

Haynes and Boone Lawyers Featured in Law360 Pro Bono Spotlight on Border Efforts

July 10, 2019 Brent Beckert, Michael Scanlon

Law360 profiled Haynes Boone lawyers in a Pro Bono Spotlight about the firm's efforts to reunite a Salvadoran father who had been detained and separated from his children after seeking asylum at the border.

The client, "Mr. A," fled his home country last year with his two young children, fearing for their lives. He was separated from his children for seven months, until he was released from custody on May 7. The Haynes Boone team represented Mr. A in administrative and legal proceedings.

The team included Partner Emily Westridge Black, Counsel Luis Campos, and Associates Paloma Ahmadi, [Brent Beckert](#), Liz Dankers, Nick Nash, Joanna Pearce and [Michael Scanlon](#). Mr. A's legal team also included John Amaya, a counsel at Harris, Wiltshire & Grannis LLP and a former Deputy Chief of Staff of ICE from 2015-2017.

Here is an excerpt:

In January, while the federal government was shut down, the firm's team filed a complaint in Washington, D.C., federal court asserting that Mr. A's constitutional due process rights had been violated and that he had been falsely accused of gang affiliation. The team asked the court to reunify the family, grant him a new credible fear interview and block the government from deporting him while he pursues his asylum claim.

Among the challenges the attorneys faced was proving that Mr. A was not a gang member while the government refused to produce evidence that they claimed supported their accusation, Partner Emily Westridge Black said.

"We had to rebut an allegation in the dark, and the team did a great job of pulling together affidavits from Mr. A's family members, from his employer, photographic evidence of the lack of gang tattoos," she said. "We were trying to do everything we could to rebut this amorphous and unsupported allegation."

The court consequently granted the attorneys' emergency motions later that month.

When Mr. A showed up for his second credible fear interview, he was accompanied by counsel, which made all the difference in such an "intimidating context," the firm's Luis Campos said.

In such interviews, which are usually a brief 15 to 20 minutes including translation services, sometimes immigrants may not understand a question from the asylum officer and stumble. But Campos said that he serves as an intermediary.

"The role of an attorney, beyond emotional support, is to facilitate communication between the examiner and the individual," he said. ...

To read the full article, click [here](#). (Subscription required)

To read more about the case, click [here](#).