

BUCKLEY

Pro Bono Practice

Buckley's firmwide commitment to pro bono work is based on our core belief that all people are entitled to legal representation, and by performing pro bono work, we are helping provide everyone with access to justice.

As a signatory to the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge, Buckley has committed to performing pro bono hours equal to three percent of our total billable hours annually. To make this commitment a reality, the firm has a dedicated pro bono coordinator and pro bono committee who endeavor to identify pro bono opportunities that not only make a difference in our community, but also match the interests of our lawyers and offer them the chance to enhance their legal skills.

Our pro bono efforts focus on providing legal services to economically disadvantaged individuals as well as to nonprofit organizations in our surrounding communities and throughout the United States. We partner with more than a dozen legal service organizations that provide pro bono support for a wide range of clients, including immigrants, children, veterans, senior citizens, and the needy as well as those caught up in the criminal justice system.

By offering such easy access to pro bono assignments and by providing one-for-one billable hour credit for every hour worked on pro bono matters, we have seen a steady growth both in the number of hours and participating attorneys since the establishment of the firm in 2009.

A few of our recent matters include:

Safety for a sex abuse victim – Buckley, along with local counsel in Tacoma, Washington, obtained an order withholding the removal of a teenage girl who came to our attention through Kids in Need of Defense. Our client had fled from El Salvador at the age of 15, having been kidnapped, raped, and impregnated by an MS-13 gang leader. She had been detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement -- one of only five unaccompanied minors in the country detained by the government. As a result of our team's efforts, the Tacoma Immigration Court granted our client immediate release from her 11-month ICE detention, and withholding of removal, allowing her to remain legally in the United States without fear of deportation.

Reuniting a mother and daughter – We overcame a significant state court hurdle for our client that will prevent her deportation while we petition the federal government for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), on her behalf. She is a teenage girl from Guatemala who came to the United States in 2015 to be with her mother. SIJS status will allow her to obtain a green card and remain in the United States with her mother. Our client was apprehended near the Mexican border, entered into removal proceedings, and eventually placed in the temporary care of her mother. Part of the SIJS process involves

obtaining a state court order awarding the mother custody of the child. The order must include certain factual findings in order to obtain SIJS from the federal government. Despite some recent rulings against our position in other Virginia courts, the judge in our case made the necessary findings, thus allowing us to proceed with the SIJS process.

Protection for an LGBTI immigrant – Buckley obtained an order withholding the removal of a man from El Salvador who is a member of the LGBTI community and was a victim of horrific sexual abuse as a boy. Our client, who was referred to us by the Capitol Area Immigrant Rights Coalition, has lived in the U.S. for 16 years, worked continuously during that time, supported his sisters here in the US along with his parents and other family in El Salvador, and stayed out of trouble. He was arrested in Virginia following a minor traffic accident, after which he was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. We sought asylum protections for him since he would be at extreme risk of violence and death if returned to El Salvador because of his LGBTI status. After a hearing, during which time we presented experts on the conditions in El Salvador as well as our client's personal psychological circumstances, the court granted our client withholding of removal, allowing him to remain legally in the United States without fear of deportation.

Special immigrant juvenile status matter – Buckley attorneys received a referral through Kids in Need of Defense and were asked to represent two brothers who entered the United States as unaccompanied minors in obtaining Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) visas to allow them to remain in the country on a permanent basis. The brothers were left in the care of their grandparents in Honduras when their mother came to the United States to escape physical abuse from the boys' father and to earn money to send back to Honduras. After their grandparents passed away, the boys' father, who physically and verbally abused them as well, refused to relinquish custody of them to their mother. Eventually, their father fled the country and abandoned them with relatives in Honduras who were unable to care for them and unable to protect them from uncontrolled violence in their neighborhood. The brothers fled to the United States so that they could be reunited with their mother. In order to obtain legal resident status for the boys, Buckley attorneys filed a custody proceeding in state court that resulted, after multiple court hearings and presentment of testimony by the juvenile clients, in their mother being awarded sole legal and physical custody of the boys. Buckley attorneys have filed petitions with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to obtain the SIJS visas and are currently working to terminate the boys' removal proceedings in immigration court. We believe these efforts will be successful although the waiting period to obtain SIJS visas is quite long.

Challenge to D.C. tax regulation – Buckley represented three low income D.C. residents referred to us by the Legal Counsel for the Elderly. Each client had applied for a D.C. Lower Income Homeownership Tax Abatement, which provides a temporary property tax abatement for low income residents who acquire property in the District, but were denied because a D.C. municipal tax regulation excluded their intra-family property transfers from the abatement. Believing the regulation's intra-family transfer restriction to be unsupported by and inconsistent with the underlying abatement statute, the firm sued the D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue arguing that the regulation — which had been on the books for 32 years — was ultra vires. After surviving a motion to dismiss, we moved for summary judgment. The judge agreed with each of our arguments, ruling that not only did the regulation contradict the unambiguous language of the statute, but that

even if the statute had been ambiguous, the regulation's interpretation was unreasonable. If the decision is not appealed, our clients will soon be receiving their tax refunds, with interest.

Over the years, Buckley has been recognized for its pro bono contributions including:

- Washington Lawyers' Committee's Outstanding Achievement Award for:
 - Public education
 - Fair housing
 - Exemplary work on the report "Protecting Civil Rights in the D.C. Region: A Comparative Assessment of State & Local Human Rights Laws"
- Law Students in Court's 2017 Pro Bono Award
- District of Columbia Court of Appeals and Superior Court of the District of Columbia's Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll

News & Blogs

- Buckley Sandler's Fundraising Efforts for Legal Aid Featured in the American Lawyer
- Sasha Leonhardt Quoted in Hill Rag Article, "Pulling Them Back From the Brink"
- Buckley Sandler Celebrates 2014 Pro Bono Work

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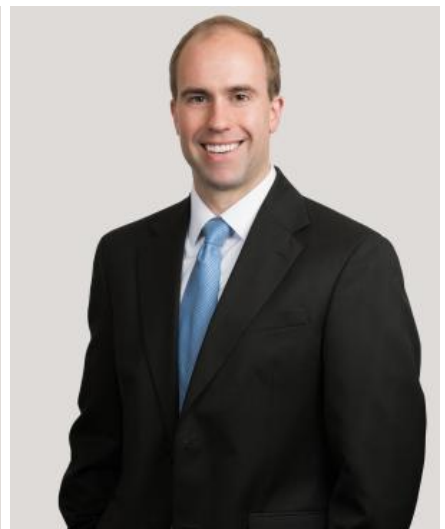
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