

FOCUS AREAS

A SOLID PATH OF PUBLIC SERVICE

At Gilbert LLP, we believe that we have a duty to serve the public interest, and that the best lawyers and professional staff are those who provide their time, expertise and other resources to their community. We strongly encourage our lawyers—from junior associates to the most senior partners—to devote a significant portion of their “billable” time to pro bono legal work. And we urge both our lawyers and professional staff to engage in community service activities that benefit the less fortunate members of our society. Our pro bono and community service activities include the following:

Civil Rights

- We successfully represented the tenants’ association of a veterans’ home when the owner of the home attempted to evict numerous disabled veterans in violation of D.C. law.
- We prepared amicus briefs in three separate U.S. Supreme Court cases supporting the constitutionality of plans aimed at addressing racial discrimination in college and law school admissions (*Grutter v. Bollinger*), high school enrollment (*Parents Involved In Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*) and government contracting (*Adarand Constructing Co. v. Mineta*).
- We assisted a national civil rights organization in preparing testimony before Congress supporting the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act.
- We reached a favorable settlement for an Ethiopian university student in her lawsuit against the District of Columbia Police Department for police brutality.
- In *Doe v. Essex Insurance Company*, we successfully represented a young boy who was repeatedly molested while in the care of a city-run youth facility. The facility’s insurer attempted to limit its liability by arguing that multiple molestations constitute only one “act of sexual misconduct” under the policy. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit rejected this argument and ordered the insurer to pay benefits.
- We work with Women Empowered Against Violence, a D.C.-based non-profit organization, to assist victims of domestic violence obtain civil protection orders.

Mortgage Industry Crisis

- We currently represent the Center for Responsible Lending in connection with Chapter 11 bankruptcies filed by lenders that issued subprime and Alt-A mortgages.
- Along with the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, we currently represent an individual homeowner, who was the victim of predatory lending, in her efforts to avoid foreclosure.
- On behalf of the ACLU of Montgomery County, Maryland, we drafted an amicus curiae brief in support of a county ordinance banning discrimination in mortgage lending. The court agreed that the ordinance was not preempted by state law, and that the county could enact it.

Hurricane Katrina

- We assisted several victims of Hurricane Katrina in their efforts to force their home insurers to provide coverage, and have successfully helped many individuals and business owners recover insurance benefits. We produced two videos with accompanying brochures to help those affected by the storm better understand common insurance coverage issues, and to provide practical pointers for obtaining insurance recovery for the hurricane and future disasters.
- We also helped draft and present testimony to the U.S. House Financial Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, on the failure of the insurance industry to respond adequately to the crisis faced by homeowners and small businesses.

Risk Management For Non-Profit Organizations

- Through the Washington Area Women’s Foundation, we founded a legal clinic series for grassroots non-profit organizations in the District of Columbia area. We presented a seminar about the kinds of insurance that would best serve non-profit organizations and have advised non-profits in matters involving risk assessment and insurance portfolios.

FOCUS AREAS (CONTINUED)

Community Service

We participate each year in many events that benefit important causes, such as:

- The Washington Legal Aid Society's Generous Associates Campaign, a fundraising event run by law firm associates soliciting contributions from associates, partners, non-lawyers, and the law firms themselves. Each year, we contribute more than every other law firm our size—and most law firms three and four times our size.
- The annual Susan G. Komen National Race for the Cure, benefiting the struggle to treat and cure breast cancer.

We also provide assistance each year for local food banks, clothing drives, school supply drives, book drives, Suited for Change, and many other local causes.