

Pro Bono Commitment



Spiegel & McDiarmid LLP provides *pro bono* services to worthy public interest activities to aid individuals and organizations. The goal of the *pro bono* practice is to benefit both the client and the community as a whole. The firm has made a significant commitment of time and resources in support of *pro bono* work, and attorneys receive credit towards their annual billable hours for approved *pro bono* matters.

The firm has been involved in many *pro bono* activities of national significance, including representing a plaintiff in an Federal Communications Commission (FCC) suit that secured the manufacture of cell phones with usability features for the visually impaired, filing an amicus brief in the Supreme Court for the National Insurance Consumers Organization in a case involving sex discrimination in annuity policies, representing Pennsylvania citizens in the Centralia mine fire dispute, obtaining landmark legislation protecting against asbestos in schools, and establishing the obligation of public bodies to accept on a nondiscriminatory basis political advertisements regardless of content. In providing *pro bono* services, the firm seeks to apply its already developed expertise in cases involving issues such as antitrust law, administrative law and First Amendment rights.

Our goals for *pro bono* work are not significantly different from our goals for our practice in general, and we are committed to providing the highest quality legal services possible to *pro bono* clients. We accept *pro bono* cases where we believe that the rights of individuals or groups have been violated, or where a legal responsibility has been ignored with adverse social consequences, subject to the availability of firm resources and potential conflicts with the interests of existing clients. Our goal is that our *pro bono* cases will challenge the attorneys who work on them and provide an opportunity to positively influence the development of the law.

Representative Cases

- Successfully defending the City of Benham, Kentucky and the Benham Power Board against a complaint brought by Kentucky Utilities seeking a judicial declaration that it was entitled to terminate its wholesale power agreement with

Benham. Tom Trauger was inducted into the 2012 Capital *Pro Bono* High Honor Roll by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and Superior Court due, in part, to these efforts;

- Providing legal representation involving an innovative FCC suit under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that secured the manufacture of cell phones with usability features for the visually impaired for our client Dr. Bonnie O'Day. Spiegel & McDiarmid partner Scott Strauss was awarded the 2004 Access Award from the American Foundation for the Blind for his work on this case;
- Filing an *amicus* brief for First Amendment and media law scholars who urged the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia to allow a defamation suit to proceed against Infowars' Alex Jones and others. The brief was featured in a [New York Times article](#);
- Representing a group of public interest organizations, internet companies, and competitive carriers dedicated to protecting an open internet in the court challenge to the FCC's repeal of its prior open internet rules;
- Representing constitutional scholars in an *en banc* proceeding that the panel decision on removal of the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is grounded in neither precedent nor the Constitution;
- Filing an *amicus* brief for constitutional scholars arguing that the court has jurisdiction and that members of Congress have standing to sue over the Constitution's foreign emoluments clause;
- Filing a Supreme Court *amicus* brief on behalf of state and local government associations arguing that district court denials of state-action immunity to governmental antitrust defendants should be immediately appealable;
- Filing a Supreme Court *amicus* brief on behalf of state and local government associations on the meaning of a provision of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which requires that any land use decision by a local government to deny a request to construct or modify personal wireless services facilities must be "in writing";
- Assisting the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) with a police misconduct case in the District of Columbia;
- Assisting public access programmers, the ACLU, and others in protecting First Amendment rights to local access channels on cable television, including a very favorable settlement for a public access programmer in Palestine, Texas;
- Providing legal advice and representation to people affected by HIV on matters involving discrimination, debtor-creditor rights, health insurance, employee benefits, housing and other issues;
- Working to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act on behalf of the deaf;
- Assisting in a class action brought by Haitian farm workers under the antitrust laws, in part, and involving employment discrimination by the sugar industry.

For more information about the *pro bono* program at Spiegel & McDiarmid, please call Scott Strauss or John Sadowski at

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McDIARMID
LLP

202.879.4000.