

2012 PRO BONO ANNUAL REPORT



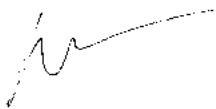
Making a **commitment**. Making a **difference**.

ROPES  
& GRAY

We are proud to present this 2012 *Pro Bono* Annual Report, which highlights just a few of our *pro bono* clients and the 1,078 Ropes & Gray lawyers and staff who helped them in 2012. In 2012, Ropes & Gray personnel worked more *pro bono* hours than ever before – over 100,000 hours by lawyers alone, and close to 115,000 by firm legal professionals in all offices.

2012 was a year of national focus and local impact for our *pro bono* program. Ropes & Gray was recognized on the national scene by the American Bar Association, *Law360*, *The American Lawyer* and *The National Law Journal* for its *pro bono* work, including for physicians seeking to advise families with children about gun safety, parents seeking to be reunited with children in custody disputes, multijurisdictional efforts to expand the right to vote to the disenfranchised, and efforts on behalf of small businesses, nonprofits and asylum seekers. On the local level, we helped immigrant students obtain access to financial aid after lifting immigration hurdles, veterans receive disability benefits and seniors retain access to health care benefits. Our *pro bono* work reflected our global reach, with London, San Francisco, Silicon Valley and Chicago showing notable growth in *pro bono* activity in 2012.

We hope you will enjoy reading, in the pages that follow, a few representative client stories and profiles of some of our lawyers who made a commitment and a difference in 2012. The names of all of our current lawyers and staff who did *pro bono* work in 2012 are found in the insert at the end of this report. We congratulate them all.



Jeff Katz



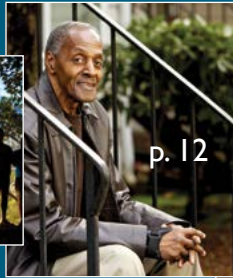
Bill Sussman



Philippe Cheng

Ropes & Gray's *pro bono* team oversaw record *pro bono* activity in 2012:  
(left to right) Senior *Pro Bono* Manager Roz Nasdor, *Pro Bono* Committee Co-Chairs Jeff Katz and Bill Sussman, and *Pro Bono* Coordinator Byrne Harrison.

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# INJUNCTION PRESERVES DOCTOR-PATIENT DIALOG IN CLOSELY WATCHED FLORIDA GUN SAFETY CASE

In the wake of several tragic incidents, the issue of gun safety remained at the forefront of national debate in 2012. Three Florida chapters of national physician groups turned to a Ropes & Gray *pro bono* team for assistance in a legislative battle that involves gun safety issues and First Amendment rights. Washington, D.C.-based partner Doug Hallward-Driemeier led the firm's work with the Florida chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians and American College of Physicians, as well as the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence's Legal Action Project, to contest the state's Privacy of Firearm Owners' Act.

"In this lawsuit, we seek to establish that doctors have a First Amendment right to counsel patients who would prefer not to be reminded of the unpleasant truth about guns in the home."

– Doug Hallward-Driemeier

"The tragic killings in Newtown, Connecticut are particularly horrific examples of the danger that guns in the home will be used to harm their owners or innocent third parties, rather than for self-defense," said Hallward-Driemeier. "In this lawsuit, we seek to establish that doctors have a First Amendment right to counsel patients, including those who would prefer not to be reminded of the unpleasant truth about guns in the home."

Physicians and other health care professionals routinely provide their patients with information about a variety of health risks in the home and broader environment. Such preventive counseling has become a cornerstone in the practice of medicine and is recommended by numerous professional medical societies. In the course of practicing preventive medicine, health care professionals routinely ask and counsel patients about firearm safety.


The Florida Privacy of Firearm Owners' Act, initially signed into law in June 2011, would prohibit health care providers from asking patients about firearms, recording information about firearms in patients' medical records and asking patients if they have firearms stored properly. The attorney team immediately filed to block enforcement of the law, arguing that the act impedes doctors' rights to speak freely with patients and have a free flow of information about any subject that may affect their health.

In September 2011, U.S. District Court Judge Marcia Cooke granted a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of the law. After both sides filed for summary judgment in November 2011, the court found that the law did curtail the First Amendment rights of physicians across the state and granted a permanent injunction in July 2012.

Commenting on the court's July 2012 decision, Stuart Himmelstein, M.D., immediate past governor of the Florida chapter of the American College of Physicians, stated: "This is a great result for safety and quality of medical care in Florida. The injunction preserves free speech between doctors and patients as protected by the Constitution and which is necessary to obtain the highest of quality care that every citizen deserves."

After the permanent injunction was entered, Dennis Mayeaux, M.D., past president, Florida Academy of Family Physicians, said, "Talking with our patients about firearm safety is an important step in helping to maintain a home environment that is not dangerous. By blocking this law the court has ensured that health care professionals can continue to speak freely with our patients and provide them with the best possible care."

The hotly contested case currently is on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. "We believe this is an opportunity to set a precedent in Florida, so that other states do not try to impose similar legislation," said Hallward-Driemeier.

Ropes & Gray associates Bessie Dewar and Mariel Goetz have been instrumental in the firm's work on the matter. 




“After four months as a New York-based associate, and with one *pro bono* case under my belt, I felt ready to take on something bigger. I turned to Immigration Equality, a Ropes & Gray *pro bono* partner organization working toward equality under U.S. immigration law for LGBT and HIV-positive individuals. They asked if I would represent a detained gay man facing deportation, and I jumped at the chance. I had no idea how large a challenge I assumed, or how much I would learn from rising to it.

Twenty years earlier, my client had fled a childhood of homophobic abuse and entered the United States illegally. Now, a late-night misstep led to his detention and deportation proceedings – and we had only six weeks to assemble a suitable claim for relief.

During that time, challenges abounded. Among them: security measures at the jail disrupted meetings; my client spoke only passable English; and he had few friends with legal status who could testify on his behalf. On top of it all, I had never appeared in court before.

Every challenge, however, was tiny compared with what my client had gone through and now feared. And every challenge could not have felt more worthwhile when I heard an immigration judge say that my client would be granted relief.

Four days later, I had the pleasure of meeting my client outside the jail and driving him back into the city. My client told me how much he had appreciated my help. He was perhaps most thankful for the chance to have told his life’s story – a story that he had long suppressed. In finally coming to terms with his past, he had found the strength to reshape his future, to make the best use of his now-legal status and to build a life he could be proud of.

I was – and still am – proud, too: of my client’s strength, of the unwavering support that my firm showed me, and of the chance to help Immigration Equality do its invaluable work.” 

## STUDENTS RETURN FOLLOWING HURRICANE SANDY


Two hundred and fifty New York City schoolchildren whose public school was severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy were able to return to a warm classroom a week after the storm, thanks in part to Ropes & Gray’s *pro bono* efforts. Many of the students had been without heat or electricity at home since the storm devastated their Brooklyn neighborhood of Red Hook.

In the wake of the storm, administrators at the PAVE Academy Charter School, which serves predominantly low-income students, realized that they needed to find a temporary facility – urgently. Working with the New York City Housing Authority, PAVE secured temporary space in Red Hook, but the school needed to negotiate and sign a lease before students could enter the building. That’s where Ropes & Gray came in. Associate Dan Stanco who, along with partner Laurel FitzPatrick and other attorneys, works with PAVE on a regular basis, reviewed and

“It is a privilege to work at a firm that takes such great strides to support the surrounding community and organizations like PAVE.”

– Dan Stanco

negotiated the lease in one afternoon, enabling the children to return to school the very next day.

“Dan’s expertise and urgency made it possible for our kids, who for weeks have been without power and heat in their homes, to return to warm, safe classrooms,” said Cooper Westendarp, director of finance and operations at PAVE. 

# FAMILIES REUNITED IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES; SUPREME COURT DEBATES HAGUE CONVENTION



Jessica Thompson (holding her infant daughter Aurora) was reunited with three-year-old daughter Jessika (center) after Ropes & Gray attorneys assisted her in a cross-border parental dispute.

A single *pro bono* engagement can be the catalyst for a long-term commitment.

For Ropes & Gray, the inspiration came a decade and a half ago, when partner Chris Green, then a first-year associate, handled an international child abduction case in federal court on an expedited basis arising under the Hague Convention. Green's client prevailed and was reunited with her two children after two years of separation.

Today, Ropes & Gray has become a leading firm in this area, the firm's lawyers having devoted more than 10,000 hours to Hague Convention cases over the last two years alone. Working closely with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the U.S. State Department, the firm has handled dozens of matters, including representing parents in federal court trials across the country.

Green, a Boston-based securities litigation partner, turned that initial case into a passion and is now among the nation's leading advocates for children's interests and the reunification of parents and children who have been separated or abducted in highly charged, cross-border disputes. Over the past year, he has represented the NCMEC as *amicus* in two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court concerning the meaning of the Hague Convention and its child abduction provisions.

"For many years, Chris Green has been a valued member of the International Child Abduction Attorney Network,

representing parents from Europe and South America and working tirelessly to promote positive outcomes for his clients and their children in Hague Convention proceedings," said Yiota Souras, vice president and general counsel of NCMEC. "Chris and Ropes & Gray also consistently have offered their *pro bono* services to assist the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in the overall cause of child protection and have authored multiple Supreme Court *amicus* briefs in cases of child abduction and child exploitation to ensure NCMEC's voice is heard at the highest levels of the justice system."

The circumstances and international nature of these cases introduce elements of real-world danger and legal complexity into stressful family conflicts. This past year, for example, one of Ropes & Gray's clients, a mother in Egypt, won the return of her two children who had been abducted 14 months earlier in the midst of civil unrest in

"Trying cases that reunite a parent with his or her missing child has been, and continues to be, among the most critically important and personally rewarding opportunities of my career."

– Chris Green

Egypt. In another case, a Ropes & Gray team reunited a Canadian mother with her daughter following an 18-month separation and a media-saturated trial that included testimony of a Canadian parliament member.

And in a case featured on NBC's "Dateline," a trial team represented a father in Turkey seeking a reunion with his two children whom a kidnapper, hired by their mother, abducted and took to the United States, where they went into hiding with their mother. The Ropes & Gray team, working with state and federal authorities, located the missing children and proceeded to a full trial on the merits. At the trial judge's suggestion, the case is now on appeal to

“Chris and Ropes & Gray ... consistently have offered their *pro bono* services to assist the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in the overall cause of child protection ... to ensure NCMEC’s voice is heard at the highest levels of the justice system.”

–Yiota Souras


Vice President and General Counsel  
NCMEC

the First Circuit on an issue which has divided the federal appellate courts, concerning the discretion of federal trial courts to return children who have been in the United States for over a year. If the First Circuit follows the majority of circuits in this circuit split, the trial judge’s findings in the father’s favor at trial will result in a victory. If the First Circuit aligns with the minority view, the issue will be ripe for Supreme Court review.

For Green, the cases are a departure from his usual caseload in a practice focusing on expedited deal litigation, private equity and hedge fund litigation, securities fraud class actions, corporate governance matters, SEC enforcement matters, and internal investigations.

But both areas of Green’s practice have something in common, as they are the highest-stake litigation for the clients, and typically move on expedited and intense schedules toward trials.

“At the end of the day, our work is about representing clients who have everything in the world at stake,” says Green. “In the child abduction cases, of course, the stakes are the highest imaginable for any parent.”

Other Ropes & Gray attorneys working on these cases include partner Doug Hallward-Driemeier and associates Allison Boscarine, Doug Brayley, Bill Dunn, Kristen Fiore, Lauren Graber, Dan Krockmalnic, Cori Lable, Kavitha Mecozzi, Pat Moore, Lisa Rachlin, Jacob Scott, Ned Sebelius and Dan Ward. 




“As a junior associate, it’s not every day that I draft a petition, file it with the court and then enter into settlement negotiations with opposing counsel. In fact, I’d never done any of these things until I started working on my most recent *pro bono* case. That’s the first thing I can say about *pro bono* work – it’s definitely a real-world, on-your-feet (or your phone), firsthand legal learning experience.

This particular experience stemmed from a Section 8 housing subsidy case referred by The Legal Aid Society. The client required advocacy in dealing with the New York City Housing Authority’s (NYCHA) leased housing office, and potentially the filing of an Article 78 petition.

We met with the client, sat on the NYCHA customer service hotline and went down to NYCHA to copy her tenant file pursuant to a FOIA request, all in an effort to untangle the pertinent facts of her situation, which was complicated – our client was living in a homeless shelter.

While all clients have the ability to create stress with the expectations they hold for the work you do on their behalf, being responsible for helping someone find a solution to a very serious, real, immediate problem is a special kind of stress.

In the end, has this case been one of the most satisfying things I’ve done in my brief career? Yes – especially if it results in the humble goal of a permanent mailing address for our client.” 

# ACCESS TO VOTER REGISTRATION EXTENDED IN VIRGINIA AND MASSACHUSETTS IN 2012

In a presidential election year when voting rights controversies made headlines, Ropes & Gray's *pro bono* efforts helped enfranchise tens of thousands of minority and low-income individuals who otherwise might not have been able to vote. In two separate cases, both with national implications, the firm's attorneys worked with voting rights groups to make sure fundamental provisions of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the 1993 law designed to improve access to voter registration, were followed.

The NVRA, often referred to as the "Motor Voter Act," addresses key issues that had limited access to voting. While the law has been successful on many fronts, many states and municipalities still do not comply with all of its provisions, nearly two decades after its passage. That's where Ropes & Gray got involved. Working with voting rights groups, our attorneys won a milestone voting rights case in Virginia in 2012. They also secured important remedial changes in Massachusetts, ensuring that eligible voters could register in time for the November 2012 federal elections.

## Enfranchising students in Virginia

"Every state in the country is looking at this decision."

— Ryan Malone

In the run-up to the 2008 elections, an unusually high percentage of students at Norfolk State University in Virginia had their voter registration applications rejected. They weren't told why. But in fact, under the NVRA, states are required to make these records public. The nonpartisan nonprofit Project Vote got involved in 2009, but its request

to review these records was denied. In 2010, Ropes & Gray attorneys stepped in to work with Project Vote, filing a lawsuit to demand access. "No one had ever sued to make voter registration records public," explained Ropes & Gray counsel Ryan Malone.

In July 2011, U.S. District Court Judge Rebecca Beach Smith of the Eastern District of Virginia ruled that Project Vote could inspect the documents. The Commonwealth appealed that ruling,

but Ropes & Gray's team prevailed again in June 2012, winning an important appellate precedent in the Fourth Circuit. "Without such transparency, public confidence in the essential workings of democracy will suffer," the Court of Appeals said in its decision. The Commonwealth decided not to appeal the case any further. "This is a case where thousands of people can register to vote who couldn't before because they didn't know why they were denied," explained Malone.

## Helping federal assistance program applicants and clients to register to vote

The NVRA also requires state agencies that administer federal assistance programs, such as food stamps, Medicaid, Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and the Women, Infants, and Children program, to offer voter registration opportunities and assistance to applicants and clients. Field surveys revealed widespread and systemic violations of this provision of the NVRA in Massachusetts. As a result, tens of thousands of Massachusetts citizens were not registered to vote in federal elections.

In May 2012, Ropes & Gray attorneys, working with voting rights groups Dēmos, Project Vote, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, filed a lawsuit on behalf of an aid recipient, the NAACP, New




Virginia residents line up in Nottoway Park in Vienna, Virginia as they wait to vote in the 2012 presidential election.



England Area Conference, and New England United for Justice, against the secretary of the Commonwealth, as chief elections officer, and two state agencies that administer these assistance programs. The immediate goal was to give eligible Massachusetts voters an opportunity to register to vote for the November 2012 federal elections. “Voting is a fundamental right of our democracy,” said Ropes & Gray partner Ken Felter, “and Massachusetts was disenfranchising far too many of our citizens.”

In July 2012, plaintiffs agreed to cancel a hearing on their request for a preliminary injunction after an interim agreement was reached. As part of the interim agreement, the Commonwealth mailed voter registration forms (with postage-prepaid return envelopes) to approximately 500,000 individuals across Massachusetts who had applied for or renewed public assistance benefits during the prior 12 months. The Commonwealth also agreed to arrange for broadcasts of public service announcements on radio and television publicizing the availability of voter registration applications and registration assistance at local agency offices; conduct or participate in community voter registration outreach activities in areas across the Commonwealth with high concentrations of public assistance clients; improve training, supervision and monitoring at local agency offices to ensure compliance with NVRA requirements; and periodically report the results of these remedial actions.


Litigation continues over ongoing violations of the NVRA and the Commonwealth’s refusal to consent to a court order to ensure its future compliance with the law. “We want to institutionalize remedial changes,” explained Felter, “so helping people to register to vote becomes ingrained into the culture of these state agencies.”

In addition to Ryan Malone and Ken Felter, attorneys working on these voting rights cases include partners Doug Hallward-Driemeier and Alexandre Rene, counsel Shannon Kirk, and associates Allison Boscarine, Sam Brenner, Bil Davison, Bessie Dewar, Caleb Dulis, Lisa Guo, Tom Lipton, Boris Milman, Eugene Morgulis, David Peet III, Nick Perros, Christine Ezzell Singer, Katy Wilhelm and Gizachew Wubishet. 

“One of my first *pro bono* cases involved representing a *pro se* litigant in federal court with one of my colleagues, Anna Friedberg. Our client, who was unable to read or write, had filed an ERISA action seeking disability pension benefits. Before we were appointed as counsel, our client was relying on friends to help him draft documents for the court. Once appointed, we amended the complaint and prepared for depositions.

Our client was very sympathetic – he had worked hard for his employer for decades before he was injured on the job and was terminated because he could no longer perform the physical demands of his position. On the eve of our discovery deadline, we reached a settlement. It was very rewarding to advocate on his behalf.

As a corporate health care attorney, I was a bit out of my element litigating an ERISA case in federal court, but I enjoyed the challenge. It allowed me to consult with other attorneys in the firm with whom I don’t typically interact. My colleague and I consulted with litigators, as well as attorneys in our tax and benefits department. I learned new skills, and I was able to implement some of the knowledge I had learned while clerking.

I would encourage other attorneys at large firms to step out of their comfort zone to represent *pro bono* clients. Although the learning curve can be steep, the resources available at a large law firm provide the support necessary to ensure the best representation for the client. It’s a win-win situation for the client and the attorney.” 



The Boston-based team assisting Steppingstone Scholars included partner Joshua Levy (front) and (left to right) associate Gina Riccio, former associate Dan Devoe, associate Christy Rodriguez, senior *pro bono* manager Rosalyn Nasdor, associates Stacylyn Dewey, Heather Sprague and Sandy Dang, and former associate Ming Zhu.

## PAVING WAY TO COLLEGE FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

The Steppingstone Academy gives underserved Boston students a better chance to succeed, in the classroom and beyond. But there's one thing some students need that Steppingstone can't provide – lawful immigration status. That's where Ropes & Gray has been working to help.

The flagship program of the Boston-based nonprofit Steppingstone Foundation,

The Steppingstone Academy prepares urban schoolchildren with high aspirations – called Scholars in the program – to get into and succeed at selective Boston-area independent and public exam schools. Students apply to the rigorous 14-month program in either the fourth or fifth grade, depending on whether they seek to enter a selective school in the sixth or seventh grade. Once Scholars enroll in their new school, Steppingstone provides

support services, including college counseling, through middle and high school.

“We have already achieved tangible results for several kids that may have fundamentally altered the trajectory of their lives.”

– Joshua Levy

Ropes & Gray launched a *pro bono* partnership with Steppingstone at the end of 2011, after Boston-based partner Joshua Levy learned from a contact about the immigration issues facing some students or their family members. Without lawful immigration status, these

students and families cannot qualify for federal loans they need to pay for college. The lack of lawful immigration status also has other negative effects on everything from employment to a family's ability to live in the United States without the fear of deportation.

“Obtaining lawful immigration status is the key to helping these great kids, who are working so hard at Steppingstone, achieve their dreams of college and



realize all of the benefits and open doors that a college education affords,” says Levy.

Since the launch of the partnership with Steppingstone, approximately 20 Ropes & Gray lawyers have spent considerable time representing 14 Steppingstone Scholars, ranging in age from 12 to 18. These efforts have encompassed a variety of *pro bono* immigration-related legal services for Scholars and/or their family members, including applications for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, family-based immigration relief, deferred action for childhood arrivals and Temporary Protected Status renewal.

“Without your connection, I would not know how to get status and would be overwhelmed with paying for college. You have done an amazing thing for me and my mom [and] I don’t know how else to express my gratitude.”

— a Steppingstone Scholar

The efforts of the Ropes & Gray team have already produced positive, life-changing results. In the most dramatic case, a client had his application for Special Immigrant Juvenile status granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, giving him lawful permanent resident status.

In another case, a Steppingstone Scholar and her sister were granted deferred action for childhood arrivals, enabling them to remain in the United States and potentially qualifying them for employment authorization. In a third case, Ropes & Gray attorneys attended an adjustment-of-status interview with clients that resulted in the granting of the clients’ applications for conditional lawful permanent resident status.

In addition to Joshua Levy, the Ropes & Gray team working with Steppingstone includes associates Mark Cianci, Sandy Dang, Stacylyn Dewey, Adam Dobson, Kristen Fiore, Hannah Freeman, Joshua Gallitano, Abe George, Andrea Giannattasio, Abigail Hackler, Alyssa Kollmeyer, Brent Lanoue, Tom Lipton, Boris Milman, Stefanie Mingel, Donna Mizrahi, Alexandra Olson, Adrienne Ortega, Gina Riccio, Jenny Rikoski, Rob Roberts, Christy Rodriguez, Heather Sprague, Katie Sullivan, Erin Turban and Katy Wilhelm. <sup>1</sup>

“I never expected, as a junior associate, to work on a project that could transform how certain social services are provided in Massachusetts and across the country. My current *pro bono* matter has provided this opportunity.

Our client came to us with a fantastic opportunity and a big problem. The nonprofit had been selected by Massachusetts to help develop and manage one of the country’s first large-scale “pay-for-success” social services programs. The problem – there was no precedent for how the program should be structured.

Through initial meetings with the client, the ultimate goals became clear. Private financing sources would provide local service agencies with capital they could use to scale their operations to support thousands of young adults trying to break the cycle of criminal recidivism. The success of these programs would be carefully measured, and the Commonwealth would provide funds based on the savings generated by the reduction in incarcerations. These funds would be used to repay the initial funders.

This basic idea quickly gave way to questions about how best to structure the program – questions involving securities, tax and other areas of law. Without form agreements or guides to rely on, we are constantly structuring the project and drafting documents from the ground up.

It is too soon to tell whether this project will serve as the foundation for future pay-for-success programs, but it is leveraging previously untapped resources to help at-risk young adults.” <sup>1</sup>



Korean War veteran Charles Henderson finally received the disability benefits he deserved, thanks to the efforts of associate Stacy Tromble.

Courtesy of the Veterans Consortium/Photo by Jim Darling

## KOREA VETERAN FINALLY OBTAINS BENEFITS HE EARNED

*“No one was listening to me.”*

Such was the plight of Charles Henderson, a Korean War veteran who, for years, had tried to obtain disability compensation for an injury he sustained during his service overseas. “We were lowering boats into the Pacific,” Henderson recalls, “when all of a sudden the guy next to me lost his grip.” Henderson’s hand was pulled violently into a bit, lacerating his right middle finger to the bone. Despite chronic pain and a slow recovery, Henderson served on active duty for another three years before being honorably discharged.

But then one day in 2000, Henderson put his right hand into his pocket and realized he couldn’t take it out. “My finger locked up on me,” Henderson says. “I didn’t think much about it at first, but then it kept happening.” The veteran sought treatment at the VA Medical Center in Portland, Oregon, where he was told he needed surgery to correct the damage that had been done by the decades-old injury. Three operations later, however, Henderson was still struggling.


After unsuccessfully trying to obtain disability compensation through veterans’ service agencies on his own, Henderson contacted The Veterans Consortium *Pro Bono* Program, which assists unrepresented veterans or their family members who have filed appeals at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The Veterans Consortium referred his case to Stacy Tromble, an associate in Ropes & Gray’s Washington, D.C. office.

“Charles is a brave man who was badly injured while serving his country,” Ms. Tromble says. “He needed someone to convey the very real impact that injury had, and continues to have, on his day-to-day life.”

Working under the guidance of Washington, D.C.-based partner Colleen Conry, Tromble succeeded in getting Henderson’s case remanded and having his hand re-examined. Findings from the exam took Henderson from a disability rating of 10 percent to 80 percent. In 2011, he received a retroactive settlement in excess of \$90,000, as well as an \$18,900 entitlement toward a vehicle. Beyond reclaiming past-due benefits, Tromble’s

successful appeal on Henderson's behalf has increased the veteran's current benefit ninefold.

"Basically, it changed my life," Henderson said in The Veterans Consortium *Pro Bono* Annual Report, which featured Tromble and him on the cover. "I used to get a check for about \$110 a month, [and] now I get over \$1,000."

For Tromble, the opportunity to assist a veteran in need made the case especially rewarding. "I have an affinity for veterans," says Tromble, whose father also served in Korea. "We owe our liberty to these courageous men and women. Helping them get the benefits they deserve isn't just a duty to me. It's a privilege." 



Courtesy of the Veterans Consortium/Photo by Jim Darling

Tromble felt honored to make a life-changing difference for Henderson.

## A DISABLED VETERAN WINS ANOTHER DAY IN COURT

When McKinley Craft's gas mask malfunctioned during a training exercise in the mid-1950s, it exposed him not only to toxic gas, but to a lifetime of health and legal issues.


The incident ultimately cost Mr. Craft his sense of smell and caused persistent sinus problems, including chronic sinusitis. Mr. Craft learned in the mid-1980s that he was eligible for disability compensation, but the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) rejected his claim, denying service connection for his disabilities. While the DVA eventually granted Mr. Craft service connection for the loss of his sense of smell, it found that his testimony lacked credibility in regard to his chronic sinusitis.

"I feel good about working on veterans' cases because they allow me to help people who have honorably served our country get the benefits they have been promised."

— Paul Schoenhard

"In this case, there was a clear record of an in-service situation that ultimately led to a variety of disabilities," says Paul Schoenhard, a counsel in Ropes & Gray's Washington, D.C. office who was referred the case by The Veterans Consortium in 2012. "That's often not true in veterans' cases. It's not uncommon for an attorney to have to go back and try to piece together events to form that linkage."

With support from Washington, D.C.-based partner Colleen Conry, Schoenhard handled Mr. Craft's appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. He argued that the DVA's credibility findings lacked consistency by crediting Mr. Craft's testimony with regard to one of his disabilities but not the other. He also challenged the medical opinion on which the DVA relied.

After negotiation, Schoenhard succeeded in obtaining a remand, under which the DVA must reconsider and appropriately credit Mr. Craft's personal testimony and accept further evidence in support of his claims. Once the case is reopened, Schoenhard hopes the result will be added disability compensation for Mr. Craft. 



© John Rae for Accion

Bicycle shop owner Erivan dos Santos is a client of Accion Microfinanças in Manaus, Brazil

## HELPING ACCION DRIVE MICROFINANCE INNOVATION

Boston-based associate Michael Doore joined Ropes & Gray in 2011, after a yearlong fellowship in the legal department of Accion International, a global nonprofit focused on microfinance. Since joining the firm, Doore has helped expand the firm's relationship with Accion by taking on several new corporate *pro bono* projects involving a range of practice groups. "Accion is a leader in microfinance," explained Ropes & Gray partner George Raine, who leads the team of attorneys working with the nonprofit on corporate, intellectual property and tax matters. "We're trying to help them navigate and innovate in the financial services industry globally on a nonprofit's budget."

Founded in 1961, Accion is an international microfinance support organization dedicated to giving people the financial tools they need to improve their lives. The Boston-based organization works to increase the reach of microfinance to the poor on a global scale by providing microfinance institutions worldwide with technical and management services, as well as equity financing and loan guarantees. Since its inception, Accion has helped to build 63 microfinance institutions worldwide, spread across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States.

Fundamental to Accion's mission is an effort to develop high standards of transparency, client protection and performance. To that end, Accion has been a leader in the Smart Campaign, an industrywide movement to

embed a set of client protection principles throughout the microfinance industry. Key to the Campaign is the Client Protection Certification Program, in which microfinance organizations are evaluated by third-party rating agencies to determine whether they meet industry standards for consumer protection. The Smart Campaign then reviews these decisions and grants compliant organizations a "Smart Campaign Certified" mark, which alerts donors, investors and clients to the organization's commitment.

"This is a *pro bono* relationship with a lot of associate initiative involved. Not only do we support this kind of exposure at Ropes & Gray, we encourage it."


— George Raine

A certification program is complex both to develop and to monitor. Over the course of the last year, Ropes & Gray attorneys, led by associate Lindsay Tunney, worked closely with Accion on the certification project, giving the nonprofit strategic guidance on issues ranging

from intellectual property to contract protections. The certification program launched in January 2013 and Accion is thrilled with the result. “This is a major milestone in the history of the microfinance industry and it wouldn’t have happened without Ropes & Gray’s support,” said Mary Chaffin, general counsel of Accion.

In addition, Ropes & Gray attorneys have leveraged the firm’s extensive knowledge of corporate, tax and investment law to assist the nonprofit with matters in these areas. For example, partners George Raine and

David Saltzman and associates Bryan LaPlant and Livia DeMarchis recently provided guidance to Accion on structuring an investment vehicle to hold certain of Accion’s investments in Africa.

Throughout it all, associates like Tunney, Doore, LaPlant and DeMarchis have gained valuable experience in their practice areas while giving back to the community. “This is a *pro bono* relationship with a lot of associate initiative involved,” explained Raine. “Not only do we support this kind of exposure at Ropes & Gray, we encourage it.” 

## PRESERVING THE WORLD’S IMPERILED COASTAL AREAS THROUGH DEBT SWAPS

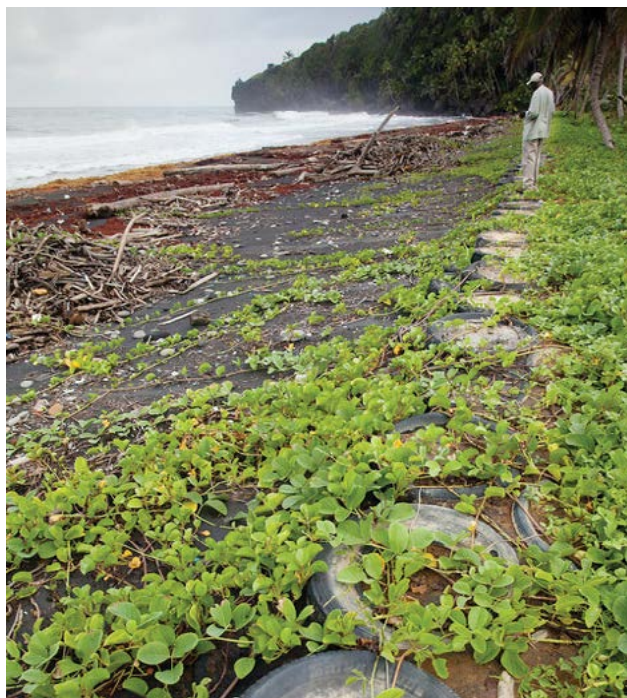
To preserve the world’s most imperiled natural resources, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) utilizes debt-for-climate adaptation swaps, in which portions of a developing country’s debt are forgiven in exchange for conservation measures. These steps have become increasingly important as island and coastal nations face the challenges of climate change.

Ropes & Gray lawyers in London, including partner Matthew Cox and associates Dan Bailey, Alice Dawson, Kasia Walawska and Fergus Wheeler, and Ben Morris in Tokyo, have been working to help engineer these innovative and complex financial structures, which involve TNC, the debtor nation, the creditor nations, the funders and local stakeholders.

In the Seychelles, Ropes & Gray is working on legislation and bylaws necessary to establish a governing trust structure and assisting with the implementation of the funding arrangements to purchase the debt of The Paris Club, the group of financiers from the world’s leading economies, in exchange for establishing 30 percent of the country’s coastal zone as marine protected areas.


In Grenada, Ropes & Gray drafted bylaws and legislation to create and implement a local conservation trust that will receive funding from TNC and other donors. This local conservation trust is designed to support the long-term management and expansion of Grenada’s marine protected areas, in furtherance of the country’s commitments under the Caribbean Challenge Initiative.

In Antigua, Ropes & Gray is working on a similar arrangement to establish a trust structure to acquire and forgive debt owed to the government of Brazil in exchange for protecting 20 percent of Antigua’s marine



© Marjo Aho for The Nature Conservancy

A park in St. Vincent & The Grenadines uses an erosion barrier built of car tires and vegetation.

area and 15 percent of its land, and also creating a sustainable effort to help the island nation adapt to climate change. 

“It is certainly not every day that a debt finance lawyer gets to assist with the protection of an increasingly important marine environment.”

– Fergus Wheeler



Tom Lynn

Gaining U.S. immigration status means a client from Mali can lead a life free of an arranged marriage and far from the physical abuse she suffered as a child.

## WOMAN FLEEING ABUSE GRANTED ASYLUM IN U.S.

The story of the young woman from Mali was heartbreaking.

At age five, she was subjected to brutal female genital mutilation that left her emotionally and physically scarred. Throughout her childhood, she was physically abused. And at 16, her father arranged for her to be married to a man she hardly knew.

So in 2010, while visiting a relative in the United States, the woman decided not to return home. She would disobey her father's commands; he retaliated with angry, threatening emails. Any promise of a normal life in Mali further eroded in March 2012 when the democratically

elected government in Mali was overthrown in a military coup. Separatist rebels aligned themselves with groups linked to Al-Qaeda and imposed their strict interpretation of religious law, curtailing the rights of women.

"We had to have an open attorney-client dialog to make sure (our client) was prepared. We had to help her understand what it meant to have lawyers on her side and what our obligations to her were."

— Nick Niles

The woman from Mali feared for her life if she returned to her homeland – but her visa expired several months after arriving to the United States, putting her at risk of deportation.

It's no easy matter convincing a judge that an immigrant merits asylum status. On her first attempt, the Citizenship and Immigration Service told the woman from Mali "no," with little elaboration. Deportation proceedings were scheduled.

The National Immigrant Justice Center, a Chicago-based organization that works to ensure human rights protections and access to legal services for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, heard about the woman's story and referred her case to Ropes & Gray, which has represented 13 clients referred by the Center. Under immigration law, the woman would have one final chance to appeal.

"She really didn't have any choice," said Nick Niles, a litigation associate at the firm who worked on the woman's case. "She either had to put up with the abuse and the prospect of an arranged marriage or flee Mali, possibly forever."

Niles and fellow litigation associate David Rhinesmith dug into her case, supervised by partner Jeff Bushofsky. It wasn't easy, as they worked deliberately over the course of several months to gain the woman's trust and turn the facts of her case into a compelling storyline.

"Success in an asylum case can turn on the credibility of the applicant," said Niles. "So we had to have an open attorney-client dialog to make sure she was prepared. We had to help her understand what it meant to have lawyers on her side and what our obligations to her were."

To their surprise, the government prosecutor assigned to the case reviewed the brief and supporting materials prepared by Niles and Rhinesmith and dropped opposition to the woman's second, and final, attempt to stay in the United States. In August 2012, the woman was granted asylum.


As Rhinesmith told the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*, which wrote about the case, "Your options when you overstay are very limited. You can't get a job, you can't get benefits. She really needed this as a way to support herself."

Today, the woman is living in the greater Chicago area, training to become a hairdresser, and relieved to be free of forced repatriation to a land she feared so much.

For the Ropes & Gray attorneys, the case had an emotional pull different from what they encounter in their usual course of business.

"Your options when you overstay are very limited...She really needed this as a way to support herself."

— David Rhinesmith


"A victory here is more tangible," said Niles. "It literally means saving her from having to get onto a plane headed back to a country where she will almost certainly be forced into a marriage she doesn't want, and abused." 

## HIV-POSITIVE DIPLOMAT PREVAILS IN 4-YEAR BATTLE

After 20 years of confronting discriminatory policies that prohibited him from becoming a Foreign Service Officer (FSO), an openly gay HIV-positive man reported for duty with the U.S. State Department in August 2012, thanks to the *pro bono* efforts of a team of attorneys from Ropes & Gray.

Our client had wanted to be a FSO since graduating from college, but State Department policy in the early 1990s prohibited openly gay applicants from obtaining a security clearance. While this policy was later overturned, our client, who had by that time contracted HIV, found that an additional policy prohibited the hiring of HIV-positive FSO applicants.

Ropes & Gray got involved with the case in 2007, and our client filed a federal lawsuit for disability-based discrimination in 2008. After four years of litigation, in which the firm's attorneys were assisted by medical experts who addressed issues such as the realities of living with and managing HIV and the availability of HIV care around the globe, the parties reached a resolution in early 2012. This cleared the way for our client to take up a post in the Foreign Service.


The Ropes & Gray *pro bono* team was led by associate Stuart Yothers, with supervision from partner Chris Harnett, and included associate Henry Huang. 

## OUTSPOKEN SYRIAN DISSIDENT GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM

In January 2011, a Syrian man arrived in the United States to study business at the Harvard Extension School. Two months later, the Syrian uprising ignited, with demonstrators demanding the release of political prisoners and the government launching a series of violent crackdowns that have engulfed the nation ever since.

The newly arrived Harvard student watched what was happening in his homeland. Inspired by the anti-government activists and emboldened by his distance from the repressive regime of President Bashar al-Assad, he posted videos and articles on Facebook exposing the government's brutal retaliation against protesters. He also started several popular Facebook groups, bringing together dissidents who opposed the Syrian regime and its human rights abuses. The Assad regime took notice.

The Syrian secret police sought out the student's friends and family in Syria and interrogated them about his support of the uprising. The student then knew he could not return safely to Syria.

Ropes & Gray attorneys, including partner Chris Green and associates Jennifer Pantina and Jenny Rikoski, took on his case, *pro bono*, and filed an affirmative application for asylum. The student testified about his fear of persecution, persuading the immigration officer to grant him asylum in September 2012. 

## PARTNERING WITH CLIENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Ropes & Gray associate Bryan MacDonald speaks with a potential client at an event held with Biogen Idec.

Ropes & Gray collaborates with firm clients to provide legal assistance to those who cannot afford representation. Some of our recent partnerships include:

### STATE STREET

We are working with State Street and Volunteer Lawyers Project to provide training and mentoring to State Street's legal department to assist it in representing low-income families in need of guardianship arrangements for minors and incapacitated adults.

### GOLDMAN SACHS

We participated in a second *pro bono* project with an LGBT diversity-related theme in New York as part of Goldman Sachs's Pride Month activities. Partnering once again with *pro bono* partner agency Immigration Equality, which assists LGBT asylum seekers with immigration/asylum issues, Ropes & Gray and Goldman Sachs attorneys and staff interviewed Immigration Equality clients to discover problems that they encountered while going through the asylum process. By using this data, Immigration Equality plans to identify systemic problems in the asylum process that are affecting LGBT asylum seekers and come up with ways to ease future clients through these problem areas.



Goldman Sachs vice president Steven Wolf (center) and Ropes & Gray associate Carly Baratt (right) interview an Immigration Equality client at a June Goldman Sachs Pride Month event.

“As a volunteer at the Pfizer legal clinic, I had the opportunity to work directly with a lawyer at Pfizer to help patients facing the harsh realities of a chronic or terminal illness execute living wills, health care proxies, wills and powers of attorney. The work was meaningful and rewarding.”

– Lisa Rosenbaum


### BIAGEN IDEC

A group of Ropes & Gray lawyers presented a *pro bono* training workshop to lawyers from Biogen Idec. Thereafter, members of the Biogen Idec legal department joined Ropes & Gray and the firm’s longstanding *pro bono* partner, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, in providing *pro bono* legal services to small business owners during an Economic Justice Project legal clinic. In the clinic, pairs of Ropes & Gray and Biogen Idec lawyers offered personal consultations regarding the legal issues that affected each participant’s small business.

### PFIZER

Ropes & Gray lawyers in New York joined Pfizer and three other law firms to work together with New York Legal Assistance Group’s LegalHealth unit to provide legal assistance to low-income individuals in the form of advance directives, including medical powers of attorney, health care proxies, simple wills and guardianship proceedings. Together, the firms and Pfizer staff a monthly clinic at the NYU Cancer Institute.


### DANA-FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute asked Ropes & Gray and three other law firms to provide legal services to low-income cancer patients, to document their end-of-life directives and to see that their family members would be cared for in the event of their death. Ropes & Gray has actively contributed to this project; since its establishment in early 2011, our attorneys and paralegals have contributed over 3,350 hours assisting 20 clients and their families. 



“As a second-year associate at Ropes & Gray, I have had the opportunity to take on a wealth of *pro bono* opportunities. I have worked on three asylum cases, one of which resulted in asylum for a homosexual man persecuted for years because of his sexual orientation in his home country of Colombia. Another asylum case in which I have been involved is ongoing; our team will soon file an appellate brief with the Ninth Circuit, in part, to challenge the Board of Immigration Appeals’ conclusion that a forced sexual and marital relationship between our client, a lesbian from El Salvador, and a man more than 50 years her senior that was intended to “cure” her sexual orientation did not constitute past persecution.

Outside of the asylum context, I have had equally challenging and rewarding *pro bono* experiences. I participated in an administrative hearing to challenge a finding of neglect by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Our client was the guardian of her three grandchildren, all of whom have special needs, and she was doing her best to take care of the children despite her extremely limited means. Recently, I have also been working on a mortgage fraud case.

I am tremendously appreciative of the firm’s support and encouragement of *pro bono* work, and have found the personal aspect of working with *pro bono* clients to be extremely rewarding. This past Thanksgiving, our Colombian asylum client (who does not speak fluent English) sent me the following text message: “You are one of the reason why I am thanks today.” 



Karen Borchers

San Francisco-based associate Alice Ho sits with Mariya Rabinovich and Huo Ying Lian.

## SENIORS RETAIN VITAL HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

— Reprinted with permission of The Daily Journal. Original article published Oct. 26, 2012.

At first glance, an elderly Georgian immigrant and a national law firm best known for defending corporate America may seem like strange bedfellows.

But when the state gutted a program for the elderly in an attempt to deal with the state's widening budget deficit, this unlikely pairing of Marietta Arakelova and Ropes & Gray fast became allies.

Arakelova, 75, immigrated to the U.S. in 1998 and attends the Golden State Community-Based Adult Services in San Francisco, which offers medical services, meals and other assistance to low-income seniors.

She comes to the adult day health center three times a week to get her blood pressure and diabetes checked out. Arakelova suffers from hearing problems, depression, diabetes and lower back pain, according to center officials.

"She likes being around people. She used to be a teacher in Georgia and Azerbaijan so it's important to maintain that connection," said her translator Sonia Maryasov. "She likes that the staff is very caring, [and] caters to her needs."

In response to the state cutting the Adult Day Health Care program as a Medi-Cal health benefit, Disability Rights California and others filed a federal lawsuit in response to the elimination. The suit later settled.

A new program called Community Based Adult Services began this year as a result of the settlement in the Adult Day Health Care litigation, according to Elissa S. Gershon, senior attorney in the Bay Area regional office for Disability Rights California.

The new Community-Based Adult Services would be offered through Medi-Cal and went into effect on April 1.

Arakelova was one of many seniors across California who was deemed ineligible to continue to receive services after state officials decided some seniors didn't qualify.

She and 75 other seniors at the adult day health center in San Francisco filed appeals with the Department of Social Services and its administrative law judges to continue to receive benefits under a new program earlier this year.

Gershon wrote in an email approximately 2,431 seniors across California filed appeals with the state as of mid-August.

That's where law firm Ropes & Gray LLP stepped in to help Arakelova and the others. Seven attorneys got involved in *pro bono* cases in February after the clients had filed their appeals with the state. They represented 14 seniors, including Arakelova, in their appeals cases, winning rulings for all of them.

"Marietta was just a wonderful joy. She is very spirited and she has this wonderful personality," said Lauren E. Foster, a Ropes & Gray associate in the health care practice who represented Arakelova.

"As spirited as Arakelova was, she obviously suffered from a number of these ailments. You could see it in her eyes, the fear, if these services were taken away from her."

Foster said it really drove home for her, personally, how important the hearings were and how important it was to advocate for the seniors.

"I kept thinking about my poor grandma who is in such good health at 93, but these people are not. They come from backgrounds where they're not able to pay for care," Foster said.

They will continue to receive services until the next reassessment period by the center and services retroactive to April 1, according to Aimee H. Kelley, an associate in the health care group at Ropes & Gray's San Francisco office.

Both Kelley and Alice Ho, an associate in the health care group, said they were excited to be involved in something like this because it's such a "vulnerable situation." "These are adults who are seniors who have a lot of chronic situations, mental disabilities, especially low-income seniors because it's Medi-Cal," Ho said. "And so we're

trying to have a place for them to go so they can avoid hospitalization and institutionalization and be able to maintain their health and well being with required level of nursing, social worker and therapeutic work."

Ho said the state's argument was that it was in its right to essentially overturn the face-to-face assessments where nurse assessors went into the centers and determined, based on a live interview, eligibility for the CBAS program.

"It was a violation of the settlement agreement and it was their argument it was their right to do so and no administrative law judge had the authority to review that issue," Ho explained.

Katya Hope, head of the psychiatric psychological services at Golden State Community-Based Adult Services, said having Ropes & Gray attorneys come in and help with the appeal cases was "huge."

"They [clients] were very intimidated by the state and weren't sure what to do. I tried to convince them the American legal system was generally pretty solid. They had no

confidence in anything happening. They didn't even want to do the appeals," Hope said.

Around 100 people were denied services, and 76 of those appealed with the state, according to Alla Lisitsa, program director at Golden State Community-Based Adult Services. █



Karen Borchers

The Ropes & Gray team that worked on the elder care matters in California included partners John Chesley, Gregory Davis and Rocky Tsai, and associates Lauren Foster, Alice Ho, Aimee Kelley, Joanne Kwan and Jessica Server.

## WE THANK AND RECOGNIZE OUR PRO BONO PARTNERS

Ropes & Gray lawyers from across the firm work on *pro bono* matters with many nonprofit organizations and legal services agencies. The firm congratulates these organizations for their success in helping members of our

communities who could not otherwise afford legal services. Ropes & Gray is honored to work with these organizations and thanks them for the opportunity to partner with them on the critical legal issues faced by their clients.

AIDS Legal Referral Panel	Lambda Legal	Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project
Anti-Defamation League	Lawyers Alliance for New York	Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia
Bay Area Legal Aid	Lawyers Clearinghouse on Affordable Housing and Homelessness	Sanctuary for Families
Brooklyn Family Defense Project	Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of Boston, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.	The Steppingstone Foundation
Children's Law Center	Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago	Suffolk Probate and Family Court – Lawyer for the Day Program
D.C. Bar Advocacy & Justice Clinic	Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice	The Legal Aid Societies of the District of Columbia, New York and San Mateo County
DC Volunteer Lawyers Project	Massachusetts Legal Clinic for the Homeless	The Veterans Consortium
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services	Medical-Legal Partnership   Boston	Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund
Equip for Equality	MFY Legal Services	Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts of Massachusetts and New York
Family Defense Center	National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association
Greater Boston Legal Services	National Immigrant Justice Center	Volunteer Legal Services Program of the Bar Association of San Francisco
Green Pro Bono	New York City Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program	The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
Health Law Advocates	New York Legal Assistance Group	
Human Rights First		
Immigration Equality		
inMotion		
International Senior Lawyers Project		
Kids in Need of Defense		

# LAWSUIT ADDRESSES NYC JAIL ABUSE

Ropes & Gray attorneys represent a class of current and future inmates in New York City jails, in a major civil rights lawsuit that seeks injunctive and declaratory relief against the City of New York and supervisory personnel in the City's Department of Correction (DOC) to remedy a pattern and practice of DOC staff brutality and related wrongdoing.

The class-action complaint, which was filed in 2012 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, alleges that DOC correction officers systematically inflict unnecessary and excessive use of force on the inmate population, and that their supervisors – up to and including the DOC's top brass – have tolerated, permitted and encouraged the practice, all in violation of the constitutional and statutory rights of the class members.


"The pattern of brutality in the City's jails is deeply entrenched," the lawsuit charges. Despite prior lawsuits that won piecemeal and temporary relief for inmates in the City's jails, "the City's jails remain afflicted by the same culture of violence, the same failure of accountability, and the same deliberate indifference and active acceptance."

The relief sought by the class is intended to change, on a systemwide basis, how the DOC selects, trains and disciplines its personnel and how it investigates brutality complaints. Class co-counsel in the case (The Legal Aid Society Prisoners' Rights Project, and Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP) also represent inmates who are seeking damages individually.

Since the filing of the lawsuit, the class has been certified, notice has been given (and will continue to be given) to the class, and in-depth merits discovery has begun.

The lawsuit has received widespread media coverage, including reports in *The New York Times* and the *Village Voice*.

Said Mary Lynne Werlwas, staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society Prisoners' Rights Project, "We are pleased to be working with such a dedicated, enthusiastic team committed to bringing about much needed reform."

The Ropes & Gray team working on this case includes partners Bill Sussman and Chris Conniff, and associates Christina Bucci, Stephanie Busalacchi, Jessica Cameron, Joe Cleemann, Paul Cohen, Anna Friedberg, Helen Gugel, Paul Kellogg, Natassia Kelly, Bharathi Pillai, Alex Pungner, Amanda Raad, Nicholas Rodriguez and Sean Seelinger. 

## FIRST PERSON:


NICK  
PERROS



“I am continually impressed by the dedication Ropes & Gray attorneys direct to their *pro bono* work. I have had the good fortune to work with three *pro bono* clients; each case has been unique in its challenges and rewards.

I have worked with a team to litigate constitutional and statutory claims against states that have made it difficult or impossible to conduct voter registration drives and have withheld public voting records. After successful outcomes in the district courts, these cases have gone on appeal to the Fourth and Fifth Circuits; though the Fifth Circuit litigation is pending, we had a great outcome before the Fourth Circuit, where a unanimous panel ruled that Project Vote was unquestionably entitled to copies of completed voter registration applications.

In Massachusetts, I have worked with other Ropes & Gray attorneys to secure DNA testing for a client who has been incarcerated for the last 28 years. The client was originally convicted using forensic evidence now known to be unreliable, obsolete and of little probative value. We filed a contested motion the day a new DNA testing statute took effect and, in a case of first impression, were granted DNA testing under the new act.

In Washington, D.C., a team negotiated a settlement with a landlord who was trying to evict a family from its home. I'm grateful for my *pro bono* work with the firm, and I'm excited about new opportunities to come.” 

## PROUD TO BE HONORED FOR OUR *PRO BONO* SERVICE



Rick Kopstein

Ropes & Gray's Pablo Hendler accepts the Marvin E. Frankel Award from Elisa Massimino, president and CEO of Human Rights First, and Lori Adams, managing attorney of the organization's Refugee Protection Program.

In a year that saw the firm devote more hours than ever to *pro bono* matters, Ropes & Gray received accolades for its *pro bono* commitment from a variety of sources:

Ropes & Gray was named to *The American Lawyer's* annual "**A-List**" ranking of 20 leading law firms for the second year in a row.

The American Bar Association's Business Law Section honored Ropes & Gray with a **2012 National Public Service Award** in recognition of the firm's ongoing contribution to providing free business legal services to individuals and organizations that cannot afford counsel.

*Law360* listed the firm as one of the top *pro bono* law firms for its efforts to help under-resourced clients.

Boston Bar Association presented its **Thurgood Marshall Award** to Ropes & Gray for our outstanding *pro bono* work. The award is intended "to recognize private attorneys in greater Boston for their extraordinary efforts to enhance the human dignity of others through improving, developing, or delivering civil or criminal legal services to low-income clients in Massachusetts."

Human Rights First honored the firm's New York and Washington, D.C. offices with its **2012 Marvin E. Frankel Award** for the outstanding work performed on behalf of the organization's asylum clients.

Washington, D.C.-based counsel Ryan Malone was profiled as a Champion in *The National Law Journal's* "**Champions and Visionaries**" issue for upholding the legal profession's

core values through public service, *pro bono* efforts and advocacy for civil liberties.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia recognized Ropes & Gray as one of seven firms in Washington, D.C. to have more than half of its lawyers contribute 50 or more hours of *pro bono* work for the year.

Ropes & Gray and associates Joe Cleemann and Meredythe Ryan were recognized by The Legal Aid Society at its annual **Pro Bono Publico Awards**.

*Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* honored retired Boston-based partner Bill Patton in its **2012 Excellence in the Law: Excellence in Pro Bono Award** category for his guardianship work. In September 2012, Patton was selected to the inaugural Massachusetts Access to Justice Commission's *Pro Bono* Fellows program, which partners senior lawyers with nonprofit and legal services organizations providing assistance to underserved populations.

**Legal Services NYC** recognized Leonard Winters, Steven Balcof, Maureen Meredith, David Tutor, Timothy Capozzi and Bharathi Pillai for their *pro bono* efforts.

The **Brooklyn Family Defense Project** honored Ropes & Gray at its annual fall benefit for work done on behalf of the organization's clients.

Boston's **Senior Partners for Justice** and the **Volunteer Lawyers Project** honored Ropes & Gray with their "MVP" (Most Valuable Partner) award for our comprehensive *pro bono* guardianship work.

The New York State Bar Association named several of the firm's New York-based attorneys as "**Empire State Counsel**" for providing *pro bono* assistance to low-income clients.

For the second consecutive year, Ropes & Gray was honored by the **Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court** through the court's new *Pro Bono* Recognition Program.

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia named several of the firm's Washington, D.C.-based associates to their **Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll**.

For three of the last four years, Ropes & Gray has been honored with the **Safe Haven Award** from Immigration Equality for its *pro bono* work on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people seeking political asylum in the United States. ■

“My firm profile includes the fact that I speak Vietnamese, a language I don’t get to use very often in private equity transactions. However, Boston has a robust Vietnamese population, and I’ve had the honor of being asked to assist with a number of *pro bono* cases for Vietnamese-speaking clients.

I joined one case team for a client who had been the victim of domestic violence while married to an American citizen. Her situation called for a number of legal actions, including getting a restraining order, applying for a green card under the Violence Against Women Act and filing for divorce.

One aspect of *pro bono* work at our firm that is similar to our private equity transaction practice is that we work on teams with truly amazing lawyers. On this particular case, I collaborated with three litigators, all of whom passionately advocated for our client.

We were able to get the restraining order, the green card and the divorce. The husband surprised us by showing up at court to contest the divorce. He loudly threatened our client again, but it didn’t matter. She had already received her green card and had a restraining order against him. After the divorce



proceeding concluded, the client smiled and clutched my arm as she told me, in Vietnamese, “He never thought I would be strong enough to stand up to him. He never thought I could do all of this, but now he knows I’m powerful.” I’m grateful the firm gave me the opportunity to translate her sentiments.”

## WORKING TO HELP ELDERLY AND LOW-INCOME CLIENTS IN NEW YORK CITY KEEP THEIR HOMES

Ropes & Gray launched a *pro bono* externship program with MFY Legal Services, a nonprofit organization that serves indigent residents of Manhattan. For many years, the firm has worked on other projects with MFY, which focuses on housing, public benefits, health, consumer, foreclosure and employment matters.

“As a longtime MFY board member, I know firsthand about the great work of the organization and I am delighted the firm is enhancing our relationship with the externship program,” said Ropes & Gray New York-based litigation partner Robert Fischler.

Under the program, two externs a year, each on a six-month rotation, work on housing cases affecting elderly and low-income tenants. Externs will remain employed by the firm with no change in compensation or benefits.

“The externship program allowed me to greatly develop as an interviewer, researcher, writer, negotiator, advocate and litigator through hands-on training and thoughtful, generous mentoring from dedicated and passionate attorneys at MFY Legal Services.”

– Bharathi Pillai

Litigation associate Bharathi Pillai was the firm’s first extern at MFY, and litigation associate Maura Sullivan is participating in the program this year.



Back row (left to right): Frannie Carley, Susan Wilker, Mark Cianci, Meaghan Calter, Catherine Simes, Chau Le  
Front row (left to right): Kirsten Ortega, David Tolley, Bryan Pennington, Michele Garvin, Terry Iandiorio, Norris Henry

## MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP TEAM HONORED WITH AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Each year, Ropes & Gray presents the Deborah Levi Award for Outstanding *Pro Bono* Service to honor the memory of former Ropes & Gray lawyer Deb Levi, a tireless advocate of *pro bono* work who lost her battle with cancer in 2002. In 2012, the award went to the Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) team of 160 associates and paralegals for their work in the legal clinic at the Dorchester House (Dot House) Multi-Service Center, a community health center in the Fields Corner neighborhood of Dorchester.


Team members invested close to 10,000 hours on this project in 2011 alone, serving families on legal matters in five MLP practice areas: housing, immigration, education, income support and family law. For its efforts, the team earned the 2011 Partner of the Year award from Dot House and recognition as “Heroes from the Field” from *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*.

The MLP team is led by supervising partner Michele Garvin, project co-leaders David Tolley and Terry Iandiorio, and a group of dedicated associates: Caitlin Barrett, Mark Cianci, Bryan Pennington, Harsha Pulluru, Ned Sebelius, Carmel Shachar and Susan Wilker, as well as paralegals Meaghan Calter, Frannie Carley, Norris Henry, Kirsten Ortega and Catherine Simes.

In addition to the MLP project with Dot House, which was launched in 2008, Ropes & Gray joined several other Boston-area law firms and MLP | Boston to launch a new *pro bono* legal clinic at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in 2011.

“Our partnership with Ropes & Gray is life-changing for many of our patients and their families, and a valuable service to our patient population.”

— **Walter J. Ramos**, President and CEO  
Dorchester House Multi-Service Center

Our MLP team gratefully receives expert legal mentorship in specialized areas of law from the following organizations: MLP | Boston, the Volunteer Lawyers Project, Greater Boston Legal Services, Community Legal Services and Counseling Center, and the Disability Law Center. 

## **PRO BONO COMMITTEE**

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## **A RECORD COMMITMENT TO PRO BONO SERVICE**

Ropes & Gray's public service commitment is a hallmark of the firm, rooted in the example set by the firm's founders nearly a century and a half ago. The firm encourages lawyers and staff to engage in *pro bono* work, which once again reached a record level of activity in 2012.



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