

2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

Laws
alone
are
not
enough

LCR

**LAWYERS FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
BOSTON**

**BOSTON MUST
BECOME A
TESTING
GROUND FOR
THE IDEALS OF
FREEDOM.**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Table of Contents

Mission & History	2
Message from the Executive Director	3
Intake Statistics	6
 Voting Rights	7
 Fighting for Immigrant Communities	9
 Economic Justice Project	11
 Police Accountability	13
 Employment	15
 Education	16
 Medical Legal Partnership	19
50th Anniversary Celebration Supporters & Sponsors	24
Edward J. Barshak Fund for Justice	26
BizGrow 2018	27
Board of Directors	30
Member Firms and Organizations	32
Congressional Resolution Honors LCR	33
Boston City Council Resolution Honors LCR	35
Timeline & Case History	36
Staff, Volunteers & Interns	40

Mission & History

Our organization is a leading hub for litigation, advocacy, and resistance to discrimination. Entrenched injustice requires 21st century solutions. To stay current, we evolve. This year, in celebration of our 50th Anniversary, we are reinvigorating our powerful foundations and breaking new ground. We are excited to announce that the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice is now **Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)**.

Lawyers for Civil Rights 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 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 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 independent 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 legal representation to address racial discrimination.

In 1973, we became the first pro bono project of the Boston Bar Association and the only Lawyers' Committee affiliate in the nation 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 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.

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

It's a new day at LCR!

Over the past year, to further guide our work and ensure its sustainability, our organization embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning and rebranding process. With the help of many of our key constituents, we produced a dynamic vision for driving the organization forward as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary in 2018.

Our name has changed, but our commitment to fighting discrimination remains unchanged. We know that modern-day advocacy must be nimble, innovative, bold, and exciting. Our work is life-changing and law-changing.

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. Every day, we bring people together to promote equal opportunity. Every day, we fight discrimination.

From desegregating Boston's public schools and public housing projects to our ongoing work to eradicate discrimination in the workplace, we are a catalyst for justice and 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.

Thank you for celebrating the legacy and future of civil rights! Here's to moving forward – without fail and without fear.

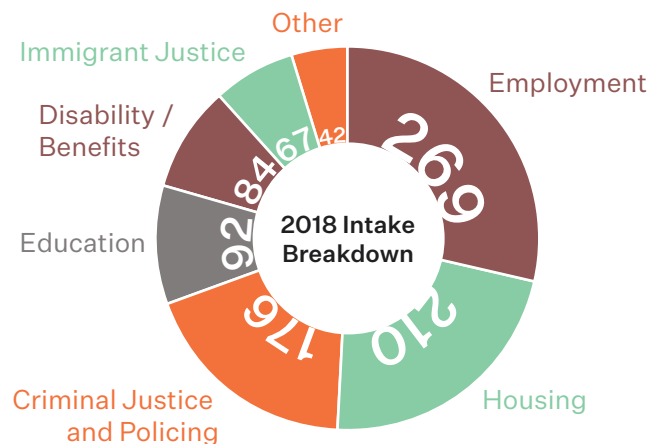
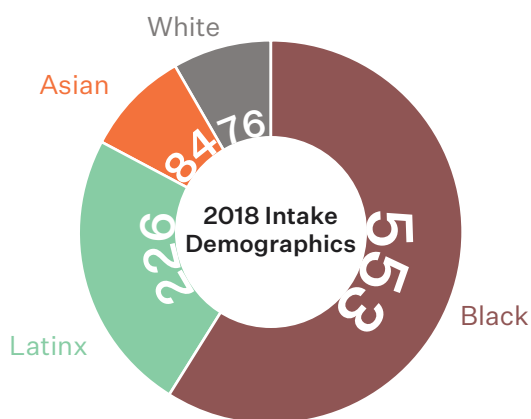
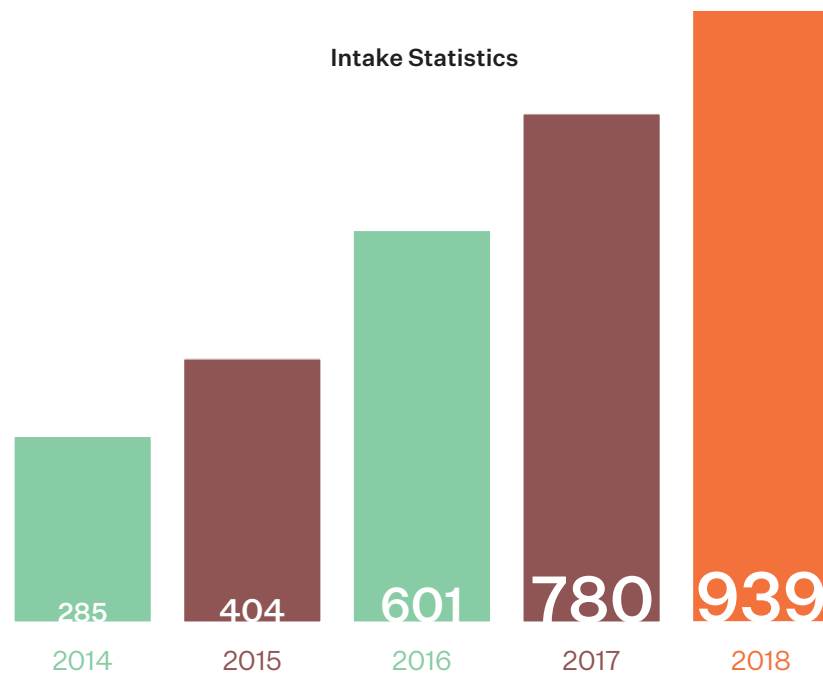
Iván Espinoza-Madriral, Esq.
Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)





Intake Statistics

As LCR enters its fiftieth year, the number of community members seeking our legal assistance continues to grow. We serve some of the most vulnerable populations in the Commonwealth, providing representation, counsel, advice, and referrals in a variety of civil practice areas.





Voting Rights

Voting Rights Lawsuit Against Lowell, Massachusetts

In May 2017, together with our pro bono allies at **Ropes & Gray**, we filed a federal voting rights lawsuit on behalf of a diverse coalition of Asian-American and Latinx residents of Lowell, alleging that the city's municipal election system discriminates against communities of color.

According to the lawsuit, the use of citywide at-large elections for all seats on the Lowell City Council and Lowell School Committee dilutes the voting power of minority voters in Lowell, violating the federal Voting Rights Act, as well as the U.S. Constitution. The complaint sets forth how although the city is approximately 49% minority, both its nine-member City Council and its six-member School Committee have been virtually all-white for all of Lowell's history. In an at-large winner-take-all system such as Lowell's, 51% of the electorate can control 100% of the seats and win every election.

The case is currently pending in federal district court, where the judge has already rejected the City's motion to dismiss. The lawsuit is believed to be the first of its kind in the country to be filed on behalf of a coalition of Asian-American and Latinx residents.

Election Protection

The 2018 Massachusetts state elections spotlighted the most diverse slate of political leaders that the Commonwealth has ever seen. In response to the swell of voters, LCR led a critical nonpartisan voter protection campaign to ensure that every eligible voter in the Commonwealth had equal access to the ballot box.

Our campaign, Massachusetts Election Protection, included a state-wide toll-free hotline and a comprehensive field program. The hotline, housed at and supported by **WilmerHale**, was staffed by volunteer attorneys from our member firms. Calls were answered throughout Election Day, providing eligible voters with the assistance they needed in real-time to ensure their ability to vote. The comprehensive field program, consisting of more than 200 volunteers, marshalled support to communities of color throughout the Commonwealth and served as the eyes and ears for the Election Protection command staff. Our partners in this effort included: **ACLU of Massachusetts, Anti-Defamation League, Common Cause Massachusetts, MassVOTE**, and the **League of Women Voters**.



Automatic Voter Registration

LCR is a member of the **Election Modernization Coalition** (EMC), a small cohort of organizations committed to modernizing the electoral process so that more eligible individuals can register, vote, and have their voices heard. EMC has made significant accomplishments, including a successful drive that resulted in 2014 legislation establishing state-wide early voting. This year, EMC

triumphed again, ushering in legislation to create Automatic Voter Registration (AVR). AVR will ensure that the 700,000 people in the Commonwealth who are not registered to vote, a majority of whom reside in urban areas with high levels of poverty, become registered with ease. LCR and the rest of the coalition are now providing their expertise and insight to advise on the proper implementation of AVR throughout the Commonwealth.





Fighting for Immigrant Communities

Since the 2016 election, immigrants in the United States are in a more precarious position than ever. With increased raids, a pervasive climate of fear, and threats to life saving programs like Temporary Protected Status (TPS), the fight for immigrant rights is front and center. LCR continues to aggressively and strategically advocate on behalf of immigrant communities and to develop creative responses to meet new challenges.

Protecting Temporary Protected Status

In February 2018, LCR, along with our pro bono partners from **Chorate, Hall & Stewart LLP**, filed *Centro Presente v. Trump*, the first lawsuit challenging the termination of TPS for immigrants from El Salvador, Haiti, and Honduras. TPS is a humanitarian program that provides immigration protection for individuals from designated countries that have experienced armed conflict, natural disasters, or other extenuating circumstances. Our federal lawsuit—brought on behalf of **Centro Presente, Haitian Americans United**, and brave individuals with TPS—challenges the terminations as discriminatory and violative of the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the U.S. Constitution as well as the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). Our lawsuit has already set meaningful precedent as the first case to narrow

the Supreme Court’s ruling on the Trump Administration’s “travel ban” and provides a model of creative litigation aimed at holding those in the highest echelons of power to account.

Challenging Illegal Detentions

In March 2018, LCR, along with our pro bono partners from **Latham & Watkins LLP**, filed *Rivas v. Hodgson*, a federal lawsuit to hold Bristol County’s rogue sheriff, Thomas Hodgson, accountable for his anti-immigrant policies and practices, and for the illegal detention of our client. Our lawsuit—brought on behalf of a young immigrant father from El Salvador—seeks damages and policy changes from Bristol County after they held our client in jail, solely because of his immigration status. This imprisonment was deeply damaging, and clearly in violation of established law. Our lawsuit seeks to rectify this harm and create a future where such injustices can no longer be carried out.

Ensuring Access to Justice and Resources

After hearing about a rise in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers stalking courthouses and arresting immigrants, LCR filed public records request to determine the extent and gravity of the problem. We found astonishing data detailing arrests at twenty-four different courthouses across the Commonwealth. In



March 2018, LCR, in partnership with the **Committee for Public Counsel Services** and **Greater Boston Legal Services**, filed a first-of-its-kind petition in Massachusetts' highest court asking for a writ of protection to block ICE from arresting immigrants in and around courthouses. Our petition, *Matter of C. Doe and Others*, filed on behalf of immigrants who need access to the courts but are chilled because of ICE presence—such as of a woman who wanted to seek a restraining order but could not because of fear of ICE detention—seeks to ensure access to justice by protecting those individuals and the courts themselves from federal immigration enforcement. Our initial petition was denied in the Single Justice session, but the Court acknowledged the privilege against civil immigration arrest in courts and recognized the breadth and depth of the problem. The case garnered strong support from a wide coalition of community organizations, District Attorneys, the defense bar, and civil rights organizations. We continue to seek ways to highlight the deeply problematic practice of ICE arrests in and around courthouses and to challenge these practices in court.

Standing with Immigrant Families

This year, the Trump Administration enacted its devastating family separation policy. Thousands of children were torn from the arms of their parents and placed in detention centers across the country. LCR immediately responded by filing litigation along with our pro bono partners **WilmerHale** and **Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP** and in collaboration with the **Brazilian Workers'**

Center, to reunite families in Boston. We then went to Honduras to meet with parents who had already been deported without their children and worked with **DLA Piper** to reunite children still detained in the U.S. with parents they thought they would never see again. Understanding the human toll that this policy had taken on the over 2500 children who were separated from their families, in September 2018, LCR along with our pro bono partners at **Nixon Peabody, Todd & Weld LLP, Demissie & Church**, and **The Law Offices of Jeff Goldman** filed *K.O. v. Sessions*, a groundbreaking damages class action on behalf of all children separated from their families and detained as part of the crisis. Primarily, the complaint demands that the government establish a fund dedicated to repairing the mental health trauma that the children experienced and continue to live with.

Community Engagement

To combat the intense climate of fear present in immigrant communities, LCR conducted dozens of community legal education trainings and clinics in the heart of Massachusetts' immigrant communities. Subjects of our know your rights trainings included: knowing your rights when confronted by an ICE agent, changes in asylum law, REAL ID, TPS, public charge, courthouse arrests, and many more. We also conducted legal clinics with community partners such as the **Chelsea Collaborative** and with pro bono support from **Fragomen** to ensure holistic support for immigrant communities.



Economic Justice Project

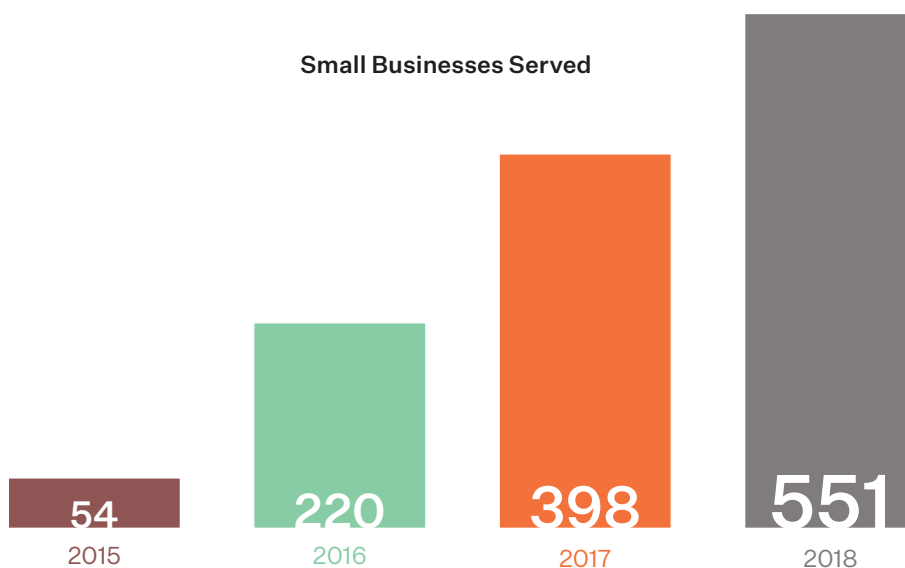
The Economic Justice Project (EJP) provides minority, immigrant, and low-income entrepreneurs and small business owners with free legal assistance, business support, and education. EJP furthers our vision of economic empowerment in disadvantaged communities by helping individuals develop sustainable businesses and achieve economic self-sufficiency. By connecting entrepreneurs to law firms providing pro bono legal services, we are closing the opportunity gap. In 2018, we served over 550 entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout the Commonwealth. Over half of these businesses are women-owned, and approximately 90% are minority-owned. These businesses are the economic engines fueling the growth of our Commonwealth.

Individual Representation

Through the generous pro bono work of our partner law firms, we match small business owners with attorneys who provide them with free transactional legal assistance that they need for the business to grow and succeed. Common small business concerns include, entity registration and formation, contract issues, intellectual property, tax, and employment issues.

Educational Programming

We help to close the opportunity gap by connecting minority entrepreneurs with the information they need to effectively operate and sustain their small business. Partnering with **Latham & Watkins** and **Roxbury Community College** we held three sessions of our 10-week seminar for new business owners, **Create Your Own Job**.





Designed to introduce fundamental business legal topics to aspiring entrepreneurs, this seminar offers classes on entity formation, business planning, networking, marketing, and e-commerce.

We also held three sessions of our **Access to Business Law** workshop series. These 10-week workshops are structured to tackle various types of legal issues that small businesses face while operating and growing. Weekly workshops cover topics such as employment law, taxes, intellectual property, leasing, and financing. These workshops are taught by pro bono attorneys from leading law firms such as **Morgan Lewis, WilmerHale, Goodwin, Nixon Peabody**, and **Latham & Watkins**.

In addition to these classroom style workshops, EJP held five free legal clinics where over 50 entrepreneurs and small business owners had the opportunity to consult with attorneys who specialize in small business issues and ask specific questions relating to their small business. These unique opportunities help small businesses get the answers they need quickly and allow them to immediately implement the best course of action.

EJP continues to assist food entrepreneurs through its unique accelerator **Food Biz 101**. In partnership with **Goodwin** and **CommonWealth Kitchen**, Food Biz 101 is a 13-week seminar designed to assist aspiring food entrepreneurs launch their businesses. In addition to general business legal topics such as entity formation and contracts, this seminar covers food-specific topics such as food safety, recipe scaling, pricing, and labeling regulations. The accelerator culminates in a pitch night where participants have the opportunity to present their business to a panel of experts and formally launch their business, making their dreams a reality.



BizGrow

On June 20, 2018 we held **BizGrow**, our annual small business conference. Held at **Suffolk Law School**, BizGrow is a full-day technical assistance conference for minority, immigrant, and women entrepreneurs and small business owners/ Thanks to our sponsors and to the many pro bono attorneys who participated, the event was tremendously successful. Approximately 150 small business owners and entrepreneurs attended 20 workshops on business and legal issues led by industry experts. Each entrepreneur also had an opportunity to meet one-on-one with attorneys specializing in a variety of small business concerns, including entity formation, intellectual property, commercial lease review, and tax concerns.



Police Accountability

Boston is among the long list of cities that have witnessed violence against communities of color by police. One tragic example occurred in October 2016, when Boston police officers shot and killed Terence Coleman, a young Black man with mental illness, after his mother Hope Coleman called 911 for medical assistance. In April 2018, LCR, with pro bono counsel from **Fick & Marx LLP**, filed a federal civil rights lawsuit to hold the involved officers and medical personnel accountable, and to demand the creation of proper policies and protocols for accommodating disabled individuals in emergency situations.

In addition to addressing incidents of police brutality and misconduct, LCR's growing police accountability practice also files cutting-edge litigation to enhance diversity in public safety agencies. Social science research proves that enhancing diversity is critical to decreasing the tension between minority and immigrant communities and police departments. One of the key ways in which police departments hinder diversity and damage community trust is by "bypassing" candidates of color who apply to be police officers—i.e. removing them from the civil service list in favor of lower-ranking candidates. To combat this problematic practice, the LCR bypass docket includes:

- In February 2018, LCR and our pro bono counsel from **Birnbaum & Godkin**, received a favorable decision from the Suffolk Superior Court limiting the use of continued without a finding ("CWOFF") matters in civil service hiring, a significant ruling to curb the use of criminal record information in hiring decisions which has a disproportionate impact on communities of color. The Civil Service Commission is already citing to this ruling as a basis for reversing the unlawful bypass decisions of other applicants.
- LCR also represents a Black man who was bypassed for the position of police officer because of an arrest when he was a teen. The client has no criminal record and has served in a law enforcement capacity for Boston College and the Boston Housing Authority for more than 15 years. At a two-day hearing before the Civil Service Commission, LCR presented a slew of evidence demonstrating that the Boston Police Department arbitrarily weighs stale criminal history records in their employment decisions.



- In June 2018, LCR began representation of another Black man, one of sixty (60) applicants who the Civil Service Commission found were deprived of their legal appeal rights by the Boston Police Department. LCR and the **Massachusetts Attorney General's Office** are advocating to uphold the Commission's decision before the Suffolk Superior Court to ensure that our client and other candidates of color receive a fair hiring process.

LCR also continues its advocacy to eliminate barriers to diversity for Black, Latinx, and Asian police officers and firefighters through work focused on the proper implementation of residency preferences, language certifications, and other civil service requirements. This year, on behalf of our organizational clients, the **Massachusetts Association of Minority Law Enforcement Officers** (MAMLEO), the **Boston Society of Vulcans**, and a host of individuals, we requested a Civil

Service Commission investigation into the negative impact that military residency preferences have on Boston's veterans of color. Co-counseling with **Fair Work, P.C.**, we also successfully settled discrimination cases for two Black former Brookline Police officers.

Finally, our long-running Title VII case against the Boston Police Department regarding the discriminatory "hair test" for drug use went to trial in federal district court in 2018, led by an amazing pro bono team from **WilmerHale**. The case has been appealed to the First Circuit twice, where plaintiffs secured reversals of adverse trial court rulings each time. At trial this year, we demonstrated that the hair test is scientifically unreliable and results in false positives particularly for Black officers, due to their hair texture and grooming practices. Moreover, BPD had a less discriminatory alternative available—using the hair test in conjunction with urinalysis—but refused to adopt it. The case is currently under submission.



Employment

LCR continues to be a staunch advocate for those experiencing discrimination in the workplace. In December 2017, LCR and our pro bono counsel from **Fair Work, P.C.** filed a landmark sexual harassment lawsuit against McCormick & Schmick's, a prominent national restaurant chain, on behalf of five low-wage immigrant women who were subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace, effectively expanding #MeToo to #YoTambien.

In October 2018, LCR and our pro bono counsel from **Pontikes Law, LLC**, filed a religious discrimination lawsuit on behalf of a practicing Catholic immigrant after he experienced repeated retaliation by his employer for engaging in prayer on his breaks and for advocating for his right to observe the Sabbath. These cases represent a continuation of LCR's work to protect the most vulnerable sectors of workers, many of whom are immigrants with limited resources.

In other employment matters, LCR and our pro bono counsel from **Birnbaum & Godkin** successfully resolved a long-standing workplace discrimination lawsuit on behalf of a Black social worker who was unlawfully terminated from the METCO program in Lexington in retaliation for her advocacy on behalf of Black students and her complaints regarding disparate discipline. During the litigation, Lexington has ushered in a series of professional trainings and workshops regarding cultural competency and implicit bias.

LCR also continues its advocacy to address the barriers faced by employees of color working within the Massachusetts Trial Courts. As a result of a successful public records lawsuit, we gained access to data showing significant disparities in the Court's workforce. There are over 1,000 court officer personnel serving courthouses across the state, but fewer than 7% are women of color, which is not representative of the demographics of the state as a whole. Representation in supervisory positions is even lower. Partly due to this under-representation, many court officers find themselves working within a toxic environment. For example, in December 2017, LCR filed a complaint on behalf of a Black female court officer who was called the "N-word" by a Chief Court Officer of the Supreme Judicial Court, and mistreated when she reported the behavior. Due to the ongoing and systemic issues that we identified, we requested a Department of Justice investigation into the Court's employment practices.



Education

Since filing *Morgan v. Hennigan*, Boston's school desegregation case, LCR has worked to protect the civil and educational rights of Massachusetts students. Today, LCR continues its fight for equal educational rights by advocating for fair school discipline, promoting racial equity in school admission and funding, and protecting the educational rights of undocumented students.

Fostering Racial Diversity at Boston Latin School and Preserving it at Harvard

Boston's exam schools, the top schools in our city, have long been held out as the merit-based means of upward mobility for the children of Boston's working-class families. But when our recent complaint on racial harassment at Boston Latin School (BLS) confirmed a federal civil rights violation, many questioned when and how Boston's exam schools, particularly BLS, came to look so different from the rest of Boston Public Schools (BPS) in terms of the students they serve.

LCR subsequently released *A Broken Mirror: Exam School Admissions Fail to Reflect Boston's Diversity*, together with the **NAACP – Boston Branch**, **Massachusetts Advocates for Children**, the **Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts**, and the **ACLU of Massachusetts**. The report highlights disparities in exam school admission along race and neighborhood lines and calls for citywide review of our exam school admissions policy. In 2018, LCR and our partners held public forums on exam school admissions across Boston's neighborhoods so that we, as a city, can develop better means for valuing and evaluating all of our students.

Meanwhile, LCR, together with our pro bono partners at **Arnold & Porter**, **Asian Americans Advancing Justice**, and the

national **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**, continue our representation of students of color in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, a lawsuit challenging Harvard's use of race in its admissions policy. The suit was brought by the same group behind the unsuccessful challenges to affirmative action in the U.S. Supreme Court's *Fisher v. Texas* case. The matter went to trial in the U.S. District Court in October 2018.

We were granted leave from the Court to give opening and closing statements at trial, and to present student witnesses who testified firsthand about the importance of diversity in higher education.

Ensuring School Funding Equity for Students of Color, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners

LCR represented students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners, together with the **New England Area Conference of the NAACP**, **NAACP - Boston Branch**, and the **Boston Education Justice Alliance** in *Doe v. Peyser*, a lawsuit that sought to eliminate Massachusetts' cap on charter schools. We successfully argued for dismissal of the suit at the Superior Court level, a ruling that was upheld in 2018 by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. **Anderson & Krieger**, our pro bono partner on the case, presented oral argument before the Supreme Judicial Court, explaining that the cap was necessary to preserve educational opportunities for students in traditional public schools, citing evidence that charter schools divert millions of dollars from traditional public schools each year, yet serve proportionately far fewer students with disabilities and English language learners and impose harsher discipline on students of color.



Protecting the Educational Rights of Undocumented Students

Thirty-five years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler v. Doe* that undocumented students have a “fundamental interest” in a public education that cannot be denied on the basis of immigration status. Amidst the panic sparked by federal executive orders on immigration enforcement and a raid targeting Massachusetts, the rights protected by *Plyler* are being threatened. Thanks to research conducted by **Choate, Hall & Stewart**, LCR has been providing technical legal assistance to schools and agencies working to protect and fulfill students’ *Plyler* rights.

In 2018, LCR and a coalition of students’ rights groups, together with **Morgan Lewis**, filed a lawsuit against Boston Public Schools to obtain public records that are being improperly withheld regarding its disturbing practice of sharing student information with federal immigration officials, including ICE via the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC). The Massachusetts Supervisor of Records already ordered BPS to disclose records related to this

school-to-deportation pipeline, but Boston refused to comply.

LCR and the students’ rights groups filed their initial public records request upon learning of an East Boston High School student who was deported based on the report of a run-of-the-mill school incident that was shared by Boston School Police with ICE via the BRIC. The report concerned an incident in which “two students attempted to start a fight but were unsuccessful.” The matter was resolved without any physical altercation: “School administrators along with school police spoke with all the students involved and mediated this incident.”

Nonetheless, the report, coupled with an unsubstantiated gang allegation, was subsequently sent by Boston School Police to the BRIC, a network of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, which includes ICE, and was used as evidence against the student in deportation proceedings. Immigrant families and children are now living in fear. Our lawsuit seeks to uncover documents that would shed further light on this disturbing school practice.



Student Discipline

In 2018, LCR issued a comprehensive report examining the state of school discipline in Massachusetts. The report, *Unfinished Business*, shows that while measurable progress has been made in reducing school suspensions over the past several years, this progress has plateaued, and our most vulnerable students remain disproportionately affected. In particular, Black and Latinx students, students with disabilities, and English language learners are still far more likely than their peers to lose class time for discipline, especially for more minor incidents.

Massachusetts public schools began several years ago to implement Chapter 222, a law to reduce reliance on exclusionary school discipline. Massachusetts did so with good reason: being suspended predicts dropping out, and almost two-thirds of the state's out-of-school suspensions from the prior year were for minor incidents—the cause for which Black and Latinx students were most likely to be suspended. Our 2018 report examines a wealth of data collected since that time, and makes the following key findings:

- Discipline rates have dropped for all students, but progress has plateaued.
- Black and Latinx students, students with disabilities, and English language learners disproportionately lose class time for discipline, often for minor incidents.
- While charter school discipline rates have dropped significantly, charters remain among the highest disciplining schools, along with alternative schools, therapeutic day schools, and, in general, schools in Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley.
- Due to off-the-books suspensions, school-based arrests, and other types of removal, Massachusetts' disciplinary data does not tell the whole story on school discipline.

We will continue to work with our community allies, and in the courts, to preserve equal educational opportunity for our state's most vulnerable populations.



Medical Legal Partnership

Since 2003, LCR has partnered with Massachusetts General Hospital to provide legal assistance to patients at the HealthCare Center in Chelsea.

Working on-site, LCR receives referrals from healthcare providers who identify patients with critical legal needs. The focus is on the most vulnerable patients, including those with disabilities and those threatened with eviction or wrongfully denied public benefits. In collaboration with the health care team, LCR engages in a broad range of advocacy: representing patients in court; negotiating with recalcitrant landlords; advocating before administrative agencies for public benefits—all with the aim of improving health outcomes by addressing related legal needs.

Expanded Services in 2018

In 2017, we expanded the services of our Medical Legal Partnership. An LCR attorney now meets with clients on two days a week instead of one. This expansion comes at a critical time, when our clients are facing increased confusion, fear, and uncertainty. Rents in Chelsea and neighboring communities have doubled. Landlords are refusing Section 8 vouchers preferring to rent to market rate tenants.

At the same time, the political climate is also deeply unsettling for our clients. Those with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) fear losing their right to live and work in the United States. Vulnerable families are afraid to go to immigration appointments or to risk encountering ICE on the courthouse steps. Immigrant families applying for a green card are fearful of being labeled “public charges.” They have already started withdrawing claims for disability, closing their public benefits accounts, and dropping off the wait list for Section 8 and public housing. As we challenge these conditions through impact litigation (see **Immigration** section), we are assisting individual families as well:

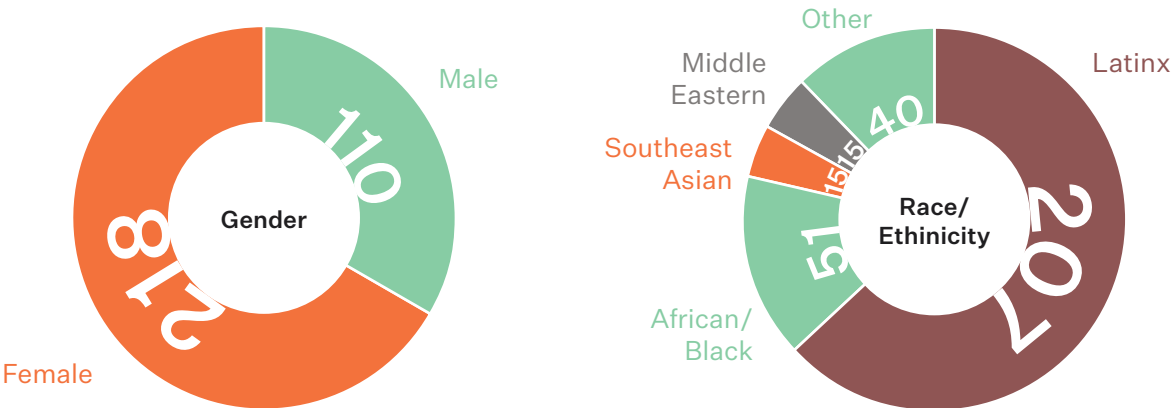
- In 2018, we have handled over 540 appointments, involving 328 new clients and claims.
- We secured and protected disability benefits for 54 children and adults, bringing much-needed economic support to low-income households.
- We helped 14 families avoid eviction after negotiation with landlords, and 7 additional families obtained affordable housing.
- We assisted 13 persons in becoming naturalized U.S. citizens, and have an additional 16 applications pending.



We also secured 5 guardianships for incapacitated adults and are obtaining child support orders against non-custodial fathers. Together with our partners at MGH, we are addressing the complex interactions between race, immigration status, poverty, healthcare, and the law.

Medical Legal Partnership 2018

New Clients



Lead Paint Lawsuit Settlement on Behalf of Disabled Child

During a routine pediatric visit at the HealthCare Center, three-year-old Naomi was found to have an extremely elevated blood lead level, 12 times the level of concern determined by the CDC. Naomi was hospitalized for five days, followed by painful chelation therapy. She was living in an apartment in Everett where lead inspectors had found numerous accessible hazards both inside and outside the multifamily house. Ten months after the inspection, Naomi was already showing signs of speech delay and aggressive impulsivity, but no de-leading had taken place, no other family in the building had been notified, and no penalties had been imposed on the owner.

Healthcare providers referred the case to our Medical Legal Partnership, and LCR worked in concert with a private attorney to file suit against the property owner on behalf of Naomi. After a year of litigation and a year of negotiations, a settlement was reached to establish a special needs trust for the child’s benefit. The trust will eventually provide \$150,000.00 for Naomi’s health, education, and well-being.

LAWYERS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS CALLS FOR **DIVERSITY** IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

According to the ABA,

86% of all lawyers are White,

less than 5% are Black,

only 5% are Latino,

and only 4% are Asian.

Less than 36% are women.



LCR

**LAWYERS FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
BOSTON**

Advancing Equ





50th Anniversary Celebration

Supporters & Sponsors

Underwriter (\$50,000 or higher)

WilmerHale
Anonymous

Honorary Circle (\$25,000)

Foley Hoag
Goodwin LLP
Hyams Foundation
Bill Lee
Lisa Pirozzolo

Patron Circle (\$20,000)

Nixon Peabody

Leadership Circle (\$15,000)

Hogan Lovells
Latham & Watkins

Visionary (\$10,000)

Anderson & Kreiger
Choate, Hall & Stewart
Vinita Ferrera
Poppi Georges-Massey
David Godkin & Pam Haran
Jim & Patti Messenger
Morgan Lewis
Nutter McClennen & Fish
Ropes & Gray
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
Sullivan & Worcester

Champions (\$5,000)

Richard Belin
Boston Bar Association
The Boston Foundation
Brown Rudnick
Thomas Dougherty
Eastern Bank
John Hancock
William Horne
MAMLEO
MGH Center for Community Health Improvement
Thomas Mela
Mintz Levin
Jody Newman
State Street
Tufts Health Plan

Partners (\$2,500)

Anna Dodson
Boston Society of Vulcans
Casner & Edwards
Citrix
Fair Work P.C.
Holland & Knight
Inez Friedman-Boyce
Locke Lord
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Edward J. Barshak Fund for Justice

On April 27, 2016, LCR launched a campaign to establish the Edward J. Barshak Fund for Justice to provide dedicated resources for our anti-discrimination work. We plan to replenish the fund when we win cases with attorney fee awards. In this manner, the fund will continue to support our work for decades to come. As of October 12, 2018, we have raised \$165,960. We are proud to acknowledge our supporters.

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We are proud to acknowledge the generous support we have received in connection with BizGrow, our one day accelerator for small businesses.

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Massachusetts Lawmakers Introduce Resolution

Honoring Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice

Bicameral Resolution Marks 50th Anniversary of the Lawyers' Committee's Boston Affiliate

Washington, DC — United States Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Stephen F. Lynch, along with their colleagues from the Massachusetts congressional delegation, today introduced a resolution to honor the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice. The resolution, which was introduced today in both chambers of Congress, commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, the Boston affiliate of the Washington, D.C.-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and recognizes the organization's many contributions to the fight for civil rights and equal justice for all. Joining Senator Warren and Representative Lynch in sponsoring the resolution were Senator Edward J. Markey and Representatives Richard E. Neal, James P. McGovern, Michael E. Capuano, Niki Tsongas, William Keating, Joseph P. Kennedy III, Katherine Clark and Seth Moulton.

"With the foundations of our democracy under attack every day, it is critical that we have organizations such as the Lawyers' Committee at the forefront

of the fight for equal justice," said Senator Elizabeth Warren. "The excellent work that the Lawyers' Committee in Boston has done over the past 50 years to protect the rights of the most vulnerable among us deserves recognition in the U.S. Congress, and I am glad to join my colleagues in introducing this resolution to express our gratitude to them."

"I am honored to join my colleagues to help recognize the wonderful and positive impact made by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice to the advancements of civil rights for the past 50 years," said Congressman Stephen F. Lynch. "It has been a blessing to our society that we have organizations such as the Lawyers' Committee in Boston that will 'fight the good fight' to protect the Constitutional rights of all our people."

"Now more than ever, we need the Lawyers' Committee to stand up and fight the daily attacks on our justice system and fight for those who need protection the most," said Senator Edward J. Markey. "It is the invaluable, irreplaceable work over the past half century

by the legal warriors at the Lawyers' Committee in Boston that has helped protect the rights of all Americans. Lawyers' Committee is doing God's work every day, and it is time Congress recognize them for their accomplishments."

"As Dean of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, I am pleased to join my colleagues in support of the extraordinary work done by the Lawyers Committee's Boston Affiliate for the past 50 years. At this moment in our nation's history, the American people count on organizations that fight for civil rights and economic justice every day. The Lawyers Committee continues to stand up for the most vulnerable in our society and that is why I am proud to co-sponsor this important resolution today," said Congressman Richard E. Neal.

"Equal justice under law is not inevitable. It takes hard work and perseverance to fight for what's right," said Congressman Jim McGovern. "For 50 years, that's exactly what the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice in Boston has done. Their tireless work to oppose discrimination

and speak out on behalf of disenfranchised communities is an inspiration to us all. I'm so proud to join my colleagues in recognizing their unwavering commitment to justice."

"Since its inception, the Lawyers' Committee of Boston has set out to ensure that the civil rights and liberties of all Americans, especially the most vulnerable members of our communities, are protected," said Congressman Bill Keating. "It is only right that Congress recognize their perseverance and dedication to justice as they work to promote their mission in a time when rights are being challenged almost daily. Along with my colleagues, I honor them for their 50 years of outstanding work and look forward to the critical contributions they will make over the next 50."

"Laws are little more than words on a page until advocates, activists and lawyers give them meaning and ensure the promises they make extend to every single American life," said Congressman Joe Kennedy III. "For five decades, the Lawyers' Committee has fought for a nation where laws are applied equally and justly regardless of a person's skin color, gender or zip code. With this resolution, Congress can play a small part in recognizing the contributions and sacrifices of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice."

"For fifty years, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice has led the fight for a more inclusive and just America," said Congresswoman Katherine Clark. "We continue to need their leadership and righteous advocacy to ensure that we live up to our country's promise of equal and fair treatment under the law."

The Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, whose mission is to secure equal justice for all through the rule of law, particularly in the areas of criminal justice, fair housing and community development, economic justice, educational opportunities, and voting rights. The national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law was founded in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy and their Boston-based affiliate, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, was founded five years later, in 1968.

The resolution highlights several contributions that the national Lawyers' Committee and its eight local affiliates have made to the struggle for equal justice in the United States and around the world, including:

- Advancing the cause of the civil rights movement by pursuing cases involving voting rights, racial segregation, education, economic justice, fair housing, criminal justice, hate crimes, and more;

- Contributing to the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
- Leading the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan voter protection program;
- Contributing to the enactment and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act;
- Working to combat the scourge of hate crimes and racially motivated violence impacting communities;
- Joining the movement to end apartheid in the Republic of South Africa;
- Working to develop and enact the Civil Rights Act of 1991; and
- Joining relief efforts during the humanitarian crisis caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005;

The resolution celebrates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice and expresses gratitude for the national Lawyers' Committee and all of its 8 local affiliates for their work to advance civil rights and their dedication to the pursuit of equal justice under the law.

In addition to Boston, the Lawyers' Committee has local affiliates in Chicago, Illinois; Denver, Colorado; Jackson, Mississippi; Los Angeles, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Francisco, California; and Washington, District of Columbia.

Boston City Council Resolution Honors LCR

Official Resolution of the Boston City Council By Councilor Kim Janey

WHEREAS: The Lawyers for Civil Rights was founded in 1968 as The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association, following the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, riots in many northern cities, and the report of the Kerner Commission that the nation was becoming more segregated and unequal; *and*,

WHEREAS: Lawyers for Civil Rights helped lead the fight to desegregate Boston's public schools, and remains very active in addressing issues related to student assignment, transportation, teacher diversity, and school discipline; *and*,

WHEREAS: Lawyers for Civil Rights provides free legal assistances to small businesses owned by minorities, immigrants, and low-income entrepreneurs; *and*,

WHEREAS: Lawyers for Civil Rights works to protect our democracy by coordinating the largest non-partisan voter protection campaign in Massachusetts and participating in litigation to protect the franchise in Massachusetts; *and*,

WHEREAS: Lawyers for Civil Rights is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a gala at the John J. Moakley Courthouse, and will be honoring the bravery, courage, and work of Anita Hill. **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That Boston City Council congratulates Lawyers for Civil Rights for its remarkable work and accomplishment and extends its best wishes for continued success; be it further resolved that the Boston City Council hereby declares October 18, 2018 as Civil Rights and Economic Justice Day in the City of Boston; be it further resolved that this resolution be duly signed by the President of the City Council, and a copy thereof transmitted by the Clerk to be made part of the permanent record of the City of Boston.



By: Andrea J Campbell
President of the City Council
Attest: Shauneen Peeney
Clerk of the City of Boston
Offered by: [Signature]
Date: October 18, 2018

Timeline & Case History

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.

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.

1970

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

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.

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 Department

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 Dep't., 780 F.2d 5 (1st Cir. 1985). A court upheld the consent decree's extension to lieutenants and captains in Stuart v. Roache, 951 F.2d 446 (1st Cir. 1991).

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.

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.

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.

1982

Established Project to Combat Racial Violence

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.

1986

Established Fair Housing Project

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.

1988

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.

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

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 minority neighborhoods to take out high interest loans, in violation of consumer protection and civil rights laws.

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.

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.

1997

**Julks
v. Neptune Towers**

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

1998

Lawyers' Committee participates 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.

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.

2000

**Mendes
v. Sullivan**

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

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 Latinxs from voting.

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 African-American State House 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 Massachusetts Civil Service Commission found in

2013 that the hair test is scientifically unreliable and required Boston Police to reinstate six officers.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

2010

Bonds v. City of 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, Inc.

Successfully represented a Sikh employee, who faced religious discrimination.

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.

2013

Pulido v. National Grid

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

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 charter 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.

2015

Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard

On behalf of a multi-racial group of students, filed intervention to support Harvard’s use of race-conscious admissions in a Title VI challenge to this practice brought by the same group behind Fisher v. Texas.

Defay v. Boston Police Department

MCAD found that Boston Police discriminates 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.

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 Aus-

tin, 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 Dept. 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 renters with distinctively White names. 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 court upheld the constitutionality of the charter cap, preserving vital resources for traditional public schools.

2017

Romero et al. v. McCormick & Schmick’s

In response to #MeToo, filed sexual harassment lawsuit on behalf of five low-wage Latina workers of 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 seeks to preserve federal funding and to protect local control over law enforcement priorities.

BizGrow

Launched signature Economic Justice Project event, connecting more than 150 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.

Huot v. City of Lowell

Federal voting rights lawsuit filed on behalf of Asian-American and Latinx residents of Lowell, charging that the City’s at-large electoral system illegally dilutes the vote of communities 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.

Amazon Class Action

Class action filed at the MCAD 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

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.

Matter of C. Doe

First case of its kind filed with public defender and legal services organizations to block immigration arrests in courthouses. Lawsuit seeks writ of protection to prevent the arrest of immigrants with pending court matters.

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 unlawful detained and denied bail based solely on his immigration status.

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