

First Transit, the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, and Haynes Boone Announce First Transit's Initiative to Expand Job Opportunities and Provide Second Chances

February 8, 2023 Greg Van Houten, Michael Freyberg

PRACTICES Autonomous Transportation, Litigation

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, the law firm of Haynes Boone, and First Transit Inc.—a global leader in transportation services—are pleased to announce that First Transit will further develop First Transit's equal opportunity hiring process. The enhanced process will increase its diversity, equity and inclusion objectives and create economic opportunity in the communities in which First Transit operates. Importantly, it will uncover individuals with skills that can help drive success for First Transit and public transportation but who have potentially been underutilized in the transportation industry.

Like many major employers, First Transit conducts background checks to screen whether prospective employees have criminal records as a part of its hiring process. Following discussions with The Washington Lawyers' Committee, Haynes Boone, and an expert consultant, First Transit has thoughtfully renewed and refreshed its background check policies. The new policy relies on rigorous recidivism research to continue to ensure that qualified persons have the opportunity to work and succeed, without being unnecessarily excluded from employment due to prior criminal records that data supports have no impact on their ability to safely do their job. The Washington Lawyers' Committee, Haynes Boone, and First Transit recognize that overly broad policies can result in the exclusion of qualified applicants of color.

"We appreciate the collaboration with The Washington Lawyers' Committee and Haynes Boone. Our ongoing partnership will continue to enhance our background check process, keeping the safety of our passengers and employees at the core of everything we do." – Brad Thomas, President of First Transit.

"Job applicants with arrest and conviction records deserve a fair chance to work, but often face roadblocks in obtaining employment. First Transit's work with an expert will ensure that its background check policy is a legitimate screening tool and furthers opportunities for qualified job seekers." – Joanna Wasik, Supervisory Counsel at the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

"We look forward to continuing to work with First Transit and the Washington Lawyers Committee to develop a hiring process that meets First Transit's safety needs and its diversity, equity and inclusion objectives, and that creates economic opportunity in the communities in which First Transit operates." – [Greg Van Houten](#), Associate and Washington, D.C. Office Pro Bono Chair, Haynes Boone

First Transit has been a leader in public and private transportation services for over 60 years. It operates in 335 locations, carrying more than 350 million passengers annually throughout the United States and Canada.

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs combats discrimination and recognizes the central role that systemic racism, including in the criminal legal system, plays in sustaining inequity. The Committee partners with individuals directly impacted by the criminal legal system to break down barriers to economic opportunity for those with arrest and conviction records.

Haynes Boone is an international corporate law firm with 19 offices, spanning Texas, New York, California, Charlotte, Chicago, Denver, Washington, D.C., London, Mexico City and Shanghai, providing a full spectrum of legal services in energy, technology, financial services and private equity. With about 650 lawyers, Haynes Boone is ranked among the largest U.S.-based firms by *The National Law Journal*, *The American Lawyer* and *The Lawyer*. It was recognized in the BTI Consulting Group's 2022 "A-Team" report, which identifies the law firms that in-house counsel commend for providing superior client service.