

Our 2019 Pro Bono Hot List

Celebrating law firms that do well by doing good.

Covington & Burling

■ **DESCRIBE YOUR FIRM'S PHILOSOPHY ON PRO BONO SERVICE.** Covington regards pro bono service as a professional obligation of each firm lawyer—with the privilege we all have as lawyers, comes a responsibility to give back. Covington seeks input from each individual lawyer about pro bono work that would best serve the public good. Our pro bono program is therefore voluntary, diverse and driven by our lawyers' interests, though anchored in increasing access to justice for economically disadvantaged individuals.

■ **OF THE BIG CASES YOUR FIRM RECENTLY WORKED ON, ONE INVOLVED REPRESENTING THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES TO PREVENT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM REQUIRING ASSISTANCE WITH IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AS A CONDITION OF GRANTS TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.** We were thrilled when Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer reached out to Covington after then-U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced he would withhold federal funding for local law enforcement from municipalities that refused to participate in federal immigration enforcement. These federal actions threatened to reduce or eliminate vital funding, and also to undermine longstanding policies on how LA's police engage with our immigrant community.

We assembled a cross-office team that included some of our strongest constitutional advocates and experienced litigators. The team has done everything from case investigation and arguing summary judgment motions, to handling two Ninth Circuit appeals. They, and the City Attorney team, have dedicated substantial time and energy to challenge the Department of Justice's unconstitutional practices, and the results reflect this dedication.

■ **WHAT WAS THE MOST SATISFYING ASPECT OF THAT KEY CASE?** It has been remarkably satisfying to work with our hometown to ensure local autonomy over critical law enforcement policies. Los Angeles welcomes immigrants from all over the world, and our city's law enforcement officials years ago determined that working collaboratively with all members of the community is the best way to build trust and keep everyone safe.

■ **DISCUSS OTHER KEY PRO BONO MATTERS RECENTLY COMPLETED BY THE FIRM.** In 2018, Covington achieved many victories in both civil rights impact cases and individual direct representations. The firm obtained a nationwide injunction blocking the federal government from rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which has allowed more than 200,000 young immigrants to continue to live and work in the United States. Covington also challenged Milwaukee Police Department's unconstitutional stop-and-frisk policies and practices



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that disproportionately targeted black and Latino individuals. The firm negotiated a favorable settlement, which mandates significant MPD reforms to training, supervision and discipline. Also in 2018, in partnership with National Veterans Legal Services Program, Covington lawyers helped more than 60 veterans seeking benefits for military service-connected injuries and in seeking military discharge status upgrades.

■ **WHY DOES YOUR PRO BONO WORK MATTER TO YOU AS A LAWYER?** In California and nationally, there is a large "justice gap," with many more clients who cannot afford counsel than there are lawyers to help them. Law firms can help close this gap, particularly in cases like these that require substantial expertise and resources. It is a privilege to work in a firm that understands we must take responsibility for our communities and our country.

Responses submitted by Alan Pemberton, co-chair of the public service committee, and Mitchell Kamin, co-chair of the commercial litigation practice group at Covington & Burling.