2026

Laws alone are not enough

LCR | LAWYERS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS™

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About Lawyers for Civil Rights

Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) was founded in 1968 to bring the struggle for civil rights from the streets to the courtroom.

LCR works with people of color, immigrants, and low-income communities to fight discrimination, foster equity, and pursue justice through creative and courageous legal advocacy, education, and economic empowerment. In partnership with law firms and community allies, we provide free, life-changing legal support to individuals, families, and small businesses.

LCR plays a vital role in our communities as the pro bono legal arm to dozens of grassroots organizations and thousands of low-income clients who would otherwise not have access to justice.

Since our first major victory integrating Boston Public Schools in 1974, LCR has built a rich legacy of impact, promoting equity and justice in our clients' lives and communities. We achieve our mission through impact litigation, legal and policy advocacy, and community education and empowerment.

We organize our work according to impact areas that represent critical battlegrounds for civil rights today, and that address the many ways our clients experience discrimination. As new issues arise, we move quickly to establish innovative practice areas—ensuring we remain on the front lines of justice.

The struggle continues, but the future is bright. Thank you for joining us tonight as we celebrate 58 years of civil rights advocacy.

Event Program

6:30 PM

Welcome

Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Lawyers for Civil Rights

Awards

Rosa Parks Keeper of the Flame Award
Lisa Owens
Hyams Foundation

Legal Warrior Award
WilmerHale

Economic Justice Champion Award
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.

Diversity Champion Award
The Boston Society of Vulcans

Fund the Civil Rights Movement

Inez Friedman-Boyce
PeoplesBank
Lawyers for Civil Rights
Board Co-Chair

Colin Van Dyke
Anderson & Kreiger
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Talk is good.
Action is better.
$91,434
given to LCR since May 2025
$5,150
MAY 2025
$23,908
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$67,180
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WilmerHale is proud to support Lawyers for Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Reception.
WilmerHale is honored to receive LCR's Legal Warrior Award recognizing its pro bono leadership and commitment to equity and justice.
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Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Lawyers for Civil Rights

Message from the Executive Director

Across the country, we are facing a civil rights crisis. Escalating ICE abuses, rising racial harassment, increasingly segregated schools and neighborhoods, and unprecedented threats to our democracy. Protections are being rolled back faster than institutions can respond.

LCR Was Built for This Moment

We act quickly. We go to court. We stand with people when it matters most. The law remains one of the most powerful tools we have to fight back. This moment demands more than just a reaction to fear. It requires hope, vision, and bold action. We cannot simply fight defensive battles; we must proactively build a future defined by dignity, equity, and lasting opportunity.

Grounding Our Work in a New Space

In October, LCR will move to a new office and community space directly across from the Boston Common. This represents a massive leap forward for our organization and the communities we serve. This is more than just a change of address—it is a physical manifestation of our commitment to systemic change and social justice.

At the heart of our new space is **BizGrow Central**, a first-of-its-kind, multi-functional entrepreneurship hub where civil rights and economic opportunity converge.

Space and location matter. By anchoring ourselves downtown we are democratizing access to the city's economic core. We are bringing inclusive growth, renewed energy, and diverse foot traffic straight to the heart of Boston.

What BizGrow Central Will Achieve

BizGrow Central is designed to close the gap between universal talent and unequal opportunity. It will serve as a hub for wealth-building, offering:

- **A Collaborative Ecosystem**: A professional workspace where entrepreneurs of color, women, immigrants, and low-income business owners can connect, innovate, and thrive.
- **Wrap-Around Support**: A single destination that brings together legal support, business planning, technical assistance, branding strategy, and financial navigation.
- **Cross-Disciplinary Mentorship**: A shared environment where lawyers, business advisors, volunteers, and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence work side-by-side with small business owners to solve complex problems.

Building the Future Together

Small business owners are transformational community leaders. By equipping them with the legal support, technology, and social capital they need to succeed, we are creating a resilient foundation for community wealth that will outlast the moment.

We cannot do this work alone.

Your presence tonight signals something powerful: you are not just watching this movement—you are helping us build it. Your generosity, your pro bono engagement, and your unwavering support directly determine the scale and speed at which we can push forward.

Thank you for standing with LCR, for celebrating our victories, and for helping us build this vibrant new chapter for civil rights and economic justice.

GOOD STANDS UP

Eastern Bank is committed to recognizing the good in our communities and celebrating the work of

LAWYERS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

We proudly support the 2026 CIVIL RIGHTS RECEPTION

Congratulations to
Lisa Owens, WilmerHale,
The Boston Society of the Vulcans,
and Mintz

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BizGrow CENTRAL

Where Small Businesses Come to Thrive

LCR is excited to announce the planned opening of BizGrow Central, the only physical hub in Greater Boston where underserved and diverse entrepreneurs can access legal support, business guidance, professional workspace, technology, and peer community under one roof – all for free.

BizGrow Central will open on **October 19, 2026**, at **141 Tremont Street across from the Boston Common**.

Growing wealth in historically disadvantaged communities is a critical civil rights issue. For over 25 years, LCR has helped close wealth equity gaps by fueling equitable economic growth, expanding access to economic justice, and directly supporting thousands of small business owners. Through LCR | BizGrow, we provide free legal, business, and technical assistance to more than 2,000 low-income, minority, immigrant, and women business owners each year—ensuring they encounter fewer obstacles and more opportunities on their journeys to economic independence.

Building on BizGrow's success and popularity, BizGrow Central will serve as a home for economic opportunity in downtown Boston. This free entrepreneurship hub will provide aspiring and established small business owners with access to pro bono legal services, business support, mentorship, skill-building programs, collaborative workspace, and connections to Boston's broader small business ecosystem.

BizGrow Central will also help revitalize downtown Boston by bringing new energy to underutilized office space and attracting hundreds of entrepreneurs to the heart of the city.

Through this new physical infrastructure, LCR is fostering economic growth, resilience, and opportunity for small businesses. BizGrow Central will strengthen Greater Boston's small business ecosystem and offer immediate and long-term benefits, including:

- Access to free legal resources, business tools, workspace, and technology.
- Skill-building opportunities that strengthen business literacy, digital capacity, and legal knowledge.
- Holistic support to help entrepreneurs solve problems, avoid costly mistakes, and grow sustainably.
- Peer learning, networking, and mentorship that build social capital.

LCR Presents

2026 AWARDS

Lisa Owens

Executive Director, The Hyams Foundation

LCR is proud to honor Lisa Owens with the prestigious Keeper of the Flame Award, which commemorates the legacy of civil rights icon Rosa Parks. Lisa brings over 30 years of experience building local grassroots organizations and supporting local and national movements. As the Executive Director of the Hyams Foundation, Lisa supports Massachusetts-based racial justice organizing groups working to build power and transform systems.

Lisa previously served as the Executive Director of City Life/Vida Urbana, a prominent housing justice group that organizes communities against displacement and builds collective power for systemic change. A movement builder and popular educator, Lisa has taught community organizing and nonprofit management courses at local universities. Currently, she serves on the boards of Boston Impact Initiative, Boston Ujima Project and Funders for LGBTQ Issues.

WilmerHale

At a time when many law firms have scaled back pro bono engagement, WilmerHale remains one of the few firms consistently standing shoulder to shoulder with LCR. With the 2026 Legal Warrior Award, we honor the firm's willingness to uphold the autonomy of the legal profession in the face of heightened governmental pressure. We are deeply grateful for WilmerHale's commitment to LCR and our clients over the years—defending diversity, reuniting separated families, safeguarding vulnerable people, and pursuing litigation and small business interventions that build hope.

A steadfast commitment to pro bono has been WilmerHale's hallmark since the early 20th century. Over the decades, WilmerHale has achieved groundbreaking pro bono victories. Today, as measured by The American Lawyer's 2025 Pro Bono Scorecard, WilmerHale's pro bono program ranks third among the 115 reporting firms.

MINTZ

Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.

The Economic Justice Champion Award honors leaders who are actively working to close the racial wealth gap and foster entrepreneurship in under-resourced communities. For years, Mintz has been a steadfast pro bono partner to LCR | BizGrow, providing hundreds of hours of free transactional legal support to small business owners and entrepreneurs. The Mintz team has played a critical role in drafting contract templates and fact sheets for small business owners; providing 1:1 legal assistance at BizGrow Winterfest and the BizGrow Boston Conference; supporting dozens of small business clients through pro bono representation; and delivering impactful workshops that directly enhance the capacity of small businesses.

Now, as LCR prepares to open the doors of a new entrepreneurship hub at BizGrow Central, Mintz has once again stepped up to play a critical role in developing tools needed for the smooth operation of the expanded programming, including a new BizGrow Central member agreement, privacy policy, and more.

The Boston Society of Vulcans

LCR applauds The Boston Society of Vulcans' efforts to protect and expand diversity and community representation at the fire department.

Founded in 1969, the Vulcans are a community-based nonprofit organization of Black and Latino firefighters in Boston. Their mission is to encourage Bostonians to pursue public safety careers. The Boston Society of Vulcans is a member of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters, an association formed in New York City to address the larger issue of racial discrimination that Black firefighters face nationwide.

Through their core mission and daily actions, the Vulcans have long advocated for people of color to see themselves reflected at every level of the public safety sector. They support applicants of color through the hiring process and are committed to improving the workplace for people of color and women. The Vulcans' advocacy at the State House led to the creation of a new fire cadet program, and regular events in local schools expose all children to careers in the fire department.

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2026 HONOREES

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Anderson & Kreiger is honored to stand alongside LCR, as well as the many volunteers and supporters whose dedication continues to advance equity and justice throughout Massachusetts and beyond.

We congratulate this year's honorees and celebrate the collective work that makes progress possible.

ANDERSON KREIGER

Fried Frank is proud to support *Lawyers for Civil Rights*

Fried Frank

Proud to support LCR and its BizGrow Program.

Congratulations to all of the 2026 Awardees!

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Timeline & Case History

Icon Key

- National
- BizGrow
- Education
- Voting
- HealthJustice
- Immigration
- Police
- Housing
- Workplace
- ClimateJustice

2026

BizGrow: 25 Years

BizGrow marks its 25th anniversary—and the BizGrow Conference its 10th—by launching **BizGrow Central**, a new hub for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Greater Boston Latino Network v. Noem

Filed landmark federal lawsuit challenging ICE policy authorizing warrantless home invasions.

Guerrero et al. v. U.S.

First-of-its-kind lawsuit challenging ICE's "smash and grab" policy after agents attacked a family driving to church on Mother's Day.

Hobbs et al. v. Galvin

Successful SJC case compelling release of jail-based voting reports.

BizGrow Worcester

Launched the first annual BizGrow Conference in Worcester.

Advancing Fair Housing

SJC amicus brief and advocacy pressing towns to comply with the MBTA Communities Zoning Law. Opposed HUD efforts to eliminate disparate impact protections nationally.

In re: MCAD

Advocacy with the Urban League and allies against the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination for intake deficiencies.

2025

Doe et al. v. Trump et al.

Within hours of Trump's inauguration, filed landmark lawsuit challenging executive order targeting birthright citizenship. Secured preliminary injunction and First Circuit victory.

HAU et al. v. Trump et al.

Federal lawsuit challenging rollback of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians and Venezuelans.

City of Chelsea, City of Somerville v. Trump et al.

Federal lawsuit defending cities' ability to adopt policies limiting local entanglement in federal immigration enforcement.

Chrispin v. Cox

Lawsuit on behalf of a Black-Haitian veteran challenging his demotion from the Boston Police Department after accepting an appointment to the POST Commission created in response to George Floyd's murder.

Ramirez-Sanan v. ICE

FTCA complaint on behalf of a mother and her children unlawfully and violently detained by ICE.

Guerrero v. ICE

FTCA complaint on behalf of family violently attacked by ICE while driving to church on Mother's Day.

LCR v. MIAA

Public records lawsuit against the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) seeking disclosure of discrimination and bullying incidents at high school sporting events.

Artist-in-Residence

Launched a new Artist-in-Residence program with two inaugural artists selected: Worcester-based Chanel Thervil and Missouri-based Damon Davis.

Nonprofit Sector Effectiveness

Legal clinics helping dozens of nonprofits navigate the evolving federal DEI and immigration landscape.

Model Lease for Small Businesses

Created a small-business-friendly commercial lease to help entrepreneurs navigate retail leasing.

Protecting Courthouses

Advocated to end ICE arrests in and around courthouses while pressing for investigation into local police entanglement with ICE.

Pineda v. ICE

FTCA complaint on behalf of lawful immigrant detained by ICE on his way to work.

Carbajal v. J. Derenzo Co.

MCAD complaint on behalf of Latina construction worker facing harassment on the job.

LCR v. Town of Saugus

Successful case compelling Saugus Public Schools to revise admissions policies that unlawfully limited access for immigrant students.

2024

Lewis v. Melrose

Civil rights complaint on behalf of a Black 11-year-old after a classmate cut one of her braids in class.

Adams v. Marblehead

Superior Court lawsuit on behalf of a 9-year-old Black student unlawfully restrained at school more than 11 times in four months.

Edwards v. Framingham Public Schools

MCAD complaint on behalf of former DEI Manager exposing retaliation for reporting discrimination.

Food Entrepreneurship

Launched a series guiding food businesses through key legal and industry topics.

BizGrow Springfield

Expanded the BizGrow Conference to Springfield.

Yield Giving Grant

Awarded $2 million in unrestricted funding from MacKenzie Scott.

TrailblazHers v. Boston Athletic Association

Federal lawsuit filed against the Newton Police Department and the Boston Athletic Association for racially profiling a Black running crew at the 2023 Boston Marathon. Defeated motion to dismiss in 2025.

Case v. Parakeet Communities

Lawsuit on behalf of a class of mobile home residents who have been subjected to unfair and deceptive practices, including extreme rent increases. Defendent owns mobile parks across the East Coast.

Model Anti-Bullying Policy

In response to rising hate crimes in K-12 schools, worked with METCO students to develop a model policy to combat identity-based bullying, featuring artwork by Ohio-based Brandon Black.

BECMA v. Yellen

Federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of small business reporting requirements under the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA), helping to make compliance voluntary nationally by 2026.

Palacios v. Melrose School District

Federal civil rights complaint filed on behalf of a Black 12-year-old who experienced racial violence at school.

Lopez v. Southwick-Tolland–Granville School District

Successful federal civil rights case in response to white students conducting a mock slave auction to sell Black students. Case settled in 2025.

Owens v. Benjamin Healthcare Center

Successful receivership petition filed to stabilize and address mismanagement at the Edgar Benjamin Healthcare Center, a non-profit nursing home serving vulnerable elderly residents of color.

Kapur v. Boston Public Schools

Discrimination lawsuit filed on behalf of a South Asian multilingual educator and administrator forced out of Boston Public Schools after raising concerns about unlawful treatment of English Language Learners.

HRI v. Charlesgate Realty Group

First-of-its-kind "tester" lawsuit filed in MA against twenty landlords and real estate brokers for engaging in discrimination against subsidized housing voucher holders.

In re: City of Cambridge

Advocacy in response to disparity study confirming the City of Cambridge's systemic failure to contract with minority-owned businesses.

BizGrow Elevate

Launched new programming to provide deeper technical support to small businesses.

East Boston Cultural District

Launched community-led process for creating a cultural district designation for East Boston. Boston City Council passed favorable resolution in 2025.

Commonwealth v. Lopez-Ortiz

Filed amicus brief in MA Court of Appeal arguing that prospective jurors should not be disqualified from jury service for expressing concerns about racial bias in the criminal justice system.

In re: Nichols College

In partnership with the Worcester NAACP, advocacy on behalf of two Black students who were unfairly penalized by Nichols College and the Dudley Police Department for acting in self-defense during an off-campus altercation.

In re: Walpole

Secured relief for Black third-grader handcuffed by police in school.

Newsome v. Gadles

MCAD complaint filed on behalf of a disabled, Black condominium owner.

Reina Carolina Morales Rojas

Following the disappearance of an East Boston immigrant woman, LCR mobilized law enforcement, engaged in extensive community outreach, and petitioned for humanitarian immigration relief for the orphaned children.

Revere Election Reform

Successfully demanded that the City of Revere change its manner of electing its School Committee from an at-large system, which diluted the vote of communities of color, to a more fair district-based system.

2023

Chica Project v. Harvard

Federal civil rights complaint challenging Harvard's discriminatory practice of giving preferential treatment in the admissions process to legacy applicants with familial ties to wealthy donors and alumni. The case is driving a nationwide shift away from legacy admissions, with universities ending the practice and states banning it.

Florence Project v. DHS

Federal lawsuit filed with Arizona allies to preserve the availability of humanitarian parole at the U.S. border.

In re: Faneuil Hall

Advocacy to protect vendors of color at Faneuil Hall, resulting in change of ownership at the site.

SFFA v. Harvard

Represented diverse group of Harvard alumni and students of color in defense of affirmative action policies. Led efforts to explain the limited reach of the Supreme Court's ruling on DEI.

Commonwealth v. Dew

Successful amicus brief in SJC arguing that a Black Muslim defendant is entitled to an automatic new trial where his court-appointed attorney is discovered to be openly racist.

Mack v. District Attorney

Successful amicus brief urging SJC to rule that police misconduct investigations are public records.

MassHealth Redetermination Process

Advocacy to ensure that low-income families retain MassHealth coverage after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alcarraz v. Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

Lawsuit filed to stop the Commonwealth from implementing changes to the emergency shelter system. Lawsuit resulted in the State Legislature appropriating hundreds of millions of dollars for emergency shelter.

Texas v. DHS

Filed amicus brief in the Southern District of Texas and the Fifth Circuit to help preserve humanitarian parole for refugees.

BizGrow Arts & Culture Series

Launched arts and culture series to foster the creative economy and support arts-based entrepreneurship.

DEI Guidance for Schools

Released guide on state and federal requirements for diversity, equity and inclusion programs for K-12 public schools.

In re: RIBBA

Advocacy on behalf of the Rhode Island Black Business Association (RIBBA) in response to a disparity study confirming Rhode Island's systemic failure to contract with minority-owned businesses.

In re: Crown Act

On behalf of three Black middle school basketball players, advocacy enforcing the Massachusetts's Crown Act against the National Federation of State High School Associations.

O'Shea v. City of Boston

Amicus brief and intervention filed on behalf of community groups in municipal redistricting case. Case ultimately settled.

Vocational Education Justice Coalition v. DESE

Successful civil rights complaint challenging vocational high schools' exclusionary admissions criteria, which disproportionately exclude students of color, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.

Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance v. Town of Holden

Successful lawsuit against Holden for failing to comply with the MBTA Communities Zoning Law.

MBTA Communities Zoning Law Compliance

Monitoring and pressing for compliance of MBTA Communities Zoning Law, which mandates multi-family housing zoning districts in 175 Greater Boston municipalities.

In re: Haitian Americans United

Civil rights complaint filed on behalf of Haitian migrants confined under a bridge near Del Rio, Texas. DHS instituted non-discrimination training for deployment of Horse Patrol Units.

Fortes v. Eastern Fisheries

Successfully settled MCAD complaint on behalf of a Black Cape Verdean woman experiencing sexual harassment and discrimination in a New Bedford fishery.

2022

Civil Rights Summit

Launched annual strategic convening of attorneys and community groups.

Lauren Sampson Fellowship

Created fellowship to honor the memory and legacy of Lauren Sampson.

LCR | HealthJustice

Rebranded our longstanding Medical-Legal Partnership as LCR | HealthJustice. Project closed after COVID-19 pandemic in 2026.

Johnson v. Arlington Police Department

Successfully settled federal lawsuit filed on behalf of a young Black man who was racially profiled, unlawfully stopped, and arrested while the Arlington Police Department was chasing a white suspect.

Alianza Americas v. DeSantis

Federal class action lawsuit filed on behalf of migrants fraudulently induced to travel to Martha's Vineyard by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and his co-conspirators.

Doe v. Austin

Federal lawsuit sucessfully reinstated a young Latinx man who was separated from the Vermont National Guard and ROTC as a result of being HIV positive.

Russo v. Cummings

Taxpayer action to invalidate Barnstable County's "287g agreement" with ICE, which purports to authorize the sheriff to perform federal immigration enforcement. Following suit, sheriff voluntarily terminated agreement.

In re: 1127 Harrison

In collaboration with ACEDONE, LCR challenged the displacement of Roxbury-based small businesses owned by immigrant women of color from Ethiopia and Somalia.

In re: East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

Filed complaint with the AG, alleging discrimination against low-income, non-English speaking patients and members of Centro Presente.

Momousette v. Medford

Complaint filed with the Medford Police Department on behalf of two Black teenagers who were wrongfully stopped, detained, and threatened with firearms.

Haverhill Election Reform

In partnership with community groups, successfully demanded that the City of Haverhill change from its at-large electoral system for City Council and School Committee, which diluted the vote of communities of color, to a more equitable district-based system.

2021

In re: Community Center

Represented the family of an 8-year old Black child who was subjected to bullying and racial discrimination at a summer camp, culminating in other campers wrapping a tent strap around the boy's neck. Secured reforms to camp policy, anti-bias training, and damages.

DCF Language Access

On behalf of limited English proficient families and community groups, filed a federal civil rights complaint against the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF), alleging that failure to provide language access services was unjustly resulting in family separation. Following the complaint, DCF substantially increased its spending on interpretation and translation.

In re: Impounded Case

Amicus filed successfully urging SJC to require that Department of Children and Families (DCF) take more substantial steps to reunify families, particularly in light of the deep racial justice issues present in the foster care system.

Lawyers for Civil Rights v. USCIS

Successful FOIA litigation releasing federal records concerning the "public charge" rule, designed to deter immigrants from applying for public benefits.

Ortega v. U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Federal lawsuit filed on behalf of a permanent resident after a series of invasive body searches at Logan Airport.

Appia v. Lowell Regional Transit Authority

Title VI complaint on behalf of a Black woman experiencing ongoing discriminatory remarks and treatment by a series of Lowell Regional Transit Authority bus drivers. LRTA conducted an investigation, and LCR successfully negotiated a resolution.

Greenroots v. EPA

Lawsuit filed with Greenroots and Conservation Law Foundation challenging EPA's interpretation of Title VI in connection with proposed energy substation in East Boston.

Vaccine Equity & Justice

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

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. Case led to reforms, including sheltered market program.

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. Policy upheld by federal court and First Circuit.

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 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

20 Years of BizGrow

BizGrow celebrated 20 years of building wealth in low-income communities, serving over 1,000 small businesses annually.

Worcester Interfaith v. City of Worcester

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

Democratizing Redistricting

After release of 2020 Census data, ensured that the redistricting process was fair, equitable, transparent, and community driven. Coordinated efforts with the Drawing Democracy Coalition.

Henry v. Needham

Filed federal civil rights lawsuit on behalf of a Black father of four, who was handcuffed in broad daylight on a main street because police falsely believed he was a shoplifter.

2020

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.

In re: Vasquez

Successfully advocated on behalf of victims of a hate crime in East Boston.

Commonwealth v. Long

SJC amicus resulting in major state criminal law reform providing victims of racial profiling with opportunities to challenge the legality of race-based traffic stops.

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.

Cofield v. McDonald

Taxpayer lawsuit challenging entanglement and 287(g) contracts between local sheriffs and immigration officials. Case led to contract termination.

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 MA 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.

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, and the facility subsequently closed. Lawsuit served as a blueprint for COVID-19 litigation across the country.

Health Disparities

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

New York v. Trump

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

Morgan v. Boston Police Department

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

Wiretap Statute

Successful amicus brief challenging the constitutionality of wiretap statute as it applies to recordings of police in the public performance of their duties in MA.

Cruz v. C&W Facilities Services

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

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.

Juarez v. SoFi

Class action filed in San Francisco challenging discriminatory policy of denying DACA recipients access to loans.

NSTAR

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.

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.

MA Fair Housing Center 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.

Everett Election Reform

In partnership with community groups, successfully demanded change to Everett's at-large electoral system for electing local officials, which resulted in vote dilution for communities of color, to a more equitable district-based system.

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.

School-to-Deportation Pipeline

Public records cases filed to shed light on Boston Public Schools' practice of sharing student information with immigration officials. Litigation and community advocacy resulted in reforms strictly limiting information-sharing.

Discrimination at MFA

On behalf of high school students and educators of color who experienced discrimination while on a field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), demanded an investigation by the MA Attorney General, ultimately resulting in a comprehensive settlement that included sweeping reforms designed to promote diversity and prevent racial profiling.

2019

LCR | BizGrow

Rebranded 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.

Census Advocacy

Launched multi-pronged campaign to ensure a full and accurate 2020 Census count, including a multilingual Census Hotline.

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

Supreme Court 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 required 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.

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. Biden Administration abandoned the practice.

Gregory v. Commonwealth

Class action successfully 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.

IIIC v. Cuccinelli

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

Ryan v. ICE

Groundbreaking federal lawsuit filed on behalf of Suffolk and Middlesex County prosecutors, public defenders, and community groups including La Colaborativa 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

SJC amicus brief 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.

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 drivers of color.

2018

Pilot v. Brookline

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

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 students of color in suburban 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. Biden Administration subsequently extended the protections.

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. Successfully settled in 2024.

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. Case successfully settled.

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.

Romero 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. Case successfully settled.

City of Chelsea and City of Lawrence 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 protect local control over law enforcement priorities.

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 on his immigration status.

Columbia Gas Explosion

In response to a natural gas explosion, BizGrow provided emergency legal assistance to affected small businesses helping them file claims with Columbia Gas.

2017

BizGrow Conference

Launched signature event, connecting more than 200 entrepreneurs with free legal and business support. Inaugural event hosted by Suffolk Law School.

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 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 MA Trial Court to release information on its employment practices.

2016

Boston Latin School Complaint

Federal civil rights complaint requesting investigation of 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 improve the racial climate at BLS.

Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin

Supreme Court 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.

Doe v. Peyser

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

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 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.

School Discipline Toolkit

Released toolkit to educate teachers, administrators, students and parents about school disciplinary policies and alternatives to suspensions. Toolkit helped to reduce disparities in suspension rates.

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

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.

Not Measuring Up – School Discipline Report

Published groundbreaking report analyzing MA 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.

2013

Pulido v. National Grid

Successfully represented Filipino electrical worker in employment discrimination matter.

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. State 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 facing religious discrimination.

2008

Amara v. Fairmont Copley Plaza

Successfully represented seven Moroccan and Muslim employees who faced religious and national origin discrimination.

2007

Bridges v. Commonwealth of Mass. Alcoholic Beverages Control Comm'n

Employment discrimination case on behalf of Black applicant for an investigator position at the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, who was rejected in favor of two less-qualified white applicants. MCAD awarded back pay and emotional distress damages.

2006

EEOC v. Home Depot

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

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.

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 with the NAACP successfully defending Lynn's voluntary school desegregation plan against a constitutional attack.

Health Disparities Project

Established Health Disparities Project centered on Medical-Legal Partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital in Chelsea. Project concluded after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2026.

South Boston Betterment Trust Corporation v. Boston Redevelopment Authority

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

Mayor of Cambridge v. Secretary of the Commonwealth

SJC amicus brief protecting several majority Black State House districts.

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. City abandoned the test. Successfully settled in 2023.

2002

Established Economic Justice Project (BizGrow)

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

2001

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.

Seaport Development Litigation

Lawsuit results in City of Boston and Boston Redevelopment Authority invalidating agreement that gave the majority of "linkage" payments from waterfront developers to South Boston, which had a discriminatory impact on racially diverse neighborhoods.

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

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.

Fair Housing Center

Co-launched the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.

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

MCAD housing discrimination case 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

Bennett v. City of Boston

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

McDuffy v. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education

SJC struck down 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.

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

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 district.

1988

NAACP v. Boston Housing Authority

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

Skadden Fellowship

Attorney from the prestigious Skadden Public Interest Fellowship's inaugural class joins the organization.

20th Anniversary Celebration

Sen. Edward Kennedy calls for "a new abolitionist movement" to stamp out racism.

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

Fair Housing Project

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 § 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

1982

Combatting Racial Violence

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.

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*. Court upheld the consent decree's extension to lieutenants and captains in *Stuart v. Roache*.

Latinos Unidos de Chelsea en Acción v. HUD

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

NAACP v. HUD

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

Castro & NAACP v. Beecher

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

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

Judicial System Report

Published "The Quality of Justice in the Lower Criminal Courts of Metropolitan Boston," a groundbreaking study that helped lead to court reforms.

1968

Amid urban riots, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Kerner Commission's warning that the nation was becoming "two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal," the **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association** was formed in 1968. With Gaspard D'Andelot "Don" Belin as its first Chair, and backed by contributions from major law firms and the Ford Foundation, it became the first of eight independent affiliates of the national Lawyers' Committee, answering President Kennedy's call to mobilize the legal profession.

1963

On June 21, 1963, President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy convened 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 civil rights movement.

Notes

GOODWIN

Goodwin is proud to support the Lawyers for Civil Rights 2026 Civil Rights Reception and congratulates this year's honorees for their outstanding leadership and commitment to advancing justice and equity.

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Ropes & Gray
is proud to support the
LCR 2026 Civil Rights Reception

We congratulate this evening's awardees:

Lisa Owens
Rosa Parks Keeper of the Flame Award

The Boston Society of the Vulcans
Diversity Champion Award

WilmerHale
Legal Warrior Award

Mintz
Economic Justice Champion Award

ropesgray.com

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates

Skadden is proud to support Lawyers for Civil Rights and congratulates all of this year's honorees.

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Brussels	Munich	Tokyo
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Congratulations to this evening's awardees.

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