



THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY
PRO BONO BULLETIN

JANUARY 2017

FOCUS ON
IMMIGRATION LAW

Since early November The Legal Aid Society's Immigration Law Unit, in partnership with volunteer attorneys, legal assistants and translators from both law firms and corporations in New York City, have helped hundreds of clients concerned about their immigration status with applying for US citizenship, renewing their Temporary Protected Status, and requesting the cessation of deportation proceedings in order to remain in the United States and keep their families together.

This issue of the Pro Bono Bulletin highlights the work of these dedicated volunteers, alongside the staff of The Legal Aid Society, in providing critical and often life-changing legal assistance.

Firms Assist with Urgent Applications to Avoid Deportation

Faced with more administrative violations than is possible to address, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is forced to prioritize the use of personnel, space, and other assets. One tool utilized by ICE is prosecutorial discretion. In the civil immigration context those discretionary enforcement decisions could include; cancelling a notice of detainer, settling or dismissing a proceeding, granting deferred action, granting parole, staying a final order of removal, agreeing to voluntary departure, the withdrawal of an application for admission, or other action in lieu of obtaining a formal order of removal.

Volunteers from the law firms listed below, supervised by Legal Aid, quickly prepared these extremely time-sensitive formal requests to the Office of Chief Counsel in Immigration Court on behalf of clients facing removal. These requests

made compelling arguments for taking action other than seeking a removal order utilizing the criteria determined by ICE. If the request is granted, the client can remain in the US and continue to be with and provide for their families.

ICE attorneys exercising this power are advised to give particular care and consideration to matters involving: veterans and members of the U.S. armed forces; long-time lawful permanent residents; minors and elderly individuals; individuals present in the United States since childhood; pregnant or nursing women; victims of domestic violence; trafficking, or other serious crimes; individuals who suffer from a serious mental or physical disability; and individuals with serious health conditions.

Akin Gump
STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

ARNOLD & PORTER
KAYE SCHOLER

CLEARY GOTTLIB

FRIED FRANK

**Hughes
Hubbard
& Reed**

KASOWITZ
KASOWITZ BENSON TORRES & FRIEDMAN LLP

O'Melveny

Proskauer >>

SHEARMAN & STERLING LLP

Simpson
Thacher



Fall/Winter 2016 Immigration Clinics

DACA

Attorneys from WilmerHale and Fried Frank volunteered for clinics in the Fall of 2016 to assist young people in renewing their **DACA** and employment authorization, ensuring that our clients are able to continue living and working in New York City. For many, renewal also assures that they are able to remain with their families.



WILMERHALE® 

FRIED FRANK

ROPES & GRAY

Ropes & Gray, along with volunteer interpreters from HBO Latino, hosted and staffed a **Naturalization** Clinic to assist legal permanent residents in completing applications to become naturalized United States Citizens.

NATURALIZATION

Volunteers Help Nepali Nationals Renew Temporary Protected Status

On June 24, 2015, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security designated Nepal a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) country, due to the devastating earthquake which occurred there in April 2015. Nepali nationals who were in the U.S. without proper immigration status could register for TPS, allowing them to live here lawfully for 18 months, with employment authorization and Social Security numbers. In October 2016, Nepal was re-designated as a TPS country, but provided only a 60 day window in which renewals could be filed.

With the assistance of **Adhikaar**, a Nepali community-based organization in Queens, Legal Aid quickly scheduled numerous clinics staffed by volunteers from the law firms highlighted below.

In addition, Goodwin, joined by volunteers from IBM and Pfizer, held a day-long clinic where over 70 clients were provided with application assistance.

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