

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Laws
alone
are
not
enough**

LCR

**LAWYERS FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
BOSTON**

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Laws
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Mission & History

Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) fosters equal opportunity and fights discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants. We engage in creative and courageous legal action, education, and advocacy in collaboration with law firms and community partners. Our organization is a leading hub for litigation, advocacy, and resistance to discrimination.

Our organization was founded in 1968 in the midst of riots, the aftermath of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the findings of the Kerner Commission report concluding that the nation was “moving toward two societies. One black, one white – separate and unequal.”

With funding and *pro bono* legal services contributed by Boston law firms, the organization became the first of eight independently funded and governed local affiliates of the Washington, D.C.-based Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a national organization formed at the request of President John F. Kennedy to enlist the private bar in providing free legal representation to address racial discrimination. In 1973, we became the first *pro bono* project of the Boston Bar Association (BBA) and the only Lawyers’ Committee in the country directly connected with a major bar association. Although the organization is now separately

incorporated with its own 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, we continue to maintain strong ties to the BBA and the private bar in Boston.

Membership by private law firms still forms the working foundation of our organization. Member law firms fund a significant part of our annual operating expenses and provide millions of dollars in *pro bono* legal services by working closely with the organization. In this way, for decades, we have harnessed the resources and talent of Boston’s leading law firms to secure and protect the civil rights of Massachusetts residents.

Over the years, our organization has also grown, adding new projects and initiatives to respond to the changing face of discrimination. While working closely with an ever-increasing number of diverse community partners, we remain true to our core mission to challenge and eradicate all forms of discrimination.

In 2018, we celebrated our 50th anniversary and we also rebranded. The U.S. Congress marked this landmark occasion with a Congressional Resolution honoring our organization and 50 years of impactful work. The Boston City Council also issued a resolution declaring October 18 as Civil Rights and Economic Justice Day in Boston.

The struggle continues, but the future is bright. *Lawyers for Civil Rights* will continue advancing justice and equality for decades to come.



Message from the Executive Director

In the current climate, Lawyers for Civil Rights is a hub for advocacy, litigation, and resistance to discrimination.

Every day, our legal warriors are in the trenches litigating groundbreaking cases, engaging in innovative policy advocacy, leading comprehensive community education and outreach, spearheading community economic development, and partnering with law firms and community groups to further the cause of civil rights. We bring people together to promote justice and equal opportunity.

From desegregating Boston’s public schools and public housing projects to our ongoing work to eradicate discrimination in schools and the workplace, we are a catalyst for equality. We are building on our rich legacy, expanding our work to make it even more diverse, inclusive, visible, and impactful.

Our staff, Board of Directors, law firm partners, community allies, and supporters are working in concert to move the struggle for civil rights from the streets to the courtroom. Together, we are providing free legal services to individuals and small businesses in communities that are often deprived of justice because of barriers such as race, language, and national origin.

Here’s to moving forward—without fail and without fear.

Iván Espinoza-Madriral, Esq.
Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)

Pandemic Response

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to dominate our clients' lives in 2021. Low-income Black and Latinx families faced the harshest consequences of the pandemic: unemployment, housing instability, and a lack of access to vaccinations and vaccine education. LCR's community-focused pandemic response prioritized the needs of those populations that were hit hardest by the public health crisis. In collaboration with our pro bono partners and community organizations, LCR was at the forefront of the fight for rebuilding our communities in a just, equitable manner.

Ensuring Vaccine Equity

LCR has been at the forefront of vaccine equity to ensure that access to a COVID-19 vaccine and to vaccine education reaches all corners of the Commonwealth, particularly marginalized and vulnerable populations. Working hand-in-hand with community health centers, we offered bilingual registration and culturally sensitive education at our vaccine sites and canvassed in communities to encourage individuals to get vaccinated. In partnership with the **Veronica Robles Cultural Center**, the **City of Boston**, the **Mexican, Colombian and Honduran** consulates, and volunteer attorneys from firms like **Choate Hall & Stewart**, LCR helped ensure vaccination for well over 5,000 individuals in neighborhoods that had the highest rates of transmission during the peak of the pandemic. Vaccine education has proven to be critical when battling vaccine hesitancy and misinformation. For example, in collaboration with the **Greater Boston Latinx Network**, LCR created and distributed vaccine information to migrant communities who were fearful of the implications of getting vaccinated on their immigration status.

Preserving Housing And Preventing Homelessness

Housing instability became a particularly salient concern as our client communities grappled with reduced hours or losing their employment entirely. Without a stable source of income, families began to face the threat of eviction and foreclosure. In response, LCR launched a pro bono initiative to connect low-income households who were behind on rent payments and facing mounting housing expenses with volunteers who worked with families to navigate the legal process and secure RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition) assistance.

LCR trained nearly 100 volunteers ranging from attorneys at our partner law firms to law students. With pro bono support from **Morrison & Foerster**, **Anderson & Kreiger**, **WilmerHale** and companies such as **Bain Capital**, LCR was able to help hundreds of households in Massachusetts stay in their homes while they stabilized their lives. Benefits secured totaled over half a million dollars cumulatively.

Securing Unemployment Benefits For Families Hit Hardest

The pandemic prompted an unprecedented rise in unemployment which, for our client communities, meant looming economic instability. As the need for financial relief grew, so did the confusion and frustration around the complex application for unemployment benefits. LCR spearheaded a pro bono initiative to connect affected individuals with volunteers who helped clients navigate the legal process. LCR attorneys provided training and support to a corps of volunteers, who were able to help our clients keep a roof over their head and food on the table.

In addition to providing direct services to those applying for unemployment, LCR pressed for systemic changes to streamline the unemployment process and ensure individuals were not unlawfully excluded from benefits. For example, we identified a paperwork requirement that was barring countless recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) from receiving unemployment; demanded a change in practice; and successfully secured it. This win brought stability and peace of mind to countless families who are often forgotten when government policies are put into place.



LCR joined forces with community partners and consulates to help vaccinate over 5000 people focusing on immigrant communities in East Boston. The vaccination clinics were hosted by the Veronica Robles Cultural Center.

Police Accountability

Holding Police Departments Accountable for Racial Bias

In July 2021, LCR and **WilmerHale** filed *Marvin Henry v. Town of Needham*, a federal lawsuit seeking compensatory and punitive damages and injunctive relief on behalf of a Black father of four who was racially profiled, handcuffed, arrested, and detained for nearly 45 minutes in downtown Needham on false suspicion of shoplifting, only steps from his place of employment. Despite acknowledging that Mr. Henry was entirely innocent of any wrongdoing—a fact underscored by subsequent internal affairs and independent investigations—the Town has refused to institute any policy, personnel, or training reforms that would prevent this kind of discrimination from occurring in the future or to compensate Mr. Henry for his dignitary harms. The case is currently pending in federal court.

LCR is demanding similar accountability from police departments across the Commonwealth. In 2021, we hired a new Staff Attorney to focus on police accountability and help meet the community need for legal support when speaking truth to police authority. This year, LCR has:

- Working with **Ropes & Gray, Nutter McClennen & Fish** and **Jones Day**, investigated and reported on police budgets of cities across the Commonwealth to bring much-needed transparency and analysis to the community.
- Empowered communities by conducting know-your-rights trainings to give people practical advice on interacting with police. For these trainings, we partnered with community groups such as the **New Bedford NAACP** and **Taiwanese American Professionals** and presented in Worcester’s low-income housing developments.
- Continued to press the Massachusetts State Police on their treatment of Black and Latinx drivers through three internal affairs investigations.
- With pro bono support from **Birnbaum & Godkin**, continued to demand transparency from the Boston Police Department through a lawsuit seeking reform of BPD’s process for responding to public records requests.
- Advised on two commissions formed by new Massachusetts Police Reform Act, the Commissions on Civil Service and Qualified Immunity.
- Along with **Fick & Marx LLP**, continued the fight for justice for **Terrence Coleman**, a young Black man who was murdered by police after his mother requested an ambulance for him.
- Partnered with **Seyfarth Shaw LLP** to support two young people held at gunpoint by police for “driving while black.”

“As the father of four Black sons, my story is about more than just that encounter with police. I want my sons to have every opportunity — not spend their lives looking over their shoulders, worried they’ll be harassed, humiliated or handcuffed because of the color of their skin.”

—**Mr. Henry**
Client in LCR Litigation against Needham Police



LCR maintained active live and virtual programming in 2021 to protect and support our communities:

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: INTERACTING WITH THE POLICE



Join us in a conversation with Lawyers for Civil Rights and the NAACP New Bedford Branch where we will hear about the experiences of people of color and the police.

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

5:30–7:30PM

NAACP Branch

95 Cedar Street
New Bedford, MA 02740



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NAACP of New Bedford
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LCR's virtual programs have been highly effective. They have attracted hundreds of community members, and once posted on social media are receiving thousands of views.

Voting Rights & Redistricting

LCR continued our focus on Voting Rights Act litigation, aimed at ensuring that unfair electoral systems do not illegally dilute the vote of communities of color.

Securing Equal Voting Opportunity

In February, along with co-counsel from **Brown Rudnick**, we filed a federal voting rights lawsuit against the City of Worcester, on behalf of Latinx and Black voters to challenge the City’s all “at large” method of electing School Committee members. In an at-large system, 51% of the electorate can control 100% of the seats 100% of the time: an unfair result that dilutes the vote of communities of color in diverse communities.

For example, although Worcester is on the cusp of becoming majority-minority, and students of color account for over two-thirds of the student body in the Worcester Public Schools, the School Committee has been all white for virtually all of Worcester’s history. Within weeks of filing, the City announced that it would not fight the lawsuit, and the matter was formally settled in October 2021. A more fair and inclusive district-based system will go into effect starting in 2023.



Photo by Element5 Digital from Pexels

Our work in Worcester follows our pathbreaking litigation in Lowell, which we litigated with **Ropes & Gray**, to dismantle a similarly unfair electoral system there. This November, Lowell saw its first elections under the new district-based system, with historic numbers of candidates of color running for—and winning—office.

Leveraging our work in Lowell and Worcester, we have also secured voluntary Voting Rights Act compliance from a number of jurisdictions. After we wrote a demand letter to Everett, MA challenging their all at-large system of electing City Council and School Committee, the City announced that it would change to a district-based system in 2021. We continue to work with community groups such as the **Haverhill Latino Coalition** and **Revere Youth In Action** to press for similar changes in Haverhill and Revere.

As part of the **Election Modernization Coalition**, we also pressed for statewide changes to ensure equal voting opportunity, to make pandemic-era reforms like expanded early voting and vote-by-mail permanent.

Redistricting Efforts Lead the Way for Equal Voting Representation

As 2020 Census data numbers were released, LCR worked in active partnership with the **Drawing Democracy Coalition** to advocate for our client communities in the once-a-decade re-districting process, where Massachusetts legislators draw district lines for State and federal elected offices. Our advocacy resulted in the creation of 13 new “majority minority” districts in the State House of Representatives, and 3 new districts on the Senate side. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) residents will now make up the majority of 33 House districts and 6 Senate districts, paving the way for more diverse representation in the decade to come.

Reaching that result took sustained advocacy and pressure. Through countless hours of community meetings, our coalition helped figure out where district lines made sense. We worked with experts such as **Prof. Maxwell Palmer of Boston University** to analyze voting trends and draw sample maps. When we had arrived at a “unity map” that brought these community voices together into one map, we pressed legislators to adopt it. Throughout, LCR was instrumental in providing the legal analysis—and the legal pressure—that led to the ultimate, successful result. With days to spare before the maps were finalized, we sent a demand letter to legislators outlining why their failure to take more aggressive action—particularly in creating a majority-minority Senate district around Brockton—would risk liability under the Voting Rights Act. With the Boston Globe and other key media outlets reporting on our legal pressure, legislators reversed course and agreed to create the district that we had been advocating for with our community partners.

"A legislature that purposefully avoids recognizing a community of interest where people of color dominate, out of exaggerated fear of being accused of racial gerrymandering, risks liability for that stance."



In 2021, LCR joined forces with the Drawing Democracy Coalition and our community partners to advance more fair and equitable line drawing as part of redistricting scoring major victories.

LCR's voting rights work has been critical to protect and expand the rights of people of color in Lowell, Worcester and Haverhill.

Immigrant Rights

LCR continues its groundbreaking advocacy on behalf of immigrants. 2021 has seen major changes in the treatment of immigrants that LCR has demanded through forceful legal action.



LCR's legal warriors joining forces with Haitian-Americans United

Standing Up For Families Fleeing Haiti

In October, we filed a civil rights complaint on behalf of **Haitian-Americans United (HAU)** and its members, including 48 individuals who fled life-threatening conditions in Haiti, and who survived unconscionable mistreatment under the custody of federal officials at the U.S. border. Our complaint was filed with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and the agency's Inspector General demanding an immediate investigation into the heinous actions perpetrated by federal officials at the border. The complaint outlined alarming facts about

the lived experiences of Black Haitian families under DHS custody at the border: families being detained in unsafe and overcrowded conditions, including in a "camp" underneath a bridge in Texas; individuals including pregnant women being denied medical care, leading to at least one miscarriage; families denied blankets or sufficient food and water; prolonged detention; and a near-complete lack of language access. Separately, we also have requested immigration relief for these and other families fleeing desperate conditions in Haiti.

FACT-FINDING MISSION TO THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

Lawyers for Civil Rights embarked on a fact-finding mission to the U.S.-Mexico border where we visited community-based organizations, shelters, and soup kitchens to observe current conditions. Our delegation met with community leaders, clergy, human rights advocates, and non-governmental organizations— including the **Kino Border Initiative**, **Casa de Misericordia**, the **Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project**, **Justice for our Neighbors**, the **Immigration Law Clinic of the university of Arizona's College of Law**, and the **Galilee Center**. After witnessing deportations firsthand and having conversations with stakeholders who are supporting refugees displaced by violence in their home countries, LCR released a groundbreaking report detailing the civil rights abuses that refugees are confronting at the U.S.-Mexico border.

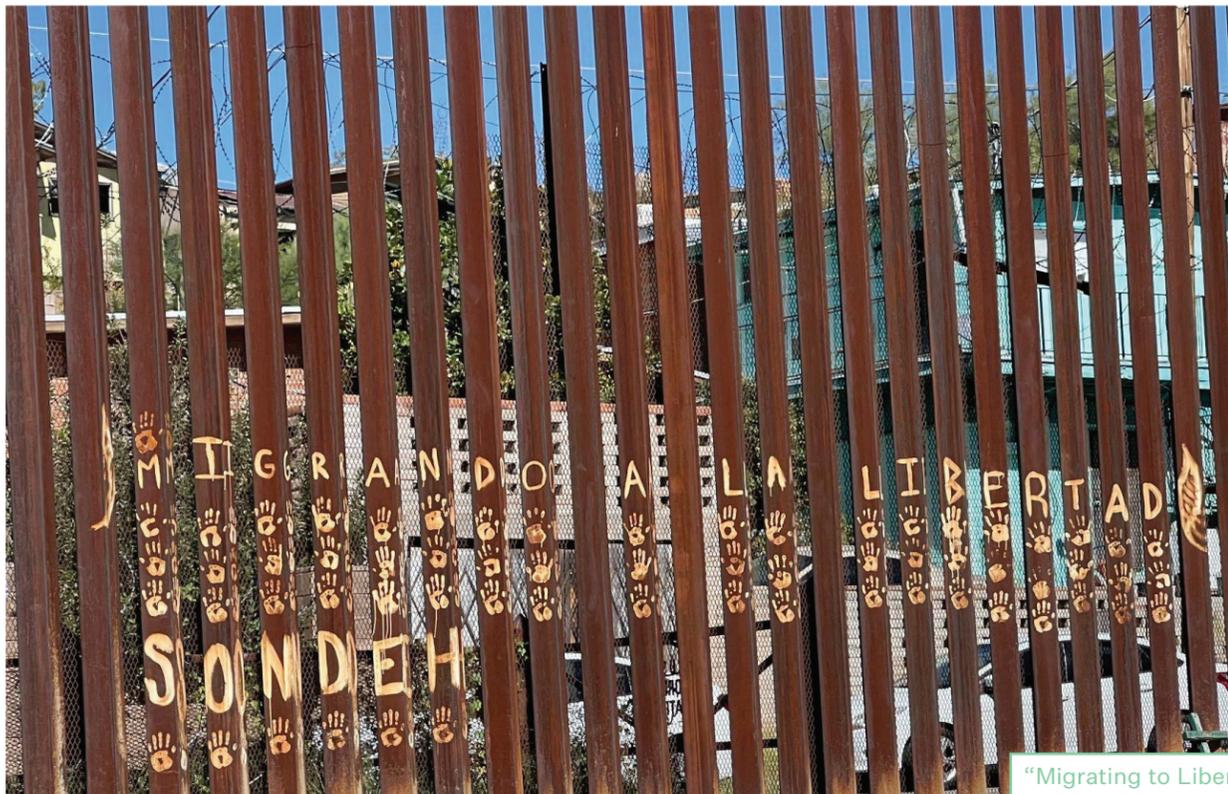


Mural of José Antonio Elena Rodríguez, a 16-year old boy shot and killed in his hometown of Nogales, Sonora.
PHOTO CREDIT: SILVANA GÓMEZ

Mural of José Antonio Elena Rodríguez, a 16-year old boy who was fatally shot by a Border Patrol agent at the U.S-Mexico border in Nogales, Sonora.

PHOTO CREDIT: SILVANA GÓMEZ





"Migrating to Liberty." Artwork painted on the Mexican side of the border wall at the U.S.-Mexico border in Nogales, Sonora.



"Our dreams of justice are not stopped by any wall." Artwork on the border wall between Mexico and the U.S.



Silvana Gómez and Iván Espinoza-Madrigal visiting the Kino Border Initiative during LCR's fact finding mission to the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Limiting Entanglement With Federal Immigration Enforcement

The Bristol County House of Correction (BCHOC), overseen by Sheriff Thomas Hodgson, has been notorious for its inhumane and unconstitutional treatment of civil immigration detainees. LCR’s ground-breaking COVID-19 federal class action lawsuit *Savino v Souza*, brought with tremendous pro bono support from **WilmerHale** and with the **Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic at Yale Law School**, resulted in BCHOC being ordered to significantly reduce the number of immigrants being held in dangerous and unsanitary conditions—down to 7 individuals when our case settled. Within days of the settlement, the Biden-Harris Administration decided to close the facility down entirely, ensuring that Bristol County Sheriff Thomas Hodgson can no longer abuse immigration detainees in his custody.

At the same time, LCR, partnering with **Rights Behind Bars**, has continued the innovative lawsuit in *Cofield v. McDonald*, using a taxpayer statute to challenge the legality of a sheriff’s contracting with ICE to undertake immigration enforcement. These so-called “287(g) agreements” are entered into between ICE and local law enforcement, purporting to give local law enforcement the authority to enforce federal immigration law. They entangle local law enforcement with federal immigration; are costly to taxpayers, since the costs are borne entirely by the local agency; and harm public safety by undermining individuals’ trust in local law enforcement, making it less likely that victims and witnesses will come forward.

After we secured a favorable preliminary ruling in court, Plymouth County decided to terminate its ICE agreement. LCR has begun advocacy to challenge the last sheriff’s office still engaged with ICE enforcement: Barnstable County.

Much of our Trump-era litigation began winding down in 2021, as the Biden-Harris Administration rolled back policies we had challenged. In *Ryan v. ICE*, LCR and **Goodwin LLP** had demanded an end to the practice of ICE enforcement targeting those entering courthouses. By May 2021, the government had changed their directive and ended the practice. Similarly, our case challenging rescission of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians, Salvadorans, and Hondurans, which we are co-counseling with **Choate, Hall & Stewart**, appears headed towards a favorable resolution with the new Administration.

Fighting Anti-Immigrant Discrimination

- LCR is continuing the fight to protect immigrants in other ways as well:
- In partnership with the **Boston College Law Clinic**, LCR filed suit on behalf of Ms. Ortega, who was repeatedly assaulted by officials at Boston Logan Airport through invasive and unconstitutional body cavity searches. Since the filing, immigration officials have ceased stopping Ms. Ortega during her travels.
- With pro bono support from **Outten & Golden**, we continue to fight in *Juarez v. SoFi* for the rights of immigrants to get or refinance loans on an equal basis.
- With pro bono support from **Latham & Watkins**, we secured substantial compensation for our client through a successful settlement of a lawsuit (*Rivas v. Hodgson*) involving allegations that the Bristol County Sheriff’s Office unlawfully held our client in custody.

Fighting Family Separation

In July 2021, LCR and **Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice** filed a complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), alleging the widespread failure of the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families to provide language access to the Limited English Proficient (LEP) families they serve. This failure directly results in the wrongful separation of LEP families; when the state agency fails to prioritize language access, parents are unable to comprehend or meaningfully participate in its processes and so face an increased likelihood of separation compared to their English-speaking counterparts. The complaint was filed on behalf of the **Greater Boston Latino Network, Haitian-Americans United**, and Jane Doe, an LEP mother who was not provided with an interpreter or documents translated into Spanish during the course of an investigation. **Massachusetts Law Reform Institute** provided a support letter and the **Committee for Public Counsel Services** identified numerous witnesses willing to speak to investigators about the systemic denial of language access—and attendant national origin discrimination—occurring every day across the Commonwealth. The HHS investigation is ongoing.

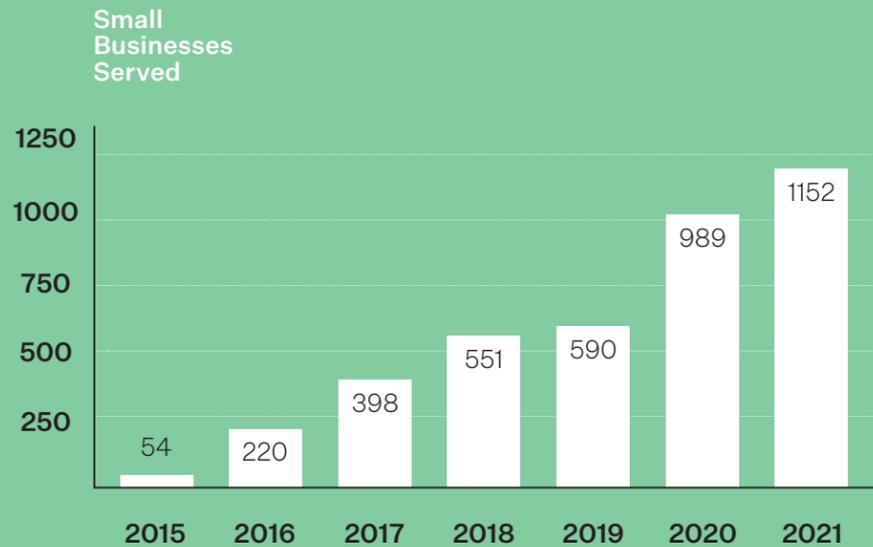
Exposing the Department of Homeland Security’s Role in Chilling Immigrant Families

We continue to litigate a FOIA lawsuit challenging the federal government’s refusal to produce information to LCR relating to a draft “public charge” regulation, which was leaked in 2019 generating fear in immigrant communities.

So far, LCR and co-counsel **Hinshaw & Culbertson** have successfully rebuffed the government’s claim that a “contractor corollary” should shield from public view communications with a proposed contractor who wanted to work with USCIS on expanding the public charge regulation to exclude more low-income immigrants of color from legal permanent residency. LCR has already received hundreds of pages of documents from the agency. Partial summary judgment briefing concluded in August 2021.

BizGrow

LCR | BizGrow provides minority, immigrant, and low-income entrepreneurs and small business owners with free legal assistance, technical support, and education. BizGrow furthers our mission of economic empowerment in traditionally disenfranchised communities by assisting entrepreneurs in developing sustainable businesses and achieving economic self-sufficiency. Through free legal clinics, business workshops, and individual representations we bridge the opportunity gap, making the connections that allow our entrepreneurs to achieve their dreams.



Celebrating 20 years in 2021

2021 marked BizGrow’s 20th anniversary. We started BizGrow (then known as the Economic Justice Project) in 2001. The program was initiated by former staff member **Laurie Hauber**, with instrumental support from **Scott Harshbarger (Casner & Edwards)** and inspired by the successful model created by our sister organization,

Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. With the significant commitment of many LCR’s Member Firms and Board Members—particularly **Anna Dodson (Goodwin)**, **Susan Mazur (WilmerHale/Latham & Watkins)**, and **John Regier (Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.)**, along with several community

partners—the project served over 500 entrepreneurs in its first year alone. Through generous support from **The Boston Foundation** and donors such as the family of LCR’s co-founder **Gaspard D’Andelot Belin**, the project has steadily grown to serve more entrepreneurs across the Commonwealth each year.

COVID-19 Response

In 2021, BizGrow met the demands of the ongoing pandemic head on. To continue to serve our clients, we expanded our remote programming and have been able to serve more small businesses around the Commonwealth than ever before. **This year, BizGrow connected nearly 1,200 entrepreneurs with the necessary legal support and guidance through our robust virtual support offerings.** Our innovative virtual programming allowed us to reach small businesses around Massachusetts that previously were too remote to partake in our workshops, clinics, weekly office hours and our full day BizGrow conference.

BizGrow’s presence on the ground through community partnerships and member engagement gives us the unique opportunity to identify the challenges small businesses face on a day-to-day basis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many entrepreneurs faced growing economic instability that threatened their small businesses. BizGrow teamed up with community partners to provide the necessary economic support for small businesses located in the communities and neighborhoods that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, with the continued support of **Point32Health** and anonymous donors, BizGrow was able to award \$60,000 to small businesses owned and operated by women, people of color, and immigrants.

Virtual Programs

BizGrow strives to ensure that entrepreneurs have the necessary resources to help their small business thrive at every stage. From entity formation to winding down a small business, our virtual workshops provide the necessary background and information to successfully own and operate a small business. Led by community leaders and field experts, BizGrow’s programming offers both educational enrichment and stellar networking opportunities for entrepreneurs. With the pro bono support from law firms such as **Goodwin, Goulston & Storrs, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C., Nixon Peabody, Ropes & Gray**, and **WilmerHale** we are able to provide resources and support that make complex but important topics accessible to our clients.

In addition to our expert-led workshops, we provide one-on-one support for entrepreneurs during our biweekly clinics. Our clients get the opportunity to have their questions answered by an attorney with expertise in that field who can provide thorough advice and guidance on how to move forward. Through our partnership with firms such as **Goodwin and Morgan Lewis**, and community partners such as the **Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center**, our clients are able to speak with experts on important issues like intellectual property, contracts, employment, real estate, and taxes. These connections and resources allow our clients to have the necessary support in a timely manner in order to accomplish their goals.

Technical Support

BizGrow continues to support food entrepreneurs through its innovative accelerator, **FoodBiz 101**. FoodBiz 101 is a 13-week accelerator designed to support aspiring food entrepreneurs through the process of launching their small food business. In partnership with **CommonWealth Kitchen** and **Goodwin**, we offer programming to cover all aspects of owning and operating a food business. From entity formation and contracts to food labeling and recipe scaling, our cohort gains first hand experience from industry experts during our virtual sessions. This year, we were able to host an outdoors Pitch Night in person while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Participants presented their business concept at its current stage to industry experts, attorneys, loan officers, friends, and family.

Free Individual Legal Representation

Resilient small business owners continue to open and expand their businesses amid the pandemic. Through the pro bono support of our partner law firms, we match small business owners with attorneys who provide them with free transactional legal assistance to ensure that their small business grows. Common small business legal issues include entity formation, contracts, intellectual property, and tax issues. Many of our law firm partners provide intensive one-on-one legal service to our clients, including **Krokidas & Bluestein, Morgan Lewis, Brown Rudnick, Goulston & Storrs, Preti Flaherty, Goodwin, Foley Hoag, Nixon Peabody, Latham & Watkins, and Archstone Law Group.**

The BizGrow Conference

On July 22, we held our annual small business conference: **The BizGrow Conference**. The BizGrow Conference is a full-day conference geared specifically towards minority, immigrant, and women entrepreneurs and small business owners. Due to the pandemic, this year's conference was again held virtually, but that did not stop our amazing entrepreneurs and pro bono volunteers. Attendance increased substantially from the previous year with a record 300 attendees. Our conference was made possible with the generous support of our sponsors and over 150 pro bono attorneys and legal volunteers. At the conference, we offered eighteen different workshops covering a wide array of business and legal issues with a particular focus on running a business during a pandemic. Each attendee also had the opportunity to meet one-on-one using virtual breakout rooms with attorneys who specialize in small business legal issues.

BizGrow in Action



Ricardo and Kamala, owners of Ricky's Hot Stuff and winner of this year's FoodBiz 101 Pitch Night, in collaboration with Commonwealth Kitchen.

Fighting Discrimination In Employment, Housing & Accommodations

In 2021, LCR handled discrimination cases across a range of different areas: employment, public accommodations, housing, and public contracting.

Expanding Employment Opportunities

We are expanding our advocacy for diversity in the Boston Police Department to highlight similar barriers that exist for civilian employees. Working with co-counsel from **Zalkind, Duncan & Bernstein LLP**, we represent two women of color civilian employees of the Boston Police Department, identifying a pattern and practice of discriminatory employment practices such as failure to promote and discriminatory distribution of overtime hours. One of the cases has settled, and the second is proceeding.

In our long-running case of *Jones v. City of Boston* that we are continuing to litigate with **WilmerHale**, the City of Boston finally abandoned the scientifically unreliable “hair drug test” that it used for years for drug screening. As numerous courts have now held, the test suffers from numerous flaws and disparately impacts Black individuals. We are still seeking justice for a number of such individuals who were wrongfully terminated.

Finally, we continue to provide legal representation to community organizations that advocate for greater diversity in public workplaces. Through work with the **Boston Society of Vulcans** (firefighters), **MAMLEO** (law enforcement), **BEAM** (educators) and **Massachusetts Minority Court Officers Association**, we have pushed state and local agencies for greater transparency in hiring and promotions. Due to our expertise in civil service we were invited to serve on the Civil Service Task Force.

Protecting Equal Rights In Accommodations

LCR resolved a public accommodations discrimination matter with a public transportation entity in Middlesex County involving a Black immigrant patron. The settlement included payment of damages to the patron, as well as a commitment by the public transportation entity to enhance its current training by conducting training on the subject of implicit bias and anti-discrimination practices. The settlement included a provision that the public transportation entity did not admit to liability.

On a parallel track, LCR represented the family of a young Black child who had a tent strap wrapped around his neck at summer camp. The family and the camp resolved this matter amicably through a commitment to reforms to the camp’s policies and procedures; constructive and meaningful conversations on race and institutional responsibility; and a focus on the continued health and happiness of the child who was directly affected.

LCR has been actively fighting against hate crimes through dedicated advocacy and community education.

DISRUPTING DISCRIMINATION

Anti-Asian Violence

Working-class Asian American women were murdered in Atlanta. This expert panel discussion will focus on the reality of anti-Asian violence and invisibility in America and share legal, policy, and community solutions.

APRIL 13, 2021 @ 5:30 PM

BETHANY LI
Asian Outreach Unit
Greater Boston Legal Services

SHIRLEY LEUNG
Columnist and Associate Editor
Boston Globe

LAUREN SAMPSON
Staff Attorney
Lawyers for Civil Rights

RSVP: bit.ly/antiasianviolencewebinar

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Fighting For Equal Public Contracting Opportunity

Through the pandemic, we continue to expand our work fighting for an equitable contracting system in the City of Boston for businesses of color, joining forces with **BECMA, Amplify Latinx**, and the **Greater Boston Latino Network** to file a landmark Title VI Complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice challenging the City’s anemic rates of contracting with minority-owned businesses.

Restoring Critical Housing Protections

Citing extensively to a landmark nationwide injunction secured by LCR and **Anderson & Kreiger**, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development proposed in 2021 to reinstate anti-discrimination protections in the Fair Housing Act. These critical protections, which the Trump Administration sought to undermine, were the subject of *Massachusetts Fair Housing Center v. HUD*, our groundbreaking lawsuit challenging the attempt to gut the disparate impact provisions of the Fair Housing Act, which would have made it nearly impossible for victims of housing and lending discrimination to seek judicial redress. The suit was filed on behalf of the **Massachusetts Fair Housing Center** in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and **Housing Works** in New York City, New York. The first of its kind in the country, the lawsuit secured a nationwide preliminary injunction and stay precluding the rule from ever coming into effect.

Education

Once in a Generation Victory for Low-Income Students and Students of Color

Following the Boston Public Schools' (BPS) creation of interim admissions criteria that accounted for equity and diversity for seating students at the City's highly selective public schools in 2021-2022, an organization sued the district, alleging the interim plan was constitutionally invalid. LCR, which has advocated for reforms to the admissions policy for years, moved swiftly to intervene in *Boston Parent Coalition v. Boston School Committee* on behalf of the **NAACP Boston Branch**, the **Greater Boston Latino Network**, the **Asian-American Resource Workshop**, the **Asian Pacific-Islander Civic Action Network**, and two individuals. Our co-counsel in the case are **Sidley Austin, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.**, and **Greater Boston Legal Services' Asian Outreach Unit**. We argued that the interim plan was not only constitutionally sound—it was necessary to remediate decades of discrimination by BPS in admitting students to its highly selective schools. After extensive briefing and oral argument, the federal court upheld the constitutionality of the interim plan. The Court of Appeals for the First Circuit declined to stay the decision, concluding that the plaintiff had a low likelihood of success on the merits. As a result, admission decisions were extended under the interim plan, which resulted in a record number of offers to Black and Latinx children, children with disabilities, LEP children, and children who are homeless or in state custody. In July 2021, BPS adopted a new admissions policy that also seeks to promote equitable, city-wide access to the district's schools.



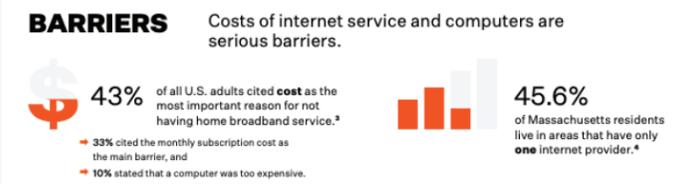
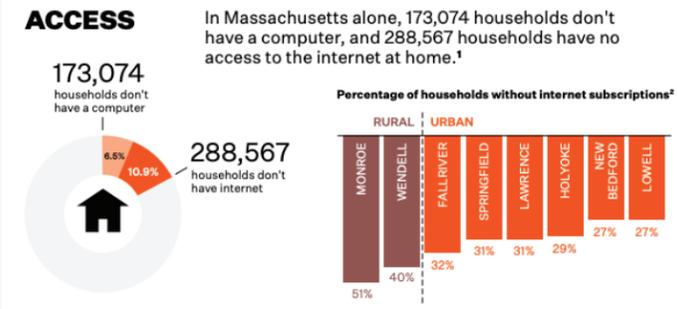
Closing the Digital Divide

As the 2021-2022 school year began, LCR worked in partnership with **Open Opportunity Massachusetts (OOMA)**, a coalition of over 40 cross-sector organizations, to identify the root causes of the digital divide and the tech inequities that pervade the K-12 education system for low-income, Black, and Latinx students. Together, we, along with over twenty signatories, sent an open letter to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) identifying urgent tech inequities experienced by low-income, Black, and Latinx students in an effort to place tech equity at the center of federal relief fund investments. The letter urged DESE to proactively work in close partnership with the diverse group of signatories and to leverage pandemic-related federal funding to close the digital divide. Pandemic-driven lost learning can only be addressed when every student has equal access to fully engage in their education.

Digital Divide

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Advancing Equality and Justice
 lawyersforcivilrights.org

The digital divide refers to the gap that exists between individuals who have access to broadband internet and modern technology and those who lack access. Most often, people of color, low-income households, and rural areas are most affected by tech inequity.



WHY IT MATTERS Closing the digital divide is an equity and civil rights issue

Healthcare	Employment	Education
Benefits of telehealth access, including access to medical records through online portals, lead to better treatment outcomes, especially for low-income patients. ⁵	People who don't have access to technology services and devices often lack digital literacy skills. 57% of Latinx workers, 50% of Black workers, 36% of Asian workers, and 23% of white workers have limited or no digital skills. ⁶	Low-income students without technology tend to perform lower, have trouble transitioning to schools and colleges that heavily rely on technology, and work more hours to comprehend the same learning objectives. ⁷

In response to the pandemic, LCR launched a dedicated initiative to close the digital divide and to promote tech equity.

Preserving Affirmative Action In Higher Education

LCR continues to fight to preserve the victory in *SFFA v. Harvard*, a case that successfully upheld the right to use race as one of many factors in creating a diverse, highly-talented student body in colleges and universities such as Harvard. We represent students and alumni of color as amicus curiae, who testified at trial about the importance of their racial and ethnic identity and about how being part of a diverse student body enriched their educational experience.

We also presented oral argument in the First Circuit, where we received a favorable ruling upholding the district court decision. The fight continues, however, as the plaintiff has now petitioned the Supreme Court for certiorari.

“Today, racism in America demeans and degrades the very fiber of our nation. Like cancer, when it appears it metastasizes, spreading hate to recipients with all too predictable consequences. We must each recognize the racism within us. We each must acknowledge it. We must own it—and we must transcend it.”

Judge William Young
LCR’s education equity litigation in Boston

“All new construction—including projects of all scales—should be required to produce a more meaningful and robust greenspace plan as part of the permitting and approvals process. Standards must be strengthened and likened to affordable housing unit requirements.”

Lauren Sampson
LCR attorney as featured in Commonwealth Magazine

Race & Climate Justice

Fighting National Origin Discrimination by State Environmental Agencies

In January 2021, LCR, along with co-counsel **Conservation Law Foundation** and the **Law Office of Joshua Daniels** filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of **GreenRoots** that challenged the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) failure to investigate a Title VI administrative complaint that alleged national origin discrimination by three Massachusetts state agencies. The lawsuit alleged that the EPA has misinterpreted the jurisdictional provisions of Title VI, failing to acknowledge that state agencies that do not directly receive federal funding are still bound by Title VI if they are “programs or activities” of a federal funding recipient. In July 2021, the EPA and the Department of Transportation (DOT) responded to our lawsuit by initiating a joint informal resolution agreement negotiation process with all three state agencies. The final agreement is anticipated to represent a landmark acknowledgment of the importance of language access and community engagement in energy facility siting decisions.

Advocating for the Right to Water

In January 2021, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights published “Water Affordability in Massachusetts,” which examined disparate access to safe, affordable water in the Commonwealth and relied on testimony from LCR in conducting its analysis and making recommendations. LCR also conducted research into water shutoffs—including the targeting of families of color and tenants for shutoffs—by water authorities in municipalities with high rates of shutoffs.

Combating Predatory Energy Suppliers

LCR continued its environmental justice and consumer rights advocacy and educational efforts surrounding competitive energy supply in the Commonwealth, in which predatory suppliers target low-income consumers of color and overcharge them for electricity. In particular, LCR organized a town hall with **Greater Boston Legal Services**, **GreenRoots**, **Alternatives for Community and Environment**, and the **National Consumer Law Center** to provide information to consumers about energy suppliers and how to avoid predatory scams. LCR and our allies also filed joint comments on the matter with the **Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office** and with the Department of Public Utilities and partnered with **Communities Resisting Extreme Weather** to provide multilingual webinars to educate consumers about the energy market.

Medical-Legal Partnership

The pandemic has upended our Medical-Legal Partnership in many different ways. Tele-Health and Tele-Lawyering have challenged the very conception of a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP). Pre-pandemic, our attorneys had long been “embedded” in the Chelsea HealthCare Center of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). When the pandemic hit, the trust and cooperation that was readily established in a face-to-face meeting within a welcoming health center had to be built from scratch. Over time, we have worked hard to ensure that these same bonds can be established through phone calls, with legal advice now mellowed by background sounds of domestic life.



As for the legal services provided, the pandemic created new hurdles for low-income immigrants and refugees. Every practice area of the Medical-Legal Partnership suffered from the dysfunction of governmental bureaucracies unprepared for even a three-way conference call. For example, for communicating with the Social Security Administration, we were instructed to send faxes to numbers that were not in service. Medical records supporting claims for disability benefits had to be scanned to Kentucky in order to reach an address in Everett, where the mail was allegedly distributed only once a week. Reaching local offices by phone is an impossibility.

Meanwhile, the need for service is even more urgent. In 2021, MLP completed over 500 interventions, almost entirely with new clients. Approximately half of the patients served were Latinx, from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Disability and housing claims continue to be the bulk of our caseload, as clients try to maintain stable housing in a gentrifying community. From assisting a Somali refugee family in moving from a home with lead paint dangers, to seeking disability benefits for a disabled adult son of a longtime Chelsea resident, to seeking reasonable accommodations for a quadriplegic seeking affordable housing, MLP handled a vast variety of civil legal issues to stabilize our clients' lives.

Special thanks to Laura Maslow-Armand



After nearly 20 years of building our Medical-Legal Partnership with MGH, Laura Maslow-Armand announced her departure from LCR in 2021 to engage in more direct service work, particularly in communities impacted by the pandemic. We are extraordinarily grateful to Laura for her years of years of tireless service to our client communities.

As MGH providers often said, MLP clients have come to think of “my lawyer” and “my Laura” as one and the same. Since word of her departure has spread, the accolades have come rolling in:

“You epitomize class and dignity, treat everyone of all backgrounds with honor and respect, and partnered so effectively with medical professionals...”

“You have made this program so vital. And you are so trusted by my patients that they feel empowered to bring these issues to me.”

“I will always remember your sheer hard work in the service of our patients. You cared deeply and channeled your brilliance into carefully crafting materials which would help our most vulnerable patients secure justice...”

And the most memorable tribute of all given to Laura Maslow-Armand (LMA):

“The tenacious LMA has been MGH Chelsea’s version of the notorious RBG.”

Thank you for your years of service, Laura! You have touched and changed many lives.

We are planning an event for early 2022 to honor Laura’s accomplishments and to celebrate 20 years of LCR’s partnership with MGH.

LCR CASE HISTORY

2021

20 Years of BizGrow

BizGrow celebrates 20 years of building wealth in low-income communities, serving over 1000 small businesses a year.

Vaccine Equity & Justice

Collaborating with medical providers and community organizations to address racial disparities in COVID-19 vaccine access.

BECMA v. City of Boston

Title VI Complaint filed with DOJ to address racial disparities in Boston's public contracts on behalf of BECMA, Amplify Latinx, and the Greater Boston Latino Network.

Boston Parents Coalition v. BPS

Successful intervention with NAACP Boston Branch, Greater Boston Latino Network, Asian American Resource Workshop, and Asian-Pacific Islander Civic Action Network in lawsuit concerning the admissions policy for Boston's exam schools.

Greenroots v. EPA

Lawsuit filed with Greenroots and Conservation Law Foundation challenging EPA's interpretation of Title VI.

Pandemic Relief for Tenants and Workers

In response to housing instability, launched a pro bono initiative to connect hundreds of families with emergency rental assistance (RAFT) and unemployment benefits.

Worcester Interfaith v. City of Worcester

Federal Voting Rights Act lawsuit filed on behalf of Black and Latinx voters in Worcester, challenging an all "at large" method of electing school committee members as illegally diluting the vote of communities of color.

Redistricting

Launched Democratizing Redistricting to ensure that the redistricting process is fair, equitable, transparent, and community driven. Coordinated efforts with the Drawing Democracy Coalition.

2020

Pandemic Relief for Small Businesses

Co-led the creation of the Covid Relief Coalition, the Coalition for an Equitable Economy, and Small Business Strong to provide free legal assistance to hundreds of struggling small businesses during the pandemic.

George Floyd

In response to George Floyd's murder, filed complaints on behalf of Black men and women racially profiled by local and state police.

Cofield v. McDonald

Taxpayer lawsuit challenging entanglement and 287(g) contracts between local sheriffs and immigration officials.

Juarez v. SoFi

Class action challenging discriminatory policy of denying DACA recipients access to loans.

Savino v. Souza

First-of-its-kind class action filed on behalf of immigration detainees held in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions at the Bristol County House of Correction during COVID-19 pandemic. Within a year of filing, the facility population dropped from a capacity of over 200 individuals to less than 10. Lawsuit served as a blueprint for COVID-19 litigation across the country.

Bertin v. Galvin

Filed a landmark emergency SJC petition on behalf of Black, Latinx, and Asian-American voters, as well as Common Cause and MassVOTE, to compel the Commonwealth to send applications for mail-in ballots to all registered voters, as specified in an emergency elections law passed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commonwealth v. Long

Amicus resulting in major state criminal law reform providing victims of racial profiling with opportunities to challenge the legality of racebased traffic stops.

Morgan v. Boston Police Department

Successful case on behalf of a Black man improperly bypassed by BPD. Client is now in the police academy.

Suffolk Downs

Successful Title VI complaint on behalf of GreenRoots and City Life/ Vida Urbana with HUD alleging national origin discrimination in zoning and planning processes in Boston. The complaint resulted in a landmark agreement between the City and HUD promoting language access and community engagement in future planning and development.

Cruz v. C&W Facilities Services

Successful race and religion discrimination case on behalf of an immigrant janitorial worker at Logan Airport.

NSTAR Title VI Complaint

Filed Title VI complaint on behalf of GreenRoots with Conservation Law Foundation regarding the state's refusal to provide meaningful language access. EPA launched a probe of the MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to assess their compliance with federal civil rights law.

Henry v. Needham

Represented Black father of four, who was handcuffed in broad daylight on a main street because police falsely believed he was a shoplifter. Town of Needham launched an internal affairs investigation and hired an independent investigator.

Haitian-Americans United v. Trump

Lawsuit filed on behalf of Haitian-Americans United, Centro Presente, the Chelsea Collaborative, and the Brazilian Worker Center challenging President Trump's exclusion of undocumented residents from the congressional apportionment base following Census 2020. The memorandum was rescinded by President Biden in January 2021.

New York v. Trump

Supreme Court amicus brief in support of enjoining President Trump's memorandum excluding undocumented people from the congressional apportionment base following Census 2020. The memorandum was rescinded by President Biden in January 2021.

Martin v. Rollins

Amicus brief on the importance of filming police officers. This right was upheld by the First Circuit.

Hernandez v. Strega

Favorable settlement on behalf of Latina who was sexually harassed while working in upscale restaurant.

Health Disparities

Expanded Medical-Legal Partnership to MGH health centers in Chelsea, Everett, Revere and Charlestown.

MFHC v. HUD

Secured nationwide injunction against HUD preserving disparate impact protections of the Fair Housing Act on behalf of the MA Fair Housing Center and Housing Works.

LCR CASE HISTORY

Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard

Represented multi-racial group of students in landmark trial to support Harvard’s use of race-conscious admissions. Federal court ruled in our favor, upholding Harvard’s admissions process, and the ruling was affirmed by the First Circuit.

2019

LCR | BizGrow

Rebranded our Economic Justice Project as LCR | BizGrow

Baker v. MA Trial Court

MCAD complaint filed on behalf of a Black female court officer who was improperly disciplined at work after reporting a colleague for calling her the N-word.

Mussotte v. Peyser

In response to major lawsuit brought on behalf of low-income students and students of color challenging discriminatory and unequal Massachusetts school funding formula, state enacted landmark Student Opportunity Act providing the largest investment in public education in decades. The Act resulted in millions of dollars flowing to low-income school districts.

Washington v. DHS

Amicus brief filed on behalf of healthcare providers across the country challenging the Trump Administration’s “public charge” rule. Favorable decision extensively cited the amicus. The Biden Administration subsequently announced that it will not enforce the “public charge” rule.

Huot v. City of Lowell

Successfully settled landmark federal voting rights lawsuit filed on behalf of Asian-American and Latinx residents of Lowell, which charged that city’s at-large electoral system illegally diluted the votes of

people of color. Settlement requires city to change to a more fair and equitable system, accompanied by a robust public education campaign in English, Spanish and Khmer, allowing all residents to participate in selecting the new electoral system.

Gregory v. Commonwealth

Class action complaint challenging overly-stringent background regulations by the MA Department of Early Education and Care, which impose a lifetime ban on childcare work for juvenile offenses, many decades-old, and have a disparate impact on employees of color.

IIC v. Cuccinelli

Lawsuit filed to stop the rescission of medical deferred action program which allows immigrants being treated for life-threatening conditions to be protected from removal. Administration backed down and reversed the rescission after lawsuit filed.

Centro Presente v. McAleenan

Federal litigation filed in Washington, DC., to stop the Trump Administration’s dramatic expansion of “expedited removal,” which eliminates due process for immigrants facing deportation.

Ryan v. ICE

Groundbreaking federal lawsuit filed on behalf of prosecutors, public defenders, and community groups including the Chelsea Collaborative to block civil immigration arrests in and around Massachusetts courthouses. Lawsuit served as a blueprint for similar cases nationally.

African Communities Together v. Trump

Case on behalf of Liberian nationals who are the beneficiaries of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), a humanitarian program which the Trump Administration sought to terminate in violation of Equal Protection. Hours before our preliminary

injunction motion was set to be heard in federal court, the Trump Administration backed down and extended the program.

Figueroa v. Boston Police Dep’t

Race discrimination case filed by civilian women of color against BPD, identifying a pattern and practice of failing to promote candidates of color and a discriminatory distribution of overtime hours.

Commonwealth v. Espinal

Amicus brief filed in the Supreme Judicial Court successfully arguing that jurors should be asked about bias against non-English speakers during voir dire.

Dep’t of Commerce v. New York

Amicus brief filed in U.S. Supreme Court arguing against inclusion of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census. Brief focused on the importance of the Administrative Procedure Act to communities of color and low-income communities as a check on illegal agency action.

Census Advocacy

Launched multi-pronged campaign to ensure a full and accurate Census count, including a multilingual Census Hotline.

Amazon Class Action

Nationwide class action filed on behalf of Black and Latinx former Amazon drivers who were suddenly terminated based on an overly stringent background check policy, which included old and minor offenses, and disproportionately affected people of color.

2018

50th Anniversary & Name Change to Lawyers for Civil Rights

Celebrated our 50th anniversary and rebranded as Lawyers for Civil Rights. The U.S. Congress

marked this landmark occasion with a Congressional Resolution honoring our 50 years of impactful work. The Boston City Council issued a resolution honoring Lawyers for Civil Rights and declaring October 18 as Civil Rights and Economic Justice Day in Boston. At our 50th Anniversary Gala, Anita Hill called for national and legal solutions to sexual harassment and violence.

Finley v. Lexington

Successfully settled a discrimination lawsuit on behalf of a Black female METCO social worker who was unlawfully terminated after advocating for the students of color in the school district.

Centro Presente v. Trump

First lawsuit filed in the country to save Temporary Protected Status (TPS), humanitarian protection for Salvadoran, Honduran and Haitian immigrants. Affected individuals and community groups allege that TPS termination was racially motivated and discriminatory.

Coleman v. City of Boston

In response to #BlackLivesMatter, lawsuit filed on behalf of a mother whose son—an unarmed Black young man with a disability—was fatally shot by the Boston Police Department.

K.O. v. Sessions

Emergency petitions filed in response to family separation crisis to secure the release and reunification of children torn apart from their families at the border. Filed the first national class action seeking damages on behalf of separated children. Suit seeks creation of designated fund to address the mental health consequences of separation.

LCR CASE HISTORY

Pilot v. Brookline

Successfully settled discrimination lawsuit filed by two Black police officers in the Brookline Police Department.

Rivas v. Bristol County Sheriff

Damages action against the Bristol County Sheriff filed on behalf of immigrant father who was unlawfully detained and denied bail based solely on his immigration status.

Sexual Harassment Settlement

Successfully settled sexual harassment charge at MCAD brought by Latina immigrant against wholesale food preparation company in Everett.

Finklea v. City of Boston

Secured favorable Suffolk Superior Court decision addressing the practice of police departments using overly stringent background checks to bar qualified minority candidates from employment opportunities.

2017

Romero et al. v. McCormick & Schmick's

In response to #MeToo, filed sexual harassment lawsuit on behalf of five low-wage Latina workers against a national restaurant chain, alleging a hostile work environment filled with lewd behavior and unwanted touching.

City of Chelsea v. Trump

Federal lawsuit filed on behalf of Chelsea and Lawrence, challenging the constitutionality of President Trump's Executive Order targeting sanctuary cities. The suit helped to preserve federal funding and to protect local control over law enforcement priorities.

BizGrow Conference

Launched signature event, connecting more than 200 entrepreneurs with free legal and business support.

Cook v. Mystic Valley Regional Charter School

Represented Black students in successful challenge to school's discriminatory hair policy, which banned hair extensions and other hairstyles worn disproportionately by students of color.

Lawyers' Committee v. Hodgson

Successful lawsuit to compel disclosure of records related to Bristol County sheriff's enforcement of federal immigration law. Within hours of filing the complaint, the sheriff apologized and released records.

Lawyers' Committee v. Spence

Public records lawsuit filed with the SJC to compel the Massachusetts Trial Court to release information on its employment practices.

2016

Boston Latin School Complaint

Federal civil rights complaint requesting that the U.S. Attorney investigate racial harassment at Boston Latin School. U.S. Attorney found that BLS violated federal law by failing to adequately respond to racial harassment, and the City of Boston agreed to take steps to improve the racial climate at BLS.

Fisher v. Univ. of Texas at Austin

Amicus brief filed on behalf of prominent national empirical scholars in a case concerning

the use of a race-based admissions policy at the Univ. of Texas at Austin, arguing that the "mismatch" theory espoused by affirmative action opponents is flawed. The Court upheld the policy, affirming use of race as one of many factors in college admissions.

Lawyers' Committee v. Evans

Successful lawsuit to compel the Boston Police to release records concerning the racial impact of its employment practices. At a time of growing tension

between police and communities of color, the data was the subject of intense public scrutiny concerning the lack of diversity in the police force.

Airbnb

Urged HUD to investigate Airbnb's compliance with civil rights laws, citing research showing that Airbnb renters with distinctively Black names are 16% less likely to be accepted by hosts than other renters. In response, Airbnb took immediate steps to eliminate discrimination by hosts against minority renters.

School Discipline Toolkit

Released toolkit to educate teachers, administrators, students and parents about school disciplinary policies and alternatives to suspensions, in order to improve school discipline and combat race and disability related disparities in suspension rates.

Doe v. Peyser

Intervention filed on behalf of students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners in support of retaining Massachusetts' charter school cap. The SJC upheld the constitutionality of the charter cap, preserving vital resources for traditional public schools.

2015

Defay v. Boston Police

MCAD found that Boston Police discriminated against Black recruits in its Training Academy. MCAD ordered Boston Police to "cease and desist" from discriminatory conduct and to reinstate and compensate affected individual.

2014

Not Measuring Up – School Discipline Report

Published groundbreaking report analyzing Massachusetts school discipline data and finding that students of color, students with disabilities, and char-

ter school students are disproportionately suspended, particularly for minor misbehavior, bringing national attention to disparities in school discipline rates.

City of Brockton v. Energy Facilities

Siting Board

Filed an environmental justice amicus brief challenging decision to locate a power plant in a minority community.

2013

Pulido v. National Grid

Successfully represented Filipino electrical worker in employment discrimination matter against National Grid.

2012

NAACP v. Galvin

Challenge to the Commonwealth's failure to offer voter registration opportunities to public assistance recipients, in violation of the National Voter Registration Act. Commonwealth agreed to policy changes and ongoing monitoring, enfranchising thousands of low-income individuals.

Ortiz v. Boston Children's Hospital

Employment discrimination case challenging wrongful termination of Latina health care workers. Case resulted in favorable settlement, including a bilingual public apology.

2010

Bonds v. Boston School Committee

Successful employment discrimination case on behalf of a Black teacher at Boston Latin School who received less desirable teaching assignments than less-qualified White teachers.

EEOC v. Autozone

Successfully represented a Sikh employee, who faced religious discrimination.

LCR CASE HISTORY

2008

Amara v. Fairmont Copley Plaza

Successfully represented seven Moroccan and Muslim employees of the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel who faced religious and national origin discrimination.

2006

Bradley v. City of Lynn

Intervened on behalf of the NAACP and the Boston Society of Vulcans to challenge discriminatory civil service exams for police and firefighter jobs in twenty communities. In a settlement, the state agreed to offer back pay and jobs to 66 minority candidates who took the discriminatory exams.

EEOC v. Home Depot

Successfully represented a Black employee who experienced a racially hostile work environment and was wrongfully terminated.

2005

Arise for Social Justice v. City of Springfield

Successfully challenged Springfield’s “at-large” election system, which diluted minority voting power in violation of the Voting Rights Act.

2004

Alshrafi v. American Airlines

Federal court ruled that the Airline Deregulation Act did not preempt a discrimination claim by an Arab-American passenger who was barred from a flight after 9/11.

Black Political Task Force v. Galvin

Federal court struck down the 2001 State House redistricting plan for 17 districts serving Boston, and enjoined the Commonwealth from holding elections for those seats until the court approved a new plan. Court found that the state plan violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, resulted in “extreme” packing

of the 6th Suffolk district, and improperly stripped minority voters out of the 11th and 12th Suffolk districts.

2003

Grutter Amicus Brief

Co-authored amicus brief filed by the Boston Bar Ass’n. and leading Boston law firms in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of affirmative action in admissions to the Univ. of Michigan Law School.

Comfort v. Lynn School Committee

Filed amicus brief, along with the NAACP, successfully defending Lynn’s voluntary school desegregation plan against a constitutional attack.

Jones v. City of Boston

Landmark legal challenge to a discriminatory and unreliable hair test used by the City of Boston to determine drug use. In 2014, the First Circuit ruled that the hair test disproportionately affects Black officers. In a companion case, the MA Civil Service Commission found in 2013 that the hair test is scientifically unreliable and required Boston Police to reinstate six officers.

Health Disparities Project

Established Health Disparities Project centered on Medical-Legal Partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital in Chelsea.

2002

South Boston Betterment Trust Corporation v. Boston Redevelopment Authority

Filed amicus brief to ensure that community benefits derived from Seaport District development were equitably distributed to minority neighborhoods.

Mayor of Cambridge v. Secretary of the Commonwealth

Filed amicus brief with the SJC to protect several majority AfricanAmerican State House districts.

2001

Established Economic Justice Project

In its first year, the project provided free legal support to over 250 small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Morris v. City of Lawrence

Federal court enjoined the City of Lawrence from implementing a voter ID policy that would have discouraged Latinos from voting.

2000

Mendes v. Sullivan

Successfully represented a Cape Verdean couple who were assaulted and had their property vandalized by White neighbors.

1999

Jane Doe v. Boston Housing Authority

Class action lawsuit against the Boston Housing Authority for failing to protect minority tenants from chronic, racially-motivated violence and harassment at historically White housing developments. Case resulted in HUD’s first-ever finding of “systemic discrimination,” and the Housing Authority agreed to a \$1.5 million settlement, including adoption of a “zero-tolerance policy” for racial harassment.

1998

Lawyers’ Committee participated in the formation of the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.

Thornton v. Amtrak

Employment discrimination class action lawsuit on behalf of minority track workers resulting in a \$16 million settlement and systemic changes in hiring, training, promotion, and discipline.

1997

Julks v. Neptune Towers

Successful lawsuit against federally -subsidized housing development that maintained a pattern and practice of discrimination.

1996

Barrett v. Danca Realty World

Housing discrimination case at the MCAD resulted in a \$60,000 award for emotional distress, the largest amount ever awarded at that time.

Mak v. Fall River Housing Authority

Successfully represented Cambodian tenants against the Fall River Housing Authority, which failed to protect them from racial violence and harassment.

1993

McDuffy v. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education

SJC struck down Massachusetts’ public school financing system, which relied heavily on local property taxes and resulted in gross disparities between districts. SJC ruled that Massachusetts has a duty under the state constitution to provide an adequate education for all children, regardless of the wealth of their local communities.

Bennett v. City of Boston

Federal lawsuit on behalf of families challenging unlawful searches and seizures by police during the Carol Stuart murder investigation.

1992

Culbreath v. BayBanks

BayBanks agreed to an \$11 million settlement in a lawsuit over its indirect home improvement financing program, which used illegal sales tactics to lure homeowners in communities of color to take out high interest loans, in violation of consumer protection and civil rights laws.

LCR CASE HISTORY

1988

At the Lawyers' Committee's 20th Anniversary, Sen. Edward Kennedy called for "a new abolitionist movement" to stamp out racism.

Black Political Task Force v. Connelly

Federal court invalidated the State House redistricting plan based on the 1985 state census for violating the "one person, one vote" principle. First Latino state legislator elected from newly created Boston district.

NAACP v. Boston Housing Authority

Federal class action lawsuit against the Boston Housing Authority for maintaining racially segregated public housing.

1987

Thong Lim v. Somerville Housing Authority

Federal class action lawsuit against the Somerville Housing Authority for its failure to protect minority tenants from racial violence and harassment.

Hispanic Parents Advisory Council v. City of Lowell

School desegregation and bilingual education case in Lowell, resulting in a favorable settlement.

1986

Established Fair Housing Project

1983

Latino Political Action Committee v. City of Boston

Federal court invalidated Boston's redistricting plan for violating the constitutional principle of "one person, one vote," under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

1982

Established Project to Combat Racial Violence

1981

Rendell-Baker v. Kohn

Represented several teachers at a private special education school in Brookline.

Hispanic Parents Advisory Council v. City of Holyoke

School desegregation case in Holyoke, resulting in a favorable settlement including bilingual and special education plans.

1979

Brown v. City of Salem

Successfully represented minority applicant who was not hired as a police officer despite ranking first on the civil service exam.

1978

Latino Association for Progress & Action v. Worcester Public Schools

Lawsuit to compel the Worcester Public Schools to provide equal educational opportunities to children with limited English proficiency. Settled by a consent decree.

Latinos Unidos de Chelsea en Acción v. HUD

Challenged the disbursement of federal funds to the City of Chelsea under the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act.

NAACP v. HUD

Class action lawsuit challenging the discriminatory use of HUD funds disbursed to Boston, resulting in a favorable settlement.

MAMLEO v. Boston Police

Challenged a discriminatory civil service exam for promotions to sergeant, resulting in a consent decree that led to the first permanent Boston Police

sergeants of color. The consent decree survived a challenge as "reverse discrimination" in MAMLEO v. Boston Police. A court upheld the consent decree's extension to lieutenants and captains in Stuart v. Roache.

Castro & NAACP v. Beecher

Successfully challenged discriminatory police and fire department hiring practices in communities across Massachusetts, including Boston. As a result of consent decrees, there are now hundreds of police officers and firefighters of color in Massachusetts.

1974

Morgan v. Hennigan

Federal court ordered the Boston Public Schools to desegregate in 1974, a landmark decision upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

1970

Published "The Quality of Justice in the Lower Criminal Courts of Metropolitan Boston," a groundbreaking report that led to systemic court reforms.

1968

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association was formed in 1968 in the midst of riots and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the findings of the Kerner Commission report (concluding that the nation was "moving toward two societies, one Black, one White – separate and unequal"). Funded with a grant from the Ford Foundation and contributions from Boston law firms, the Committee became the first of eight independent affiliates of the national Lawyers' Committee. President Kennedy's vision of the legal profession mobilizing its resources to support progress in civil rights came home to his birthplace. Gaspard D'Andelot "Don" Belin served as the first Chair of the Committee.

1963

On June 21, 1963, President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy met with 244 leading American lawyers in the White House. The President and Attorney General made a special appeal to mobilize the legal profession to support the struggle for civil rights. The national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law was created.

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