Haynes and Boone Team Creates Voting FAQs for Feeding America Network of Food Bank Clients

By Michelle Jacobs, Brent Beckert, Purvi Patel Albers, Suzie Trigg, Erin Hennessy, Lauren White, Catherine Robb, Ryan Paulsen, Lindsey Hughes, Arsalan Muhammad, Tania Khatibifar, Carlos Carrasco, Matthew Howes, Mordechai Sutton, Annie Allison, Timothy Piscatelli, Maria Parker, Calmann James Clements, Valisa Berber-Thayer, Morgan Haenchen, Camie Carlock McKee | October 27, 2020

A team of 31 Haynes Boone lawyers partnered with 16 in-house lawyers and legal professionals to voluntarily prepare two dozen sets of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for voters across the nation. The project helped the Feeding America network of U.S. food banks in their non-partisan efforts to educate clients about their voting rights.

The FAQs address a broad range of issues that Feeding America's clients are likely to face in registering to vote and taking the necessary steps to successfully mail in ballots or vote in person.

The voter-education project was no small feat: In just a few weeks, Haynes Boone lawyers and staff worked swiftly with Feeding America to generate about 400 pages of FAQs for 24 states and the nation at large. The documents were shared with food banks across the country and their many clients.

"This effort involved an incredible amount of collaboration to quickly create these FAQs for the Feeding America network of food banks in time for early voting," said Haynes Boone project lead and Partner Michelle Jacobs. "This was an important public service initiative to answer food bank clients' questions about their eligibility to vote and where to vote."

The Feeding America network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs provide food to more than 40 million people.

"Haynes Boone has been an incredible partner this past year in their pro bono assistance to Feeding America and the Feeding America network of food banks," said Alan Dorantes, Chief of Staff and General Counsel for Feeding America. "As Feeding America works to raise awareness on the issue of food insecurity and the its importance in the voting booth, this FAQ prepared by Haynes Boone is essential in helping us meet the important goal of voter awareness."

The effort is a testament to Haynes Boone's deeply engrained culture of civic engagement and pro bono work. One of the firm's primary goals under its 2025 Plan is to "engage deeply in our communities." The firm has been working with Feeding America since March, when Associate Brent Beckert and Partners Purvi Patel Albers and Suzie Trigg began offering pro bono support to the organization. More than 65 firm lawyers have also provided pro bono support to Feeding America on a range of issues, including legal protections that food banks should institute when bringing on volunteers to help with COVID-19 response efforts.

Haynes and Boone's assistance to Feeding America also underscores the firm's collaborative spirit. New York Partner Erin Hennessy, who recently joined the firm, identified and helped organize the voter-education initiative with her friend and client, Rick McMurtry of WarnerMedia. In short order, dozens of lawyers from across the firm were eager to help out.

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Separately, Counsel Paloma Ahmadi, Partner Lauren White and an additional team of attorneys are assisting the Feeding America network of food banks in navigating the myriad of tax, labor and campaign finance laws and regulations that are implicated by the 2020 election season.

The voter FAQ project has involved a cross-office, multi-practice team from the tax, labor and employment, trademark, business litigation, investment management, intellectual property litigation, mergers and acquisitions, and real estate practice groups, as well as Business Development and Marketing. Leading the project were Counsels Catherine Robb, Ryan Paulsen, Lindsey Hughes and Arsalan Muhammad, Associates Tania Khatibifar and Thomas Carroll, along with firm Partners Hennessy, Albers and Beckert.

Other Haynes Boone lawyers who supported the effort included attorney Tyler Hubert, Associates Vikki Marsh, Jessica Berkowitz, Serge Agbre, Carlos Carrasco, Christine Dryden, Matthew Howes, Samuel Drezdzon, Mordechai Sutton, Annie Allison, Timothy Piscatelli, Maria Parker, Magnus Gan, Erica Santamaria, Calmann Clements, Valisa Berber-Thayer, Alex Kirincic, Matthew Rountree, Daley Epstein, Morgan Haenchen, Camie Carlock and Joanna Pearce, and Counsel Angela Kwok.

“This was a great example of the firm’s entrepreneurial spirit, unique culture of client-first service, and teamwork,” Jacobs said. “It was truly a team effort involving lawyers from various practice groups from around the nation.”

The FAQ files can be found on the Haynes Boone website here. Helpful resources in preparing the files included: https://www.usa.gov/voting-laws, https://www.vote.org/election-protection/, and https://www.rockthevote.org/how-to-vote/voting-faqs/.

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