

2017 Pro Bono Report

Below is a summary of the more significant pro bono matters that the firm has worked on in 2017.

Human Rights Committee of the Autism Services Association

As part of his work for this organization, which services adults with autism, mostly via work day programs, **James B. Peloquin** reviews incident reports with a view towards evaluating whether certain situations (i.e. restraints, minor injuries, etc.) have been handled properly by staff.

Health Law Advocates

The firm represented a 38 year old widowed mother of two young children whose husband/father died from cancer in 2012. After his death, the treating hospital billed the client \$146,000 for cancer treatment that her late husband's insurance did not cover. **Anthony V. Bova and Andrew R. Dennington** are representing the client in seeking either forgiveness of the debt or a negotiated plan to pay a lesser amount.

Veterans Legal Services

The firm represented a Vietnam-era Air Force veteran who is receiving VA disability benefits for PTSD. A credit card issuer sued the client in the Lawrence District Court on a \$10,000 credit card balance. In a fantastic result, **Andrew R. Dennington** persuaded the credit car company to agree to dismiss the case with no payment.

The firm represented an Iraq War veteran in an appeal from the denial of his unemployment benefits, after he was terminated while using earned and accrued sick leave time. After a hearing handled by **Alexis P. Theriault**, the DET reversed the decision, and the client received substantial past due benefits and is now receiving weekly benefits while he looks for another job.

Attorneys Representing Children (ARC)

The firm represented a 10-year-old boy caught in the middle of a custody dispute between his mother, who had moved to Connecticut, and his father, who remained in Massachusetts. **Anna O. Klimas** conducted an independent investigation into the child's best interests, and represented the child's interests in proceedings at the Bristol County Probate & Family Court.

Women's Bar Foundation

The firm represented a survivor of domestic abuse in contentious custody and support proceedings with the father of her young daughter. After numerous hearings, **Katherine A. Kelter** negotiated a settlement that accomplished the mother's goal of retaining physical and legal custody of the daughter,

with the father's future ability to obtain joint legal custody conditioned on his continued counseling, commitment to rehabilitation, drug testing, and successful completion of parenting time.

The firm represented a low-income domestic violence survivor and mother of two young children in a divorce action. **Kathleen R. O'Toole** obtained an extended 209A order, filed a complaint for divorce, and obtained temporary orders for child support payments from the father, full custody of the children to the mother, and supervised visitation to the father. Kate will continue to work on the matter in 2018.

Massachusetts Advocates for Children

The firm represented a child with special needs in successfully transitioning from a school servicing only children with special needs to a sub-separate classroom within a general education middle school. **James F. Kavanaugh, Jr.** and **Christopher K. Sweeney** negotiated the details of the program, which allows the firm's client to attend music, art, and other electives with typically-developing students, while still having the opportunity for more individualized attention in other subjects.

Kids in Need of Defense ("KIND")

The firm represents two unaccompanied minors from Guatemala in their immigration proceedings. **Anthony V. Bova, Daniel R. Fishman,** and paralegal **Paige K. Haller** are working to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status for the two minors, in hopes of putting the children on a path to legal resident status.

Legal Services Food Hub, a project of the Conservation Law Foundation

The firm represented a local nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting local agriculture and hunger relief through farmland preservation and education. As a farm, a non-profit, and a seasonal organization, the client had a unique mix of employees, and needed advice to ensure compliance with wage and hour regulations. **Mary E. (Beth) O'Neal** and **Kathleen R. O'Toole** reviewed and assessed the organizations' policies and procedures, and advised the client accordingly.

The firm also represented a local non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing surplus farm crops for people in need. **Thomas J. Gallitano** and **Kathleen R. O'Toole** worked to ensure that the organization was in compliance with overtime law, including analysis of certain agricultural exemptions to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

At the request of the Food Hub, the firm (**Mary E. (Beth) O'Neal, Andrew R. Dennington, and Henry H. Tran**) prepared a handbook for agricultural employers addressing federal and state laws and regulations applicable to agricultural employers, focusing on wage and hour laws, including state and federal exemptions from overtime and minimum wage laws; state and federal leave laws; employee vs. independent contractor issues; deductions from the agricultural worker's wages for meals and lodging; workers' compensation issues; unpaid interns and volunteers; and employer record keeping requirements.