in the immigration space, where we regularly bring impact litigation to address injustices and inequities in the immigration system writ large.

APA Challenge to Asylum EAD Rule

In 2023, Gibson Dunn attorneys wrapped up a groundbreaking case that resulted in significant injunctive relief for persons seeking asylum in the United States. In June 2020, Gibson Dunn attorneys teamed up with immigrants' rights groups to challenge 18 rules promulgated by the prior administration that would have made it much more difficult for immigrants to work (and thus support themselves and their families), while their asylum applications are pending.

The court granted our motion for a preliminary injunction, finding a likelihood of success on the merits of the claims that the rules at issue were unlawful because the Trump administration official who promulgated them, Chad Wolf, was not properly appointed, and that the rules themselves did not comply with the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act. The September 2020 decision issuing the preliminary injunction was the first to recognize the unlawfulness of Mr. Wolf's appointment, and of the actions taken while he purported to head the Department of Homeland Security. Since then, multiple courts around the country have adopted the reasoning in that opinion, invalidating a number of actions taken by the Trump administration that unlawfully burdened asylum applicants.

The preliminary injunction in this case remained in place for more than two and a half years, allowing more than 150,000 asylum seekers to obtain work authorization permits before the rules finally were invalidated in a separate action.



AILA v. EOIR

A Gibson Dunn team won a decisive victory for our client, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, New Jersey Chapter (“AILA-NJ”)—the professional organization of New Jersey immigration attorneys—against the federal Executive Office for Immigration Review (“EOIR”), assuring access to remote hearings at the Newark Immigration Court for immunocompromised attorneys and clients. In issuing a final order in AILA-NJ’s favor—following a multi-day evidentiary hearing and oral ruling from the bench—Judge John Vazquez of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey found that Newark immigration judges had been routinely violating a stipulation entered into by the parties early in the COVID-19 pandemic that guaranteed access to remote WebEx hearings.

This decision was the first of its kind, both finding that the federal government has violated commitments it made to provide access to remote hearings for immunocompromised individuals and setting standards for judges to follow in evaluating requests for such hearings. The decision underscores that access to remote hearings for immunocompromised persons remains a critical aspect of access to justice.



ADVISING SMALL BUSINESSES & NONPROFITS

Each year, the Firm has the privilege of advising and representing nonprofits and small businesses across the globe that are making a difference—big or small—in their communities. Our work often evolves with our clients' needs, as we regularly advise on both limited-scope questions and longer-term questions spanning months or years. Whether we are advising clients on questions regarding commercial leasing, doing business online, nonprofit formation, intellectual property, corporate governance, or something else entirely, we are proud to help our clients with their legal questions so they can focus their attention on work that furthers their core missions and thereby strengthens our communities.

04





Outdoor Afro

Outdoor Afro is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to celebrate and inspire Black connections and leadership in nature. The network also connects Black people with lands, water, and wildlife through outdoor education, recreation, and conservation. Outdoor Afro’s year-round activities include fishing, hiking, biking, kayaking, gardening, skiing, and more.

The Firm has been representing Outdoor Afro since 2015 and has had the privilege to watch the organization grow significantly in recent years. Last year, Bay Area-based corporate associates helped negotiate corporate grant agreements on behalf of Outdoor Afro, which provided funding for their Making Waves program. Outdoor Afro launched Making Waves in 2019 in response to the alarming number of Black children who drown each year. Outdoor Afro partners with U.S. swim providers to fund lessons in water safety and basic swimming techniques. In 2023, more than 1,000 Black children and caregivers throughout the United States received swim lessons through the Making Waves program.

In previous years, real estate attorneys based in Gibson Dunn’s San Francisco office helped Outdoor Afro explore options for purchasing land in Sonoma County, which would serve as a permanent home base for the organization with a retreat center, overnight camp, and event space. We assisted Outdoor Afro on diligence and negotiations in connection with the proposed purchase.

“ Since the Firm began working with Outdoor Afro in 2015, the organization has grown tremendously, both in terms of number of participants nationwide and funding. It has been an honor to support Outdoor Afro through this transformative time and to grow our partnership with them as well, with the full support of the Firm. Seeing the impact that Outdoor Afro has made on communities through the United States over the past almost ten years—including with programs like Making Waves—has made the work even more fulfilling and I look forward to seeing what is in store for Outdoor Afro and Gibson Dunn over the next decade! ”



Melanie Neary
Associate, San Francisco

Global Impact Investing Network

The Global Impact Investing Network, Inc. (the “GIIN”) is a charitable nonprofit organization headquartered in New York whose mission is to increase the scale and effectiveness of impact investing around the world by reducing barriers to impact investment so more investors can allocate capital to fund solutions to the world’s most intractable challenges. We recognize the importance of education in driving investment towards sustainable solutions, and we support the GIIN’s cause to enable collective action and build a sustainable society through the key lever of education. Gibson Dunn’s Singapore office is currently providing corporate, employment, and regulatory law advice to the GIIN in relation to the its proposed series of paid educational trainings for impact investors in Singapore. In the past, we have provided corporate governance advice, employment advice, and intellectual property advice to the GIIN, among other things.

New York Healthy Food Business

Last year, a team of Gibson Dunn attorneys began working with Chef Ms. T, the owner of a culinary and nutrition education program founded to educate youth in the Bronx on how to prepare and consume healthy foods. The business’s mission is to provide food education and encourage low-income communities to consume nutritious food options by sharing “the culture, history, and traditions” of Latin cuisine from Spain to Puerto Rico. The business hosts private cooking classes and corporate experiences and sells kitchenware and other goods on an online shop. Ms. T also co-hosts a podcast featuring Latinx artists, entrepreneurs, writers, and entertainers. Gibson Dunn has been able to help her with a review of her website policies, among other things. We are proud to have helped grow and protect Ms. T’s business.



Flowering Tree

Gibson Dunn's Singapore office is advising Flowering Tree, Inc., a U.S.-based foundation founded in 2006 with a mission focused on women's development and children's education in Asia. The Firm's longstanding partnership with Flowering Tree has spanned numerous projects in Indonesia and India that have developed research and best practices in the fields of international education and development, with a strong environmental and sustainability agenda. Our team's work also has contributed to the development of several partnerships with key stakeholders in those fields. The Firm currently is assisting Flowering Tree with the development of its projects in India, aligning them to government policies.

California Bottled Salsa Business

Another Gibson Dunn team has been working with Ms. N, the owner of an e-commerce business selling a versatile bottled salsa that is both spicy and crunchy. Ms. N, who grew up in Mexico and now lives in California, began making her salsas at home during the pandemic as a way to reconnect with her Mexican culture. She uses spices and other authentic ingredients to bring the flavors of her hometown into homes across the United States. Her business highlights traditional Mexican and Mayan flavors that can complement any meal. Our team has been providing Ms. N corporate governance advice, including regarding business registration and corporate compliance requirements. We look forward to watching her business continue to grow and thrive.

BeEngaged

Gibson Dunn's Hong Kong office recently began advising BeEngaged, a student-led initiative that which aims to empower the LGBTQ+ community and advocate for the rights of sexual minorities in Hong Kong by addressing three major problems faced by the LGBTQ+ community: discrimination, lack of knowledge of LGBTQ+ rights, and potential gaps within the existing Hong Kong legislation. The Hong Kong office has provided pro bono assistance with assessing the appropriate legal structure for the initiative and helping with the formation of the resulting entity.



Community School Employment Case

Occasionally, our work on behalf of nonprofits goes beyond the corporate advice space. That was the case this year with one of Gibson Dunn's pro bono clients, a school that was sued by a terminated teacher seeking millions of dollars for alleged breach of contract and defamation.

The teacher filed a complaint in state court seeking millions of dollars in damages, alleging (1) breach of contract for termination without good cause; (2) breach of contract for failure to follow disciplinary procedures in an expressly non-contractual employee handbook; and (3) defamation.

In early 2023, the trial court granted the school's motion for summary judgment in full in an opinion closely tracking the school's arguments. In March 2024, five weeks after hearing oral argument, the Appellate Court of Maryland unanimously affirmed the decision below, agreeing that there was good cause for termination; the handbook provisions were not contractual; and the allegedly defamatory statements were protected by a common interest privilege, with no evidence of the malice required to defeat that privilege.

“ It was an honor to represent this long-term client in this case and to obtain a favorable result. Arguing before the appellate court was a great professional opportunity made possible by our pro bono program. ”



David Schnitzer
Of Counsel, Washington, D.C.



LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Gibson Dunn's commitment to the LGBTQ+ community has its roots in the Firm's 2013 historic marriage equality victory, striking down California's constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage. A decade later, that commitment continues to guide Gibson Dunn's pro bono practice. The Firm represented LGBTQ+ immigrants seeking asylum in the United States, helped transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming clients obtain name changes, and worked with nonprofit partners to file briefs in important court cases around the country to defend LGBTQ+ rights.



05

Resource Guide to Improve Safety in Carceral Housing for Transgender People

Gibson Dunn is proud to have assisted the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association in developing a Resource Guide to Improve Safety in Carceral Housing for Transgender People. The Guide is intended to support the critical work of advocates fighting for the safety and autonomy of incarcerated transgender people, who often are unaware about the policies in place to protect them. Recognizing this information gap, a team of Gibson Dunn lawyers spanning the globe worked together to compile policies concerning housing transgender inmates across all 50 states and territories of the United States. The resulting guide is a robust, easy-to-use, comprehensive resource that gives transgender inmates and their advocates quick access to the legal remedies available to transfer transgender people to their preferred population.

“ Far too often, incarcerated transgender and gender non-conforming individuals throughout the country are housed with the incorrect population, making them increasingly vulnerable to physical and psychological harms. Once the guide launched, we were met with an overwhelming response from community organizations and stakeholders in the field who quickly began to put it to use. It is a privilege to have worked on this and to continue to develop ways to leverage it on behalf of incarcerated individuals and allied organizations. ”



Kelly Herbert
Associate, New York

LGBTQ+ Asylum Initiative

Gibson Dunn has long fostered a partnership with Legal Services NYC, a leading legal aid organization in New York, to assist LGBTQ+ individuals seeking asylum in the United States. Each year, we screen dozens of LGBTQ+ clients for asylum eligibility and take on the cases of those individuals deemed to have a viable asylum claim. In some cases, we pair our asylum representation with assistance obtaining name and gender-marker changes.



In all of these cases, our clients have fled incredibly dangerous conditions in their home countries in search of safety and the ability to live authentically. They came to the United States from countries on every continent, including Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Liberia, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Syria, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela. Now, they are building new lives in New York City. Over the last five years, the Firm has helped more than 40 clients obtain asylum. Many have since received their green cards, and several will soon be eligible to apply for citizenship.

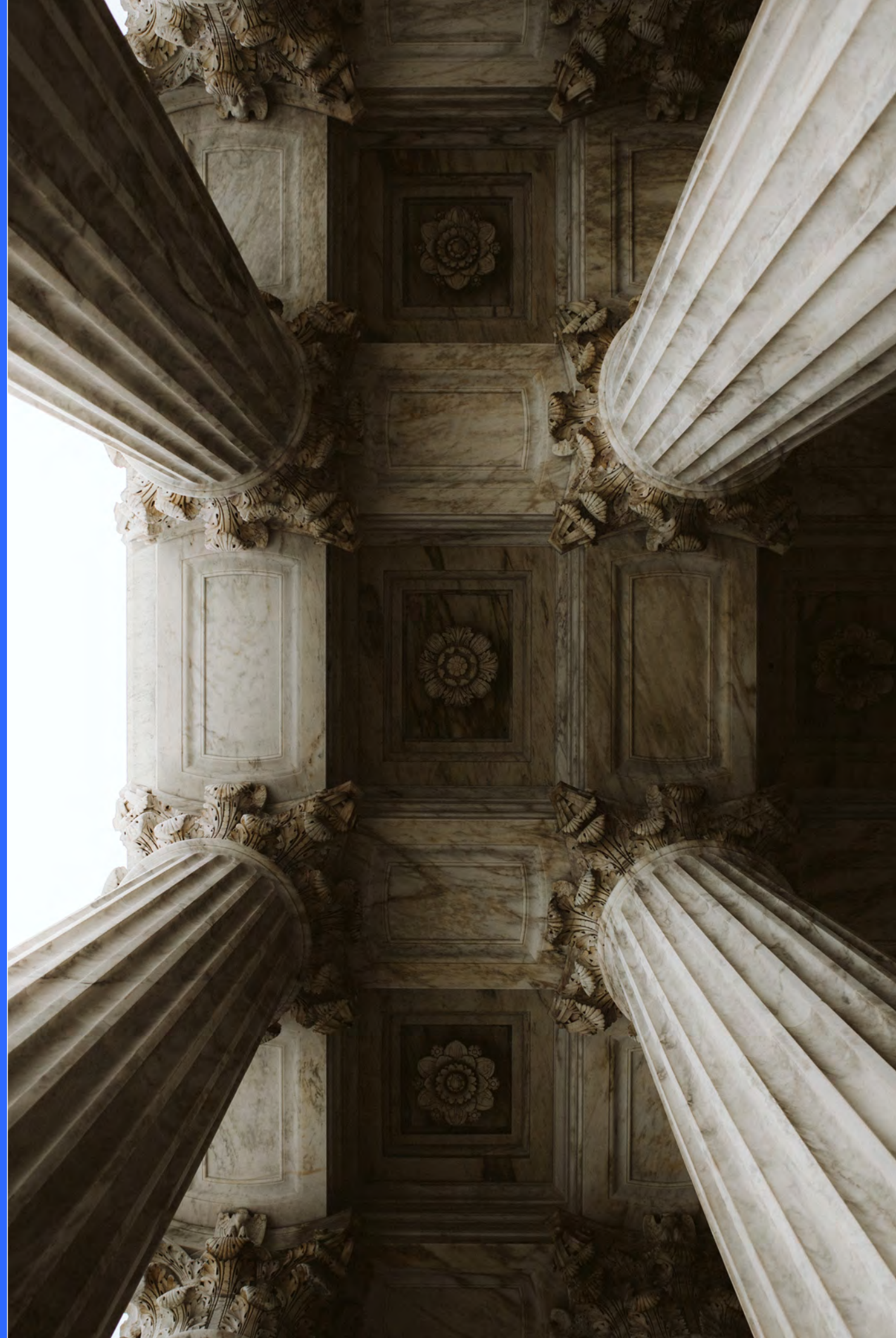
Trevor Project

In 2023, the Firm continued its longstanding partnership with The Trevor Project, the largest LGBTQ+ youth crisis intervention and suicide prevention organization and the only nationwide organization that offers accredited, free, and confidential phone, instant message, and text messaging crisis intervention services for LGBTQ+ youth. Last year, we filed amicus briefs on behalf of The Trevor Project to protect the right of transgender students to participate in school sports. In two of the briefs, we supported transgender plaintiffs who challenged state laws that would effectively ban transgender women and girls from participating in school sports in a manner consistent with their gender identity. In another, we wrote in support of a state policy that allows transgender youth to continue to participate in sports as their authentic selves. Specifically, we argued that policies that exclude transgender youth from sports exacerbate the harms these youth already face from discrimination, including severe effects on their mental health. For example, a study published by The Trevor Project found that while nearly half of transgender women and girls had seriously considered suicide within the past year, the risk of suicide significantly decreased when they had a supportive and accepting environment at school.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Gibson Dunn's appellate practice is consistently recognized as one of the best in the nation. That expertise is put to good use in the Firm's pro bono practice, where Gibson Dunn attorneys work to defend constitutional rights and promote the rule of law. In 2023, Gibson Dunn appeared in courts across the country, addressing some of the most consequential constitutional questions of the day.

06



United States v. Rahimi

After the Supreme Court’s landmark decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*, 597 U.S. 1 (2022), a wave of challenges to gun regulations—some new, some renewed—were filed around the country. One challenge was brought by Zackey Rahimi. Rahimi, who had previously been found to have committed “familial violence,” was charged under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8), which prohibits individuals subject to certain domestic violence restraining orders from possessing firearms during the pendency of such orders. Initially, Rahimi pleaded guilty to the offense. But after *Bruen* was issued, Rahimi argued that Section 922(g)(8) and its restrictions on gun ownership placed on adjudged domestic abusers violated the Second Amendment. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ultimately sided with Rahimi. In its view, “[t]he Government fail[ed] to demonstrate that [Section] 922(g)(8)’s restriction of the Second Amendment right fits within our Nation’s historical tradition of firearm regulation.” *United States v. Rahimi*, 61 F.4th 443, 460 (5th Cir. 2023). The Government then sought, and was granted, certiorari. *United States v. Rahimi*, 143 S. Ct. 2688 (2023).

Gibson Dunn filed an amicus brief on behalf of the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence before the Supreme Court in support of the Government in *United States v. Rahimi*. In so doing, Gibson Dunn stood on the side of those fighting to maintain the rights and safety of domestic violence survivors and opposed attempts to invalidate federal law prohibiting domestic abusers from purchasing and possessing firearms.

Drawing on the Giffords Law Center’s law and policy expertise, Gibson Dunn’s amicus brief urges the Supreme Court to reverse the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit’s “dangerous” invalidation of Section 922(g), and argues that fundamental societal changes, including women’s enfranchisement, invite a nuanced and properly contextualized approach to constitutional analysis under the *Bruen* historical-analogical framework with respect to Section 922(g)(8). In sum, the brief asks the Court to reaffirm both that the Second Amendment is not a “regulatory straightjacket,” and that it does not require the government to sit idly by in the face of documented, historic, and pervasive threats to public safety by allowing adjudged domestic abusers to purchase and possess firearms.



State of California et al. v. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, et al.

Ghost guns are do-it-yourself projects that allow anyone to quickly and easily build fully functional and untraceable firearms, including military-grade assault rifles. In September 2020, Gibson Dunn filed suit on behalf of Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence and co-plaintiff, the State of California, challenging the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives’ (“ATF”) failure to sufficiently regulate ghost guns.

At the time, ATF had done very little to address the well-documented ghost gun epidemic in this country. Under the Biden administration, ATF initiated rulemaking directed at ghost guns, but the resulting Final Rule didn’t go far enough. The Final Rule left a significant and deadly regulatory gap by excluding many partially complete receivers—integral components for building a “ghost” AR-style rifle—from the definition of “firearm.” Specifically, it provided that a partially complete AR-style receiver is not a “firearm” so long as it is sold separately from jigs and other tools commonly used to convert the receiver into a fully functional AR-15. Because of this loophole, many AR-style receivers were purchasable by anyone without a background check—including minors, people subject to domestic violence restraining orders, and other prohibited purchasers.

In 2023, Gibson Dunn filed a motion for summary judgment, arguing that ATF’s actions (1) contravene the text and purpose of the Gun Control Act of 1968, which requires ATF to regulate all “firearms”; and (2) adopt arbitrary and capricious distinctions between categories of AR-style ghost gun products. On February 26, 2024, Gibson Dunn secured a significant victory when Judge Chen of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California entered summary judgment on its behalf. This decision marks an important step in closing a significant regulatory gap that previously enabled manufacturers and retailers to sell these deadly products without serialization or background checks. It is an important victory not only for our client but also in the nationwide fight against ghost gun violence.



Rabbi Levi Illulian



Rabbi Levi Illulian moved into his current home in October 2022 and began hosting a variety of intimate religious gatherings to meet the religious needs of his family and friends. For example, he hosts weekly Shabbat dinners, celebrations for Passover, and prayers to mourn the loss of loved ones. For months, Rabbi Illulian hosted these gatherings without incident, always striving to be respectful of his community. All of that changed, however, in early February 2023, when the City of Beverly Hills received a complaint from a private citizen regarding Rabbi Illulian inviting family and friends to his home to pray. After spending nearly a month investigating the complaints, the City initially (and correctly) concluded the alleged violations were unfounded and closed its case.

That hiatus was short-lived, with the City reopening its investigation at the end of March 2023 after a disgruntled resident complained again regarding religious activities in the Rabbi's home. Instead of disregarding what it had already determined to be unfounded complaints from a handful of residents who are hostile to Rabbi Illulian's religious exercise, the City renewed its investigation with increased vigor at the end of March 2023. Invoking Orwellian tactics usually reserved for serious criminal investigations, City personnel engaged in multiple stakeouts of the Rabbi's home over many hours and days. City officials not only tallied the number of individuals and cars coming and going from the Rabbi's home, but also photographed his guests. Police officers even threatened to confiscate his property and issue him a citation for hosting a celebration on Halloween for his three-year-old son's Upshernish—a solemn rite where a young Jewish boy has his hair cut for the first time as a symbol of his initiation into his formal study of the Torah.

In June 2023, the City issued the Rabbi a notice of violation, threatening civil and criminal proceedings against the Rabbi if he did not “terminate all religious activities” in his home. The Rabbi reached out to First Liberty Institute, which asked Gibson Dunn to represent the Rabbi to protect his right to exercise his faith in his own home with family and friends. Over the course of four months, Gibson Dunn sent several communications to City officials documenting the City's harassment of the Rabbi and detailing his right to engage in religious exercise at his home, free from government burden and interference, under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000cc *et seq.* We demanded that the City withdraw its Notice of Violation and cease all harassment—making clear that we were prepared to sue the City to safeguard the Rabbi's rights if needed. On November 29, 2023, the City informed us that they were withdrawing their notice of violation in full.



“ At a time when gatherings of the Jewish community are most critical, it was a privilege to help the Rabbi obtain the assurances he needed to continue opening his home as a place of safety and refuge for his family and friends. I'm pleased to be at a firm with a commitment to safeguarding the constitutional rights of all faiths to practice their religion free from government burden and interference. And that's exactly what the Gibson Dunn team achieved for the Rabbi and his community. ”



Elizabeth Kiernan
Associate, Dallas

Smith v. Trump

On January 6, 2021, the U.S. Capitol was attacked by violent insurrectionists protesting the results of the 2020 election and attempting to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power. On August 26, 2023, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights filed a lawsuit on behalf of eight Capitol Police Officers who had been violently assaulted, tear-gassed, bear-sprayed, subjected to racial slurs and epithets, and put in fear for their lives during the January 6 riot. The Officers brought their suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1985, the Ku Klux Klan Act, arguing that the individuals who planned, organized, and incited that unprecedented attack, including President Trump, should be held accountable.

In 2023, President Trump's motion to dismiss the suit against him on the basis of presidential immunity was denied. President Trump appealed that denial to the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Gibson Dunn represented the Officers for purposes of that appeal. The brief argued that President Trump was not protected by presidential immunity for the conduct alleged, because a conspiracy to use force, intimidation, and threats to prevent Congress from certifying the election results falls beyond the outer limits of official presidential duties. In December 2023, the D.C. Circuit agreed, affirming the District Court's denial of absolute immunity and ordering preliminary discovery. President Trump elected not to challenge the D.C. Circuit's decision before the Supreme Court. Gibson Dunn also has appeared before the Supreme Court to defend its clients' interests in *Trump v. Anderson*, a case concerning Donald Trump's disqualification from the Colorado presidential ballot. There, Gibson Dunn represented the Officers as amici and argued that Trump's participation in the insurrection was unprotected by the First Amendment.

In recognition of the Firm's work on this case and many others, the Lawyers' Committee honored Gibson Dunn with the Robert F. Mullen Pro Bono Award, given annually to one law firm "for advancing the legal profession's highest ideal of equal justice for all and for exceptional pro bono legal service." Gibson Dunn is grateful for its longstanding partnership with the Lawyers' Committee and will continue to proudly join their mission.



Johnson v. Wyoming

On July 25, 2022, a group of women, OBGYNs, and abortion providers filed an emergency Temporary Restraining Order ("TRO") and lawsuit against the State of Wyoming and other parties to enjoin a statewide abortion ban that would go into effect following the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling. The court granted the initial TRO for plaintiffs. In September 2023, a team of Gibson Dunn attorneys joined the case to oppose a motion to intervene by legislators and co-sponsors of the Wyoming abortion ban.

Since that time, Gibson Dunn attorneys have worked alongside Wyoming lawyers to represent plaintiffs in the suit, which presents numerous challenges under the Wyoming Constitution, including under a unique provision guaranteeing citizens the right to control their own health care decisions. Gibson Dunn successfully moved for TROs enjoining the enforcement of Wyoming's 2023 abortion legislation, which included a first of its kind ban on abortion medications. These injunctions remain in place today.

Gibson Dunn also defeated an effort by an anti-abortion advocacy group and state legislators to intervene in the case—a decision that recently was unanimously affirmed by the Wyoming Supreme Court.



Gibson Dunn also briefed and argued a summary judgment motion seeking a permanent injunction and declaration that the laws are unconstitutional. Subsequently, the court certified constitutional questions to be resolved by the Wyoming Supreme Court. As a result of Gibson Dunn's work, people in Wyoming and neighboring states (primarily Idaho and South Dakota) have been able to continue to access essential reproductive health care in the State of Wyoming.

“ Nearly every week, we read in the news about pregnant persons who are denied essential healthcare due to state abortion bans, often with dire consequences. Because of our work, pregnant persons in Wyoming (and neighboring states with bans such as Idaho and South Dakota) have been able to continue accessing critical healthcare since the *Dobbs* decision. It has been enormously gratifying to hear from total strangers who have reached out to thank us for making a real difference in their lives. This point was driven home to us recently when we learned that one of our clients was able to obtain prompt, evidence-based healthcare for an undiagnosed ectopic pregnancy that would have posed a threat to her health and possibly her life if the Wyoming abortion ban had been in effect. ”



Peter Modlin
Partner, San Francisco

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 2023, the Firm took pride in continuing its longstanding commitment to representing survivors of domestic violence through various partnerships and projects around the globe. Survivors of domestic violence often feel trapped—physically trapped in fear for their life if they try to leave, trapped out of fear for what will happen to children caught in the middle, or financially trapped by an abuser who is in control of the finances. Being able to provide compassionate and zealous pro bono representation to survivors seeking legal protection from their abusers is at the very heart of our mission to provide access to justice to those who need it most.

07



Domestic Violence Restraining Orders

In one case, a Gibson Dunn team secured a two-year domestic violence restraining order in favor of a low-income mother of a developmentally delayed child, who suffered years of physical, psychological, and financial abuse from her husband. Before Gibson Dunn joined the case, our client's temporary restraining order did not include a move-out order against her husband or an order for possession of her vehicle, leaving our client without stable housing or reliable transportation. The Gibson Dunn team successfully amended the request for a temporary restraining order to seek that additional relief.



At the evidentiary hearing, Gibson Dunn presented compelling evidence that our client suffered abuse from her husband throughout their 11-year marriage. The husband testified that he had never physically or otherwise abused our client, and attempted to argue that our client was the abuser. After a contested evidentiary hearing, including cross-examination of the husband, the court sided with our client and adopted our client's testimony in its findings, concluding that our client was more credible than her husband. In addition to the restraining order against her husband, the court awarded our client sole legal and physical custody of their child, exclusive use of the residence (with the first month's rent paid by the husband), and immediate return of her vehicle.

In another case, our lawyers achieved a huge success by obtaining a five-year restraining order and sole legal and physical custody for our client. The referring organization, Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice ("LACLJ") initially had warned that it would be a "very difficult" case because it was based on coercive control, including using and withholding time with the parties' child as a means to control our client. LACLJ previewed that it was a novel legal argument and that they were unsure of the likelihood of success in the case. The team was not deterred, and advocated zealously for our client. LACLJ noted that, "thanks to their skill, dedication, bravery, and hard work in tackling this case, the client obtained a better result than we could have imagined!"

“ I am so proud to have worked with a team comprised of primarily junior associates to fully litigate an appeal on behalf of a pro bono client, a survivor of domestic abuse seeking full custody of her son. Working closely with an outside pro bono organization to brief and argue the appeal, we helped our client overturn a custody order infected with legal error and obtained a favorable judgment that will hopefully help pave the way for greater protections of domestic violence survivors and their children. ”



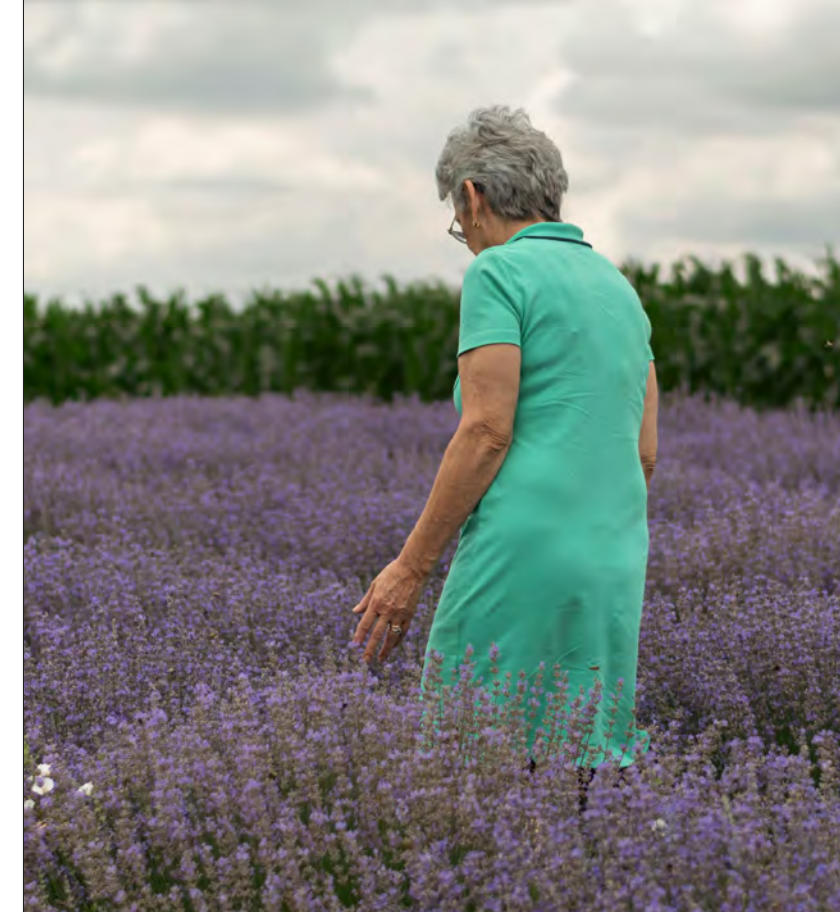
Ally Harris
Associate, Orange County

UK Domestic Abuse Response Alliance

Gibson Dunn is proud to be a founding member of the Domestic Abuse Response Alliance ("DARA"), an advocacy alliance made up of ten law firms. DARA was launched to represent survivors of domestic abuse who are ineligible for legal aid and who cannot afford to pay for private representation. DARA is the largest pro bono project ever assembled in the United Kingdom to provide end-to-end representation and, crucially, advocacy for survivors seeking protective orders against their abusers.

DARA launched in 2022, against the backdrop of surges in domestic violence following the COVID-19 lockdowns. DARA has since grown to a multi-award-winning collaboration of ten firms. DARA receives case referrals from the National Centre for Domestic Violence ("NCDV") and Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors ("FLOWS") and refers them to the participant firms on a taxi-rank basis. An operational committee, with representatives from each participant firm and mentor firm Beck Fitzgerald, meets monthly to share knowledge and best practice, to resolve challenges that arise, and to discuss policy and advocacy for change.

One of the most notable cases coming from DARA involved an 87-year-old woman who had suffered from years of financial and emotional abuse at the hands of her son. The Firm successfully obtained a restraining order to protect the client and guided her through the proceedings while also navigating the sensitivities of the subject matter and the familial dynamics at play. To date, 40 Gibson Dunn attorneys have spent over 4,500 hours helping 17 individuals to bring restraining order proceedings against their abusers, with almost all of these resulting in successful hearings or effective settlement.



LACBA Domestic Violence Project

A group of Gibson Dunn lawyers also supported the Domestic Violence Project ("DVP") of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Counsel for Justice. Through its team of trained volunteers, DVP strives to make the justice system more accessible for survivors who come to court for protection by providing legal information, assistance with preparing forms, and connections to other supportive services in the community. Over the past year, DVP served almost 2,000 self-represented litigants, most of them low-income; 80% of the litigants were women, about 40% were people of color, and one third were non-English speakers. Gibson Dunn lawyers provided 165 hours of pro bono services in 2023 alone, which accounted for about 10% of the project's overall pro bono volunteer time.

CIVIL RIGHTS & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

At Gibson Dunn, protecting the civil rights of the most vulnerable members of our communities is a cornerstone of our pro bono practice, underpinning many of the pro bono matters we take on each year. This work often touches on the deep flaws that run through the criminal justice system — flaws that often disadvantage people of color, women, and those lacking in financial means. In recognition of this fact, we also remain dedicated to addressing those systemic issues and work to create a system of justice that truly does guarantee equal justice under the law for all.

08



Jose Ramirez Settlement

In 2008, Jose Ramirez walked into prison a healthy man. Nearly a decade later, Mr. Ramirez was rolled out of prison in a wheelchair, severely disabled and in constant pain. In those intervening years, Mr. Ramirez received two botched back surgeries that relegated him to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. After the surgeries, his repeated, desperate pleas for medical care and disability accommodations were routinely denied. Mr. Ramirez's complaints were met by indifference and violence. On one occasion, when Mr. Ramirez complained about his conditions of confinement, three prison guards responded by throwing Mr. Ramirez out of his wheelchair and savagely beating him. Instead of reprimanding the officers, the prison disciplined Mr. Ramirez and placed him in solitary confinement.

Mr. Ramirez filed a pro se complaint in the Southern District of New York against the prison guards and the prison's medical director pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, alleging excessive use of force and deficient medical care claims under the Eighth Amendment. In 2018, the Court dismissed Mr. Ramirez's deficient medical care claim against the prison's medical director. In 2019, the Chief Counsel of the S.D.N.Y. Office of Pro Se Litigation turned to Gibson Dunn, asking the Firm to take on Mr. Ramirez's case pro bono.

Appearing as Mr. Ramirez's pro bono counsel, Gibson Dunn convinced the Court to reopen discovery. Gibson Dunn then filed a motion for leave to amend the complaint to reassert Mr. Ramirez's dismissed deficient medical care claim, and to bring a new Eighth Amendment inhumane conditions of confinement claim and new Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act claims. The Government vigorously opposed the motion. In December 2020, U.S. District Judge Vincent Briccetti issued a 19-page decision granting the motion for leave to amend in its entirety. The S.D.N.Y. Office of Pro Se Litigation featured a story about Gibson Dunn's win on its website.

Gibson Dunn then pursued additional discovery and successfully moved to compel the disclosure of internal prison documents, winning the motion during oral argument. Gibson Dunn deposed several witnesses, including the prison guards and medical directors, and retained a renowned orthopedic surgeon as an expert witness. In lieu of filing a responsive expert report, the Government requested that the parties enter settlement negotiations.

On July 10, 2023, Gibson Dunn obtained a \$110,000 settlement for Mr. Ramirez. Gibson Dunn was proud to achieve justice for Mr. Ramirez and obtain compensation from the Government for the deplorable treatment he received as a severely disabled inmate.

Ninth Circuit Civil Rights Decision

In 2016, Gibson Dunn's client, Shane Love, witnessed Pasadena police officers kill Reginald Thomas, who had raised Mr. Love as his son from the age of one. Mr. Love filed a § 1983 lawsuit in federal court, claiming that the killing violated his due-process rights to a relationship with his father. The district court dismissed the claim for lack of Article III standing on the theory that Mr. Thomas was not Mr. Love's biological father and had never formally adopted him. Mr. Love refiled his due process claim in California court, as parties have the option to do after an Article III dismissal. Yet the City of Pasadena removed the case back to federal court and asserted that issue preclusion prevented Mr. Love from relitigating his standing. The second federal district court accepted that preclusion argument and again dismissed the due process claim.

Gibson Dunn began representing Mr. Love on appeal and argued that the City of Pasadena had waived its preclusion defense by removing the case back to federal court, that issue preclusion does not apply to Article III standing anyway, and that Mr. Love should have his day in either federal or state court on the merits in all events. The Ninth Circuit agreed. Mr. Love finally will have an opportunity to litigate the merits of his due process claim on remand in the district court.



Deon Jones v. City of LA



Deon Jones, a Los Angeles-based performance artist, entrepreneur, and Truman Scholar, grew up in Wiggins, Mississippi, where he witnessed and was subjected to rampant anti-Black racism. He has chosen to dedicate his adult life to serving as a leader and voice for his communities, using his work to help spread messages of inclusivity, social justice, and equality. He counts among his mentors the late Congressman John Lewis, who instilled in him the deep-seated belief that he had a responsibility to stand up and fight against inequality.

On the afternoon of May 30, 2020, Mr. Jones was engaging in a peaceful protest in Los Angeles in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. As protestors began to march, LAPD officers outfitted in riot gear arrived, causing the scene to become increasingly chaotic. Mr. Jones and his friend sought refuge in the parking lot of a nearby Trader Joe's. While peacefully filming the scene with his phone in the parking lot, Mr. Jones was suddenly shot in the face by Officer Peter Bueno with a projectile from a weapon known as a 40mm "less-lethal" launcher. The projectile broke two bones in Mr. Jones' face and was millimeters away from blinding him, or even worse, killing him.

Mr. Jones brought this civil rights lawsuit to hold the City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Chief of the LAPD, and LAPD Officer Bueno accountable for their egregious and unconstitutional conduct on May 30, 2020. When Mr.

Jones filed his initial Complaint in the Central District of California on December 9, 2020, he did not know the identity of his shooter. It was only after the City and the LAPD were ordered by the Court to produce critically important documents to Mr. Jones, including documents related to the LAPD's internal investigation into the shooting, that Mr. Jones was finally able to identify Officer Bueno as his shooter—almost a year after filing his initial Complaint. Mr. Jones' case then survived multiple motions to dismiss and a motion for summary judgment before proceeding to trial. Mr. Jones also rejected a settlement offer from the City, an offer that would turn out to be less than what Mr. Jones was awarded at trial.

On February 28, 2023, trial commenced before an eight-person jury, with the Honorable Fred W. Slaughter presiding. The trial featured body-worn camera videos that captured the events of the day, including videos showing Officer Bueno using excessive force against Mr. Jones and other protesters. The trial also featured testimony from eyewitnesses of the shooting and LAPD officers and other witnesses who testified it violates LAPD policy to shoot people in the face and otherwise engage in excessive uses of force.

After listening to four days of testimony, the jury deliberated for approximately five hours before returning a unanimous verdict in favor of Mr. Jones on his Fourth Amendment claim against Officer Bueno. The jury awarded Mr. Jones a total of \$375,000, consisting of \$250,000 in compensatory damages and \$125,000 in punitive damages. In awarding Mr. Jones punitive damages, the jury concluded Officer Bueno's shooting of Mr. Jones was malicious, oppressive, or in reckless disregard of Mr. Jones' rights.

As reported on the front page of the Los Angeles Times, this verdict is "the first verdict of its kind since mass protests swept Los Angeles in 2020," with several other similar lawsuits ending in settlement with no acknowledgement of any wrongdoing by the City of Los Angeles or the officers involved. This verdict in favor of Mr. Jones helps pave the way for future protesters to exercise their fundamental constitutional rights without fear of police violence and retaliation.

In July 2023, Gibson Dunn announced the settlement of the remainder of Mr. Jones' case. The officer has agreed to forego any appeal of the jury's verdict, ensuring the verdict will continue to stand as a national message of accountability for police misconduct. The City has also agreed in the settlement to pay Mr. Jones additional damages to avoid a second trial that would have likely been held next year. That trial would have addressed and further exposed the City and LAPD's historic abuses against civil rights protesters like Mr. Jones. Rather than proceed to that second trial, the City agreed to pay Mr. Jones \$860,000 to resolve all claims—more than double the amount the jury awarded against the officer that shot Mr. Jones. The team that litigated this case won Gibson Dunn's 2023 Frank Wheat Award in recognition of their outstanding work.

“ I am proud of what this case accomplished, both in terms of accountability for the Los Angeles Police Department, and in terms of paving the way for broader accountability for all police departments that encounter and manage peaceful protests. I believe it is no coincidence that the jury verdict in our favor came down on the 58th anniversary week of Bloody Sunday in Selma where the late Congressman John Lewis almost died at the hands of law enforcement. It was a reminder that I come from a people and legacy who bled and died to have a voice in this country, and that is why we showed up and gave 100 percent every day to fight this fight. ”

Deon Jones

Release of “B.T.”

Several years ago, the Firm launched a collaboration with Promise of Justice Initiative, a New Orleans-based nonprofit working to repair the systemic harms caused by so-called Jim Crow juries, which allowed individuals to be convicted of crimes by non-unanimous juries in Louisiana for over 100 years. More than 80% of the over 2,000 people still imprisoned due to Jim Crow juries are Black, and most are serving life sentences. The Supreme Court held the practice unconstitutional in 2020, but subsequently decided that decision would not apply retroactively—leaving those already convicted by Jim Crow juries prior to 2020 without hope for relief.

One of our clients, B.T., was convicted by a non-unanimous, unconstitutional jury in 1983. He was only 19 years old. Over the dissenting votes of two jurors—who, like B.T., were Black—B.T. was found guilty of an alleged armed robbery and sentenced to ninety-nine years of hard labor without benefit of probation, parole, or suspension. Effectively, B.T. received a life sentence despite important mitigating facts: the alleged robbery was of \$400, he had never before been accused of a violent crime, he had lived a difficult childhood, no one was physically injured during the alleged robbery, and two jurors had reasonable doubt he was guilty at all. After spending the past forty years incarcerated in Louisiana state prisons, Gibson Dunn successfully advocated on his behalf and B.T. received an amended sentence reduced to time served. He was released as a free man in November 2023. B.T. entered a three-year reentry program that will provide comprehensive resources and support as he adjusts to life outside of incarceration. B.T.—who is known by those around him for his selflessness, wisdom, and unwavering optimism—is excelling in the program.

VETERANS

The firm is proud and honored to represent veterans of our armed forces on a pro bono basis, assisting with a wide variety of veterans-related matters. Our attorneys, with guidance and mentorship from expert nonprofit organizations serving veterans, work to obtain just and equitable outcomes for our veteran clients in accessing hard-earned and well-deserved benefits and support, including critical physical and mental healthcare.

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The Veterans Consortium

In partnership with The Veterans Consortium, our attorneys have taken on several full-scope cases representing veterans in final-stage appeals to prove entitlement to VA benefits following denials of administrative appeals below and obtained favorable outcomes for those clients. In 2023, dozens of Gibson Dunn attorneys dedicated hundreds of hours to helping veterans referred by the Veterans Consortium in their appeals to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

One of those clients is an 85-year-old veteran of the United States Army Reserves and career educator. As a result of his military service, our client suffers from generalized anxiety disorder, persistent depressive disorder, and other neurocognitive behavior. Although the VA had awarded our client a 100% disability rating from 2021 to 2022, that disability rating was dropped to 50% starting in September 2022. The client had lost his appeal of that rating change when we took on his case. Through zealous advocacy, we were able to convince the VA that the Board of Veterans' Appeals had erred, and the decision to deny his appeal was vacated. The Gibson Dunn team continues to represent our client in his remand proceedings before the Board.

National Veterans Legal Services Program

Firm attorneys also worked on numerous veterans' rights matters in partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program, focusing on assisting veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan in obtaining disability compensation and discharge upgrades. For example, our attorneys have assisted veterans of recent combat in their efforts to obtain discharge upgrades based on mental health conditions, post-discharge conduct, and changes to societal understandings of trauma's impact on behavior. Additionally, because disabled service members are often discharged instead of treated, we have sought to obtain medical retirement status for veterans who were improperly discharged on the basis of their qualifying disabilities, including seeking retroactive benefits.



Swords to Plowshares

Gibson Dunn proudly partners with Swords to Plowshares, a Bay Area-based nonprofit organization dedicated to providing holistic support to local veterans. In addition to providing legal support to this vulnerable population, the organization also provides wraparound counseling and case management, access to emergency housing and other critical needs, program and community referrals, and job training.

Through the Firm's Swords to Plowshares relationship, Gibson Dunn attorneys assisted veterans in obtaining access to critical benefits and securing discharge upgrades, regardless of era or length of service. For example, we have helped veterans who received less-than-honorable discharges under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" obtain military benefits to which they are entitled. The process to obtain benefits and correct military records can be complex and difficult to navigate for those without legal training, even when they are undoubtedly deserved. Our attorneys are honored to have the opportunity to provide no-cost legal support for these worthy individuals.

“ Our country made a commitment to servicemen and servicewoman that we would provide the support and care they need, both during and continuing after their service. However, navigating the legal landscape for discharge or post-discharge benefits is incredibly complex and often occurs during one of the most challenging times of a veteran's life. Supporting our veterans by providing world-class representation can be the glimmer of hope our veterans need during these challenging times. And the outcomes we deliver have significant impacts on real people's lives. ”



Al Suarez
Associate, Dallas

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

The Firm is proud to partner with nonprofit organizations that are leaders in the environmental preservation and conservation space, both in the United States and around the world. Our environmental conservation work takes many forms, from advising individuals regarding initiatives promoting sustainability to representing nonprofit organizations dedicated to conservation and preservation.

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Family Forest Carbon Program

In 2023, the firm began a new pro bono relationship with the American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit organization that enables family forest owners to access climate finance from carbon markets, empowering them to help address climate change while earning income from their land. The Family Forest Carbon Program pays enrolled landowners upfront to implement climate-smart forestry practices that go above and beyond what is otherwise common practice. The program also provides landowners with professional expertise and guidance to help them transition to long-term sustainable forest management.

Gibson Dunn attorneys have dedicated their time to advising family forest owners about rights and obligations under the complex contractual structures required to establish the relevant carbon credit relationships and land use restrictions. With the benefit of pro bono legal support, the Program is able to expand enrollment, education, and access to resources, thereby increasing the amount of carbon sequestration in American forests. We are proud to support the Program in this critical mission and look forward to a robust continued partnership in years to come.

“ As nearly 40% of forests in the U.S. are stewarded by family forest owners, it is crucial that these landowners have the tools they need to protect the health and wellbeing of their woodlands. Through its Family Forest Carbon Program, the American Forest Foundation provides opportunities for these landowners to maximize their conservation impact while supporting rural economies. We are grateful for Gibson Dunn’s support in helping landowners navigate the complexities of carbon projects so they can implement sustainable forestry practices through enrollment in the Family Forest Carbon Program. ”



Patricia Ruby
Director of Enrollment, Family Forest Carbon Program

The Nature Conservancy

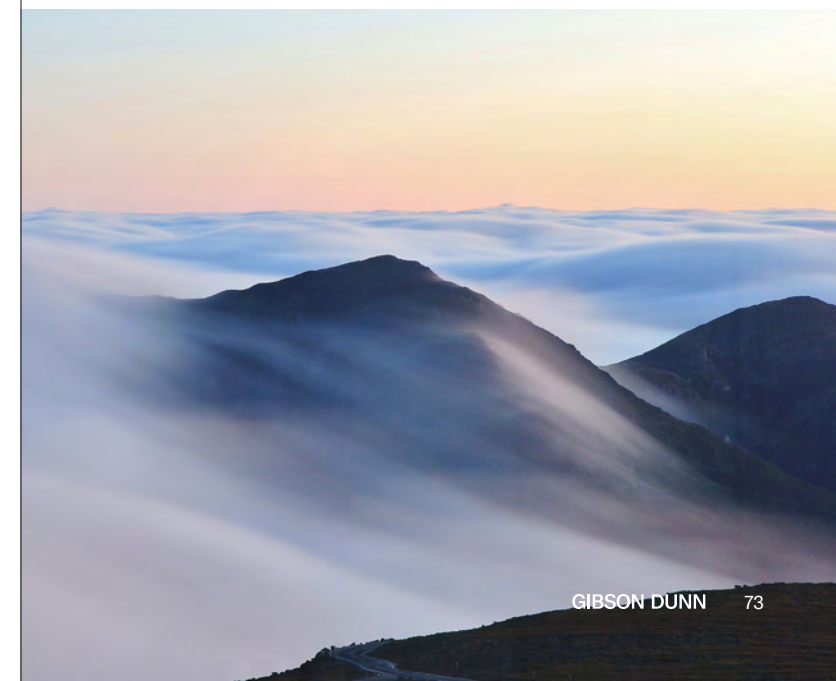
The Firm is proud to continue its longstanding partnership with The Nature Conservancy (“TNC”), a nonprofit founded in the 1950s to conserve the lands and waters on which life depends. One project we assisted with in 2023 was the Maybell canal project. A group of ranchers in northwestern Colorado dug the 18-mile-long Maybell canal more than 125 years ago to divert about 130 cubic feet of irrigation water from the Yampa River (a tributary of the Colorado River, upstream of Dinosaur National Monument and the Grand Canyon). Located near the town of Maybell, the ranchers use their Maybell Ditch water right to irrigate their hay fields and provide water for livestock. The reach of the Yampa is home to abundant wildlife, including four threatened or endangered fish species, whose free movement depends on healthy flows in this critical part of the river.

The original Maybell headgate structure situated on Bureau of Land Management land away from any road required significant repair to work efficiently, while also maximizing in-stream flows to leave water in the Yampa. TNC organized grants from nonprofits and government sources to fund the significant cost of replacing the Maybell headgate structure and provide cutting-edge remote-control technology for the ranchers to control when the Ditch diverts water. The new headgate and technology also will maximize in-stream flows, helping leave water in the Yampa for increased ecological connectivity, which benefits endangered fish and other species.

Attorneys in Gibson Dunn’s Denver office worked with TNC on its oversight of the design and construction for this major project, which was largely completed during the fall and winter of 2023 during low stream flows.

Smart Air

Gibson Dunn’s Singapore office is advising Smart Air, a social enterprise and certified B-Corp established in 2013 that promotes cost-effective, data-backed air filters as a solution to indoor particulate air pollution, and which also provides open-source data and hosts educational workshops across Asia to teach people how to protect themselves from the harms of poor air quality. The Firm advised Smart Air in connection with the development of distribution arrangements to various Asian jurisdictions in the furtherance of Smart Air’s mission to improve air quality for populations in Asia.



INTERNATIONAL RULE OF LAW

We are proud to partner with nonprofits and non-governmental organizations dedicated to promoting the rule of law, international human rights, and transitional justice around the world. Last year we provided thought leadership and advised on international best practices, advocated before international tribunals, and supported efforts to strengthen the rule of law around the world. Given the nature of the work, these projects lend themselves to cross-border collaboration and typically bring together attorneys from across the Firm with a shared interest in these important issues.

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Public International Law & Policy Group

The Firm has developed a strong partnership with the pro bono law firm Public International Law & Policy Group (“PILPG”), and this relationship continued in 2023. PILPG provides free legal assistance to parties in peace negotiations, war crimes prosecution, transitional justice, and similar efforts, and serves as a prominent thought leader in this often fraught space. Gibson Dunn has worked with PILPG on a variety of projects, and we have developed a particularly close collaboration on issues related to the war in Ukraine. For example, we played a lead role in PILPG’s Ukraine Memorialization and Accountability Initiative, an effort to preserve direct testimony from individuals who witnessed potential atrocity crimes in Ukraine.

Gibson Dunn has been fortunate to work with a valued thought leader like PILPG to provide support to a number of jurisdictions in connection with post-conflict peacekeeping and rule of law development. In the last year alone, the Firm partnered with PILPG on projects promoting rule of law and international human rights around the globe, including assisting with efforts to memorialize potential war crimes and atrocities committed in Ukraine, drafting peace negotiations briefing materials related to conflicts in several regions, analyzing transitional justice processes and avenues for conflict resolution in Africa, and supporting efforts to promote mediation and peaceful conflict resolution, among other projects.

The Clooney Foundation for Justice

Gibson Dunn has developed a strong pro bono relationship with the Clooney Foundation for Justice (“CFJ”) over many years. Among other projects, attorneys across the Firm’s offices are collaborating with CFJ’s TrialWatch Project to advocate for fair trials around the world and guard against sham trials. TrialWatch is an innovative global initiative that monitors criminal trials against some of the most vulnerable groups worldwide, provides free legal support for innocent people who are wrongfully imprisoned, and advocates for legal reform. TrialWatch has monitored trials in dozens of countries, with a focus on trials involving journalists, women and girls, democracy defenders, LGBTQ+ people and activists, and religious and ethnic minorities. Gibson Dunn has analyzed the fairness of trials, as assessed against international human rights law standards, in a broad array of jurisdictions, ranging from Pakistan to Russia. In addition, we have collaborated with CFJ to advocate before United Nations and regional mechanisms on behalf of human rights defenders and journalists whose right to a fair trial has been violated.



“ Gibson Dunn’s international human rights law practice has provided our attorneys with rewarding opportunities to both develop legal frameworks that are compatible with human rights standards, and to also advocate on behalf of those whose human rights have been violated. I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to use my legal training to work with incredible organizations on rule of law projects around the world. ”



Marryum Kahloon
Associate, New York

International Senior Lawyers Project

The International Senior Lawyers Project (“ISLP”) provides pro bono legal assistance to governments and civil society organizations to build robust legal frameworks that align with international best practices. In 2023, Gibson Dunn collaborated with ISLP to deliver a one-week workshop in Guyana on international arbitration procedure. The workshop in Guyana was developed in partnership with the Attorney General’s Chambers and the Ministry of Legal Affairs and included 30 participants from various areas of Guyana’s government as well as the Guyana Bar Association.



CORPORATE CLIENT COLLABORATION: THE INNOCENCE PROJECT



Corporate Client Spotlight: The Innocence Project

The Innocence Project was founded more than 30 years ago to help exonerate the innocent, prevent wrongful convictions, and create a more equitable justice system. The Innocence Project has helped exonerate hundreds of innocent people who spent years behind bars for crimes they did not commit. As a result of these successes, the Innocence Project has received more than 65,000 requests for assistance from incarcerated individuals seeking to prove their innocence. This staggering number is far too many for the Innocence Project to meaningfully review and consider on its own. As part of our support of the Innocence Project, Gibson Dunn stepped in to help screen cases to evaluate whether they have colorable claims of actual innocence worth pursuing. It has become a cornerstone of our criminal justice work, as well as our racial justice initiative.



The Innocence Project's cases reflect the effects of systemic racism in the criminal justice system and the disproportionate impact of wrongful convictions on Black Americans: more than half of the Innocence Project's cases involve Black defendants. Many cases that ultimately end in exoneration involve faulty evidence that contributed to the original guilty verdict, including many cases with witness misidentification, false confessions, and misapplied forensic science. Eyewitness misidentification is particularly problematic: more than two thirds of national DNA exonerations have involved witness misidentification. Notably,

witnesses tend to be less accurate when making cross-racial identifications, further exacerbating the effects of systemic racism in the criminal justice system. Our teams help identify cases that display these issues, with a goal of determining whether DNA evidence could exonerate the individual claiming innocence. By doing so, our teams help the Innocence Project direct their resources and advocacy to those cases that are most likely to result in an exoneration and free an innocent person from prison.

We have taken on approximately 75 case screenings on the Innocence Project's behalf. More than 250 attorneys at Gibson Dunn have worked on this project over the years, spending over 12,000 hours on this important effort. We are especially proud to have collaborated on this project with dozens of in-house attorneys and other legal professionals from some of our corporate clients, to great effect. We are fortunate to work with many corporate legal teams that share a desire to put their legal training to use addressing injustice and working toward a more equitable future. Although our pro bono collaborations are incredibly varied, they all share the fundamental goal of bringing volunteers together to help marginalized members of our community. There is no better example of the impact of our pro bono collaborations than our work with the Innocence Project. Working together, Gibson Dunn and in-house volunteers review a case file and provide an in-depth summary of the facts of the case, the biological evidence available, and the theory under which DNA testing can or cannot prove innocence. This collaboration has been so effective that we now partner with in-house teams on nearly all new case files.

We are proud to have worked with in-house legal professionals from companies such as Amazon, DaVita, JPMorgan Chase, Marsh McLennan, and State Farm. Together, our teams have helped the Innocence Project identify several potentially viable cases, with many screening projects ongoing. We look forward to continuing to work with our corporate clients to support the Innocence Project in its important work.

“ This is Amazon Legal's second year collaborating with Gibson Dunn in support of The Innocence Project. Gibson Dunn provides training, resources, and guidance. They efficiently organize small working groups of joint Amazon-Gibson Dunn legal teams to analyze case materials compiled by The Innocence Project through intake, collect any additional documentation needed (e.g., trial transcripts, appellate records, etc.), and draft and provide The Innocence Project with a comprehensive case evaluation memo. The Innocence Project uses the case evaluation memo to determine whether DNA testing can be used to exonerate a wrongfully convicted individual. I appreciate that Gibson Dunn makes it easy for me and so many of my colleagues to take part in such impactful, important work. I sincerely look forward to continued collaboration. ”



Lovely Hammett
Program Manager
AWS Legal Sales and Marketing

“ Each year we continue to partner and work together to service our communities. We really enjoy our partnership with the Gibson Dunn team, and hope to continue in the coming years, together we truly make an impact. ”



Marcela Castro
Executive Director & Assistant General Counsel, JPMorgan Chase

“ Collaborating with colleagues on the joint Marsh McLennan / Gibson Dunn Innocence Project team gave me an opportunity to help play a role in potentially righting very serious wrongs. The project also afforded me an opportunity to work in an area of law that isn't my usual focus— assisting wrongfully imprisoned persons challenge their convictions and fight for their release. I found it especially rewarding to facilitate someone feeling empowered and hopeful in situations that they thought were dire and hopeless, and providing an avenue for possibly gaining their freedom. ”



Ventrice McKoy-Henry
Senior Counsel, Marsh McLennan

 MarshMcLennan

“ The partnership with Gibson Dunn screening the Innocence Project applications has been both rewarding for our Law Department participants and an excellent learning opportunity for our pro bono volunteers. The Pro Bono team at Gibson Dunn helped make the review of applications as seamless as possible. We are grateful to make a small contribution assisting the Innocence Project in review of these applications. ”



Carla von Dongen
Senior Vice President & Counsel, State Farm

 StateFarm

OFFICE SPOTLIGHT: PALO ALTO

This year, we are proud to feature the work of our Palo Alto office, which demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to pro bono work. Nearly every attorney in the office participated in pro bono work. And Palo Alto attorneys averaged nearly 100 pro bono hours in 2023—the highest average of any Gibson Dunn office.

The work was also incredibly diverse, including nonprofit advice work, appellate advocacy, immigration and refugee representations, criminal justice reform, veterans work, and representation of local minority-owned small business owners. The office both represented clients in the local community and contributed to many of the Firm's biggest pro bono initiatives, from the Afghanistan Response Task Force to the post-*SFFA* DEI Task Force.

Here is just a snapshot of the incredible contributions of the Palo Alto office to our pro bono practice in 2023. Thank you to everyone in the Palo Alto office for your incredible contributions to pro bono work at Gibson Dunn!



Family Violence Appellate Project

As part of a longstanding partnership with the Family Violence Appellate Project (“FVAP”), attorneys from Gibson Dunn’s Palo Alto office assist FVAP with its Case Publication Project, an initiative that seeks publication of unpublished California appellate cases to create binding legal precedent that benefits domestic violence survivors in California. First, Gibson Dunn analyzes unpublished California appellate opinions to identify opinions that, if published, would be beneficial to domestic violence survivors. Once such an opinion has been identified, Gibson Dunn works with FVAP to draft and file a letter to the relevant court of appeal, arguing that the opinion meets the statutory standards for publication. For example, the opinion might establish a new rule of law, address an apparent conflict in the law, or explain an existing rule of law.

In 2023, FVAP and Gibson Dunn successfully sought publication of a number of cases that will benefit domestic violence survivors for years to come. These victories include obtaining the publication of: (1) a case holding that a firearms restriction in the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (“DVPA”) is not unconstitutional in light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 ruling in *N.Y. State Rifle & Pistol Ass’n v. Bruen*; (2) the first published case to analyze whether allegations of abuse fall under the definition of “coercive control” that the legislature added to the DVPA in 2021; (3) a case holding that the existence of a retaliatory motive when filing a domestic violence restraining order (“DVRO”) request does not negate compelling evidence that the applicant had a reasonable apprehension of future abuse; and (4) a case dispelling common misconceptions about domestic violence, such as that a DVRO applicant who truly had been abused would not continue to interact with the abuser.

“ Pro bono continues to be an integral part of the Palo Alto office. As Silicon Valley lawyers, we know what it means to think innovatively and creatively, and we apply those values to all facets of our pro bono efforts—whether it be supporting first-time entrepreneurs in making their dreams a reality, representing asylum seekers in their journey towards a life free from persecution, or ensuring that our community’s most vulnerable members have a voice in our legal system. The rich, varied, and challenging pro bono work that our colleagues handle with compassion, dedication, and respect make us all in Palo Alto proud to call ourselves Gibson Dunn lawyers. ”



Wesley Sze
Associate, Palo Alto

Salinas Valley State Prison Litigation

Gibson Dunn recently was appointed as pro bono counsel to represent an inmate at Salinas Valley State Prison in a retaliation case against two correctional officers. After a correctional sergeant physically assaulted him, the inmate filed claims against the sergeant and other officers alleging civil rights violations under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Without any justification or hearing, the sergeant then ordered another officer to confine the inmate to his cell for 30 days. The inmate brought claims pro se against the sergeant and the officer, alleging his 30-day confinement to his cell—with no justification—violated his Fourteenth Amendment right to due process and was retaliation for the exercise of his First Amendment right to access the courts, among other claims.

The court appointed a Palo Alto-based Gibson Dunn team to complete discovery and take the case to trial. Since our appointment, Gibson Dunn associates have deposed each defendant, as well as a superior officer charged with investigating the inmate’s complaints, pursued multiple rounds of document discovery, and issued subpoenas to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. We expect to take the inmate’s claims to trial.

“ In the Palo Alto office, we have a long history of participating in the United States District Court’s Federal Pro Bono Project. The Federal Pro Bono Project appoints counsel to represent clients upon the recommendation of the District Court judges where they identify a case that would benefit from the services of experienced counsel. We are proud to have been appointed to represent a state prisoner whose civil rights action survived summary judgment and may be proceeding to trial. This work is vital both to our client and to the courts, both of whom benefit from experienced trial lawyers. We view this work as an integral to our success; it is a demonstration of our commitment to our community, to the court system, and most of all to our clients. ”



Michael Celio
Partner, Palo Alto



Advocacy for Afghan Refugees

Members of the Palo Alto office have played a key role in the firmwide Afghanistan Response Task Force, which helped hundreds of Afghan individuals and families who faced persecution by the Taliban apply for humanitarian parole to enter the United States or, once here, seek asylum in the United States.

A team of attorneys in the Firm's Palo Alto office is helping two Afghan siblings apply for asylum in the United States. The siblings face persecution for several reasons, and surely would be at risk of serious harm or even death if forced to return to Afghanistan. As a result, our team filed asylum applications last year on the grounds that the siblings (1) participated in pro-women activities and advocacy now banned in Afghanistan; (2) are members of ethnic and religious minority groups that face persecution by the Taliban; and (3) have family members who supported the prior government. While they await a final decision on their applications, the siblings are continuing their education here in the United States. Our team has been continuously impressed by the siblings' unwavering desire for education and bravery in the face of danger.



“ I am so proud of the Palo Alto Office's commitment to pro bono. Lawyers in our office work on a wide range of matters, including helping incarcerated individuals protect and vindicate their civil rights, seeking asylum on behalf of people who suffer persecution and harm in their native countries, and working with nonprofit organizations on corporate governance, intellectual property, and other transactions. Our pro bono work gives us all an opportunity to learn and develop important skills, and to give back to our communities, serving the people who need our help the most. ”



Jessica Valenzuela
Partner, Palo Alto

INTERVIEW WITH HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

Jenna Gilbert is Director of Refugee Representation at Human Rights First (“HRF”), where she oversees HRF’s pro bono legal representation program. This program helps indigent asylum-seekers access high-quality legal representation in the New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. Since the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, HRF has played a lead role in coordinating U.S. legal organizations, law firms, resettlement agencies, and other stakeholders to provide legal representation for Afghans in the United States—regardless of where in the country they reside.





Jenna Gilbert, Director of Refugee Representation

Unlike many legal service organizations that focus on a relatively small geographic footprint, Human Rights First works with pro bono attorneys across the country. How do you manage such a far-ranging pro bono program?

Our primary work remains based in the geographic areas where we have offices: New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. However, when the Afghan crisis began in August 2021, we realized the need for nationwide coordination and determined that we could play a unique role in leveraging our pro bono relationships with law firms across the country to provide assistance to Afghans, regardless of their ultimate destination in the United States. Our pro bono model, which focuses on partnering with mostly medium and large law firms with offices across the country and abroad, allowed us to partner with attorneys beyond our normal geographic area. And unlike other areas of law, our area of expertise in asylum and immigration, remains applicable regardless of whether a client resides in New York or New Orleans.

HRF has taken a lead role in the efforts to help Afghan arrivals in the United States apply for immigration relief. How has your work evolved since the Taliban's seizure of power?

In August 2021, we created a new program, Project: Afghan Legal Assistance (PALA), with an aim toward helping the 80,000+ Afghan evacuees apply for affirmative forms of immigration relief. We also saw a role for us in creating a space for other attorneys, law firms, and legal service providers to have access to resources, trainings, and guidance to help maximize resources to collectively address the legal needs of such a large population. We re-thought the way our existing asylum pro bono program operates and began developing new, innovative models to maximize our resources to serve a much larger population of clients. Our pro se plus asylum, adjustment of status, work authorization, re-parole, and other clinics allowed us to serve much greater numbers of clients through partnerships with law firms and corporations. And we re-vamped our mentorship model to provide “light touch mentorship” on full-scope representation cases, incorporating office hours, developing a resource library, running a listserv and Ask the Experts forum, and other tools to help us train and mentor greater numbers of volunteer attorneys working on similar cases at once.

Has the way you work with pro bono partners changed in light of these developments?

Absolutely. There was and continues to be a huge amount of volunteer interest in helping Afghans, and we learned very quickly that we had to find a variety of ways to quickly leverage that support. Initially, we worked with pro bono partners to help us screen the thousands of cases that came to us requesting legal assistance—something we had never done in the past. At every step, we have reimagined where and how pro bono volunteers can help act as a multiplier for our services to help us reach more clients in need of legal assistance.

How do pro bono partnerships help advance HRF's mission?

Our pro bono volunteers are critical to our mission to help change the lives of refugees by helping them gain protection in the United States. While it may appear we have a big footprint, we are a small team that is only able to attain big results through the dedication of our volunteer attorneys. In 2023, volunteer attorneys donated 109,000 hours of pro bono legal services to Human Rights First, valued at over \$92 million. We simply could not provide this level of support to asylum seekers across the country without our pro bono partners.

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

As with any collaboration, it's important that both sides get what they need out of it. We aim to recruit, train, and mentor volunteer attorneys to provide legal representation to asylum seekers so that we can multiply the availability of high-quality legal representation. Our pro bono partners want to work with organizations that help their attorneys engage in meaningful volunteer legal work with the quality of support, training, and guidance to ensure that they can effectively represent their pro bono clients. We strive for partnerships where these expectations are clear at the outset, and we have great lines of communication so that our clients receive the level of services they deserve. It's very important to us that not only do our clients get a positive outcome, but also that our pro bono attorneys feel well-supported, empowered, engaged, and inspired to continue doing pro bono work.

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

Human Rights First has partnered with Gibson Dunn on asylum cases for at least the past two decades. However, I began to work much more closely with Gibson Dunn in the past few years through our PALA work and as co-founders of the Welcome Legal

Alliance. In that time, our partnership has really strengthened, and Gibson Dunn has cemented itself as one of our greatest allies and supports in providing legal representation to Afghans across the country. We regularly look to Gibson Dunn for support with our clinics and other representation efforts, and it's a partnership that I am thrilled to see continue to grow and evolve.

What do you see as the key pro bono needs of 2024?

We try to offer a wide range of volunteer opportunities, ranging from pro se or limited scope support to full scope representation. There is a lot of interest in limited scope representation, but we need just as much enthusiasm for longer term representation. Those are the experiences and relationships that become the most meaningful. I would encourage all pro bono attorneys to take on at least one full scope representation pro bono matter in their career.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I am very honored to lead a program that aims not only to provide legal assistance to asylum seekers, but to help them rebuild their lives with dignity in the United States. Our clients and their stories of resilience and hope inspire me on a daily basis, but I am also inspired by my colleagues who choose this difficult profession because they believe in the mission. I'm equally inspired by our pro bono volunteers who decide to dedicate their time, on top of their demanding day jobs, to contribute their legal expertise to this work. That's a lot of people choosing to work together to ensure that asylum seekers get the legal representation and protection they deserve. What an honor that I get to surround myself with all of you every day!

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 Winner



Bethany Saul
Associate, New York

“ It is a privilege to work at a firm where pro bono work is a respected and celebrated part of my practice. Over the last several years, I’ve had the opportunity to work with other attorneys to build cases from the ground up—defending asylees’ right to stay in the US, suing a state to protect abortion access, investigating criminal wrongdoing for a church, and countless other matters. Every matter has differed drastically in harms and remedies, but all cases have had consistent themes—the work is deeply meaningful, support from mentors and peers is unparalleled, and our clients are immensely grateful for our representation. I remember meeting one of my clients during my first month of practice and feeling so much pressure to make sure she trusted me with her case. Now, she and her family have legal status in this country, live a subway ride away, and send regular updates of their life in New York. Thanks to the Firm and our nonprofit partners, I now have clients who feel like family. ”

Single-Office Team Winner

**Germany’s Ukrainian
Assistance Project**

Cross-Office Team Winner

**Deon Jones v.
City of Los Angeles**

Staff Winners

**Katy Lysaght
Dianne Macri
Rosemary McCague**

PRO BONO AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – Robert F. Mullen Pro Bono Award

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law presented Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP with its 2023 Robert F. Mullen Pro Bono Award, which “honors a law firm that has provided extraordinary pro bono legal services on behalf of Lawyers' Committee client or matter.” The organization noted Gibson Dunn’s “exemplary commitment to pro bono service as exemplified by [the] tremendous work with the Public Policy team, as well as [the] firm’s work on the *Smith v. Trump* case.” It also highlighted the Firm’s “commitment to excellence and genuine partnership on all issues and engagements, as well as [the] fierce commitment to pro bono legal services” on “everything from police reform and accountability to Kristen [Clarke]’s confirmation process (becoming the first woman ever confirmed to lead the [DOJ]’s Civil Rights Division) to lobbying compliance.” The award was presented on December 7, 2023.

The Lawyer Awards – Pro Bono Initiative of the Year Award

Gibson Dunn was named as one of the joint winning firms in the Pro-bono Initiative of the Year category at The Lawyer Awards 2023 for its work as a founding member of the Domestic Abuse Response Alliance. In addition, the Firm’s work as part of the Afghan Pro Bono Initiative was awarded second place in the pro bono category. Gibson Dunn was also shortlisted for our work securing the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe from illegal detention in Iran. The awards were presented on June 20, 2023.

State Bar of Texas – Pro Bono Excellence Awards / The Houston Bar Association – Harris County Heart of Pro Bono Award

Last year, Gibson Dunn’s Houston office, partner **Hillary Holmes**, and a team of associates—**Kyle Clendenon**, **Iris Hill Crabtree**, **Mason Gauch**, **To Nhu Huynh**, and **Hayden Theis**, as well as former associate **Ezra Brown**—were recognized for their exemplary dedication to pro bono work.

The **State Bar of Texas** honored Gibson Dunn with two Pro Bono Excellence Awards: the W. Frank Newton Award, which recognizes “the pro bono efforts of attorney groups whose members have made an outstanding contribution toward increasing access to legal services for the poor,” and the Frank J. Scurlock Award, which “honors an individual attorney, in good standing, who has provided outstanding pro bono work.” The associate team received the W. Frank Newton Award after they independently formed a “pro bono squad” in which they team up on projects and offer support on each other’s cases shortly after being admitted to the Texas bar. The junior associates exemplify Gibson Dunn’s self-motivated approach to pro bono work and the premium placed on collegiality and professionalism when interacting with one another and clients. Within six months of being licensed, they collectively devoted 694.33 hours to 26 pro bono projects, averaging 115.7 hours per attorney. Partner Hillary Holmes, who served as the Houston office’s pro bono partner from 2017 to 2022 and is a longtime pro bono champion, received the Frank J. Scurlock Award in recognition of her individual commitment to pro bono work. The awards were presented at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting during its Bar Leaders Recognition Luncheon on June 22, 2023.

Also in 2023, the **Houston Bar Association** (“HBA”) Harris County Bench Bar Pro Bono Award Committee conferred its highest pro bono award—the Harris County Heart of Pro Bono—to Gibson Dunn’s Houston office and to Hillary Holmes and the associate pro bono squad. The awards program recognizes lawyers who provide outstanding direct pro bono services to low-income Harris County residents. A committee of distinguished judges and attorneys annually selects winners in six categories, including the special honor, the Heart of Pro Bono. The award continues the office’s laudable track record of serving its community, as Gibson Dunn’s Houston office also won in the midsize law firm category the previous year. By recognizing a long-serving pro bono champion alongside the most junior attorneys, the HBA celebrated Gibson Dunn’s special culture of collaboration and commitment to service. As the Award Committee wrote, “the teamwork and culture that has been created at Gibson Dunn is a shining example of dedication to giving back.”

Financial Times – Europe Innovative Lawyer Awards

The *Financial Times* recognized Gibson Dunn at the Europe Innovative Lawyer Awards 2023. The Firm was selected as overall winner in the Responsible Business category for our work securing the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe from illegal detention in Iran. The Firm also was recommended in the Private Capital category for our work advising KKR on its purchase of a minority stake in the fiber network spin-off of Telenor, and in connection with our work on behalf of a German client that was seeking to sell to a private equity buyer, in which our lawyers cut the time required to draft the legal “fact book” from weeks to three days. In addition, the Firm also was recognized in the Supporting Refugees and Migrants category as part of the Afghan Pro Bono Initiative. The awards were presented on September 21, 2023.

Sanctuary for Families – Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Award

Gibson Dunn was honored by Sanctuary for Families with the 2023 Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Award, which recognizes “outstanding pro bono representation and advocacy to survivors of domestic violence, sex trafficking, and related forms of gender violence,” for representing “Ms. N” from El Salvador in a defensive asylum case. The Gibson Dunn team that won asylum for Ms. N included associates **Ana Lopez** and **Alexandra Perloff-Giles**, as well as former associate **Philip Shapiro**, currently senior litigation counsel at Norges Bank Management.

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) – Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Award

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) awarded its 2023 Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Award to a Gibson Dunn team that helped a young man from El Salvador obtain asylum to escape death threats from a local gang. The representation spanned over seven years and more than 1,000 hours of pro bono work, with the client ultimately being granted asylum in 2023. The team included **Audi Syarief**, **Connie Lee**, and **Victoria Granda**, supervised by **Joe West**.

Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) – Advancement in Animal Law Pro Bono Achievement Award

Gibson Dunn received the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) 2023 Advancement in Animal Law Pro Bono Achievement Award, which “honors dedicated legal professionals and law firms who help the Animal Legal Defense Fund achieve its mission to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system.” This is the second consecutive year that the Firm has been honored with this award.

PILnet – Local Impact Award

The Domestic Abuse Response Alliance (DARA), of which Gibson Dunn is a founding member, has been awarded the PILnet Local Impact Award. DARA is a multi-firm advocacy alliance and the largest pro bono project ever assembled in this jurisdiction to provide end-to-end representation and advocacy support for domestic abuse survivors seeking protective orders against their abusers. DARA represents survivors of domestic abuse who are not eligible for legal aid but who cannot afford to pay for private representation. The PILnet Local Impact Award, voted for by participants of the PILnet Global Forum, recognizes the work DARA has done to help victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales.



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 more than 600 attorneys who individually billed 60 or more hours to pro bono in 2023.

A

Jonathan J. Abrams
Joseph Clark Adams
Colton Addy
Ryan M. Adlem
Syamack Afshar
Anna Marie P. Aguiard
Najatt Ajarar
Nadia K. Alhadi
Fahad Ali
Paavni Anand
Christina Andersen
Brian W. Anderson
Nikita L. Aneja
Rameez Anwar
Jacob Arber
David E. Arom
Mimra Aslaoui
Artin Geeming Au-Yeung
Hadhy H. Ayaz
Christopher D. Ayers
Diana Ayoub
Ryan Azad
Alisa Babitz

B

Maithili M. Bagaria
Katy Baker
Alisa L. Balderas
Virginia P. Baldwin
Lorena Balic
Russell B. Balikian
Edmund Bannister
Maria P. Baraya
Rebecca F. Barry
Robert A. Batista
David A. Battaglia
Sarah K. Bauer
Colleen L. Bazak
Crystal S. Becker
Anthony D. Bedel
Alexandra S. Begin
Christopher D. Belelieu
Amanda M. Bello
Michael A. Benison
Matthew Jordan Benjamin
Addison W. Bennett
Stephen A. Berg
Devin C. Bergstein
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Luca Bernini
Akila S. Bhargava

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Kirsten Bleiweiss
Robert C. Blume
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Jonathan C. Bond
Alexander Toth Boudreau
Theodore J. Boutrous Jr.
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Charlotte A. Brown
Jessica Brown
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Susanne Bullock
Jeremy A. Bunting
Stanton Burke
Yvana M. Bustamante
Ryan Butcher
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David W. Casazza
Alejandra T. Castañeda
Raleigh C. Caverro
Anne M. Champion
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Elaine Wen Su Chao
Minh-Thu Vu Che
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Aaron J. Cheung
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Lefteri John Christos
Kai Wen Chua
Hazel Marie S. Chuang
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Gregg J. Costa
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James Robert Cox
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Anthony F. Cruz
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To Nhu T. Huynh

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Matthew A. Kaplan
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Hannah J. Lewis
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Yun Lin
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Kristin A. Linsley
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Miguel Loza Jr.
Andrea L. Ludtke
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Claire V. Madill
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Alisha S. Mahalingam
Mashoka Maimona
William R. Majeune-Fagan
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Julian Manasse-Boetani
Deandra R. Mann
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Sean Patrick McCroskey
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Amber D. McKonly
Marcellus A. McRae
Cynthia C. McTernan
Megan E. Meagher
Katherine Moran Meeks
Brennon K. Mendez
Valeria A. Menendez
Matthew Charles Mewing
Nina K. Meyer
James K. Michael
Julia-Barbara Michalon
Jay Minga
Paulette C. Minitier
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Thank you to everyone who partnered with us on pro bono work in 2023. We look forward to building on these efforts in 2024 and beyond. For more information or to get involved in these efforts directly, please reach out to a member of the Firm's pro bono team.

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