Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell

Pro Bono

We approach pro bono with the same relentless commitment we bring to paying client work. Our focus on impact litigation and firmwide participation has earned national recognition. Our commitment to the principles of opportunity, participation and commitment drive our success.

Opportunity - Initiative is expected and supported here. Our program brings together people from across the firm, each contributing distinct skills and passion to help those who need it most.

Participation - Everyone does their part. We log more than 50 pro bono hours per lawyer annually, exceeding 75% of firms surveyed in the 2024 Best Law Firms survey. In 2025, 97% of associates did pro bono work despite extremely busy practices.

Commitment - Firm leadership supports pro bono programmatically–with a 100-hour pro bono credit–and opportunistically, as when we sent three lawyers to Alaska for a three-week trial to protect foster children, or dispatched lead lawyers and summer clerks alike to Texas for a fight against prison heat

Punching Above Our Weight

97% of associates did pro bono work in 2025

7,837

7,837 pro bono hours donated by lawyers, law clerks, paralegals in 2025

50+

50+ pro bono hours per lawyer on average a year, exceeding the per lawyer contributions of 75% of firms, based on a Best Law Firms survey

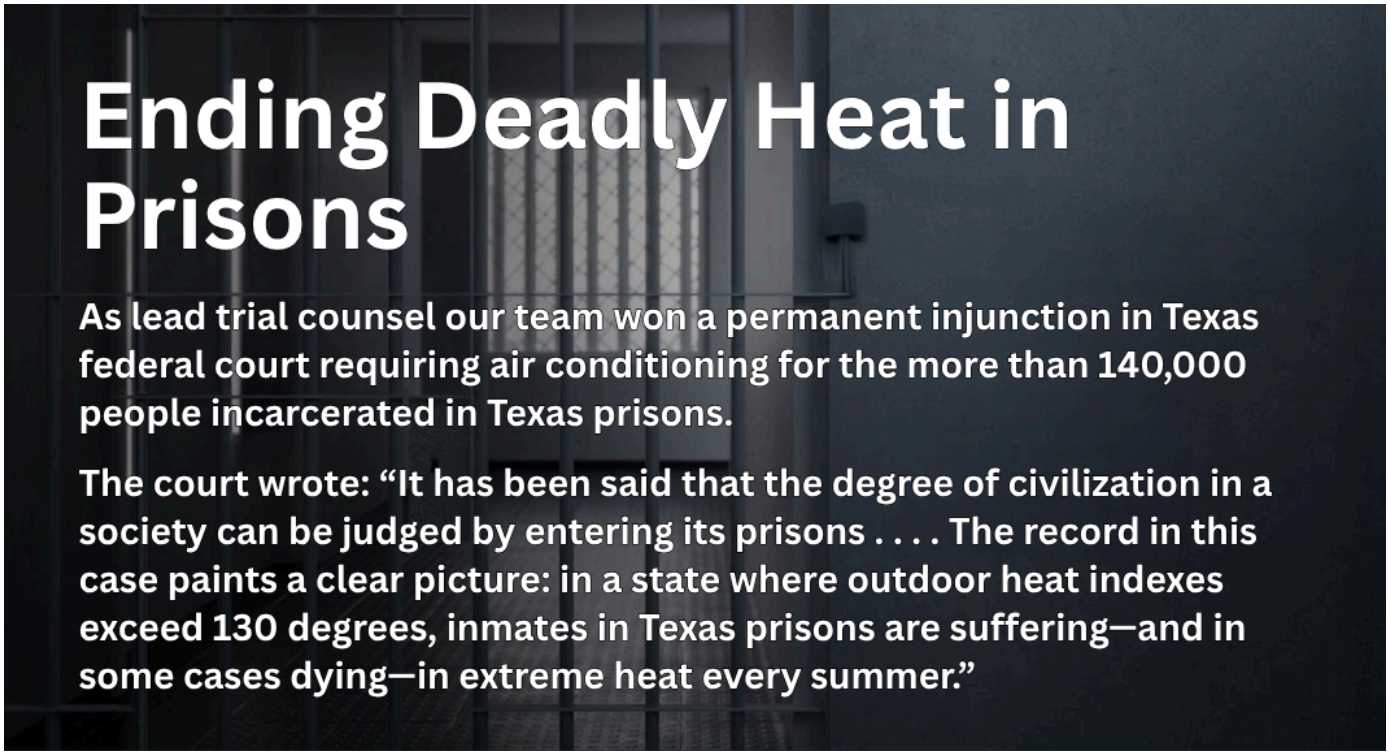
#6

Ranked #6 in Law360 Pulse's "Pro Bono Leaders" among midsize firms

"Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell has brought the level of rigor and excellence one would expect in the highest-stakes commercial litigation, and they have delivered it in service of the public good."

– Dr. Amite Dominick, Founder of the Texas Prisons Community Advocates

Impact Litigation



Upholding the Law Regarding Warrantless Arrests

In October 2025, a federal judge in the District of Colorado issued a preliminary injunction enjoining ICE agents from making warrantless arrests in Colorado without first making the statutorily-required probable-cause determination of the arrest subject's flight risk. ICE appealed to the Tenth Circuit. At the request of the ACLU of Colorado, we drafted the answer brief to ICE's appeal.

Partner Organizations

TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

ABC A BETTER CHILDHOOD

Colorado Poverty Law Project

ACLU Colorado

ROCKY MOUNTAIN VETERANS ADVOCACY PROJECT

RMIAN rocky mountain immigrant advocacy network

Cases

Served as lead trial counsel and won a permanent injunction in Texas federal court requiring that the State of Texas provide air conditioning in its prisons statewide. This was the first extreme heat case to go to trial against a statewide prison system, and the injunction will remedy unconstitutional conditions of extreme heat for many tens of thousands of current and future inmates.

Representing foster children in Louisiana, West Virginia, and Alaska in class actions to compel state agencies to fix broken foster care systems.

Won a preliminary injunction for plaintiffs suing the Elizabeth (Colorado) School District over a book ban violating free speech protections. We are partnering with the ACLU of Colorado and representing students of the school district, the Rocky Mountain NAACP State Conference CO-MT-WY, and The Authors Guild.

Secured a historic $1.1 million settlement in a civil rights case for a pro bono client stabbed 43 times in prison.

Drafted an amicus brief for the University of Colorado Law School's Korey Wise Innocence Project, which successfully convinced the Colorado Supreme Court to revisit the standard for appointing indigent pro se criminal defendants post-conviction counsel.

Won a pro bono victory lifting the unconstitutional banishment of a former Woodland Park School District employee from school board meetings and other property. The case restored our client's First Amendment rights and earned national media coverage.

Secured a settlement for a pro bono client who sued her landlord for wrongful eviction and breach of contract.

Represented a civil rights organization in certiorari and merits-stage briefing before the U.S. Supreme Court in a Fourth Amendment case with national implications.

Prepared and submitted an amicus brief for the Texas Civil Rights Project to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit addressing municipal and public officer liability issues raised by challenge to Texas S.B. 12.

Secured a civil rights settlement in a pro bono case for a child with autism.

Won a pro bono appeal that included an award of military disability benefits for a 79-year-old veteran whose claim had previously been denied.

Contacts

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