

## Our 2019 Pro Bono Hot List

Celebrating law firms that do well by doing good.

### Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll

■ **DESCRIBE YOUR FIRM'S PHILOSOPHY ON PRO BONO SERVICE.** We believe that all people deserve justice under the law, particularly people in historically disenfranchised groups. Cohen Milstein is deeply committed to providing pro bono representation to those who cannot otherwise obtain legal counsel in their fight for justice. We litigate challenging, high-profile cases that are often a part of the national conversation and attempt to help establish positive, long-lasting legal precedent along the way.

■ **OF THE BIG CASES YOUR FIRM RECENTLY WORKED ON, ENGLUND V. WORLD PAWN EXCHANGE, AS YOU WRITE, WAS THE FIRST CASE IN THE NATION TO ADDRESS LICENSED FIREARMS DEALERS' LIABILITY FOR ONLINE GUN SALES. TELL US MORE ABOUT THE CASE AND HOW YOU REACHED THE OUTCOME.** *Englund* established first-in-the-nation rulings that firearm dealers can be liable for shooting deaths caused by online straw gun sales, despite the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. We defeated defendants' PLCAA defenses on motions to dismiss and for summary judgment by arguing that straw-sale liability applies equally to online sales as to in-person sales. After these victories and a successful petition to add a claim for punitive damages, we were well-positioned to negotiate favorable settlements with both dealer defendants. The settlements not only provided financial relief to victim Kirsten Englund's family, but also required the dealer defendants to improve their sales practices, serving as a model to other dealers.

■ **WHAT WAS THE MOST SATISFYING ASPECT OF THAT KEY CASE?** Kirsten Englund's family was able to obtain justice in a manner that helps prevent future firearm violence. We were honored to work with the Brady Center and D'Amore Law Group to establish legal precedents that future plaintiffs can use to their benefit and that encourage dealers to take proactive steps to prevent illegal gun sales, thereby protecting others from harm.

■ **DISCUSS OTHER KEY PRO BONO MATTERS RECENTLY COMPLETED BY THE FIRM.** In 2018, we also co-led two nationally significant and precedent-setting cases in Florida—one ending the systematic solitary confinement of juveniles charged as adults in Florida's county jails; the second helping to restore the voting rights of former felons. While the lower court's ruling to permanently end the state's unconstitutionally "arbitrary" voter re-enfranchisement process was on appeal, Floridians overwhelmingly voted to allow for automatic



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restoration of such rights. We also helped advance several high-profile cases: successfully co-arguing for the vacation of the Trump administration's rescission of the DACA program, and pursuing justice for peaceful protesters beaten by Turkish security officials on U.S. soil.

■ **WHY DOES YOUR PRO BONO WORK MATTER TO YOU AS A LAWYER?** Helping the disenfranchised seek and obtain justice is deeply meaningful—personally and professionally. To witness our pro bono clients' courage and determination throughout the litigation process is empowering. To see their heroic commitment transformed into legal precedent that will ultimately improve the lives of those who follow them is inspiring.

*Responses submitted by Julie Goldsmith Reiser, a partner and co-chair of the securities litigation & investor protection practice at Cohen Milstein.*

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