

Firm News | May 10, 2021

# Troutman Pepper and Penn Law Partner to Address Dearth of Immigration Lawyers

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According to [a study](#) released by the American Immigration Council, immigrants with attorneys fare better at every stage of the court process than those who are unrepresented. Unfortunately, the shortage of lawyers who practice in this space, coupled with individuals' inability to afford legal services, leaves a majority of immigrants without representation in a field of law that even the most seasoned professionals find daunting.

To help meet this need, Troutman Pepper, an Am Law 50 firm, has partnered with JD and LLM candidates at the Toll Public Interest Center at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School for the past three years on its pro bono immigration work through its Pepper Center for Public Service.

Troutman Pepper attorneys from across the country have represented clients through all facets of the immigration process, from court proceedings to dealings with U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and various social service agencies.

Pepper Center attorneys recognized the need for assistance in their immigration work, including interviews with clients (often in Spanish), factual development of the cases through witness interviews and investigation, and preparation of a wide variety of documents for the immigration court.

"There are simply not enough immigration lawyers to serve the thousands of individuals seeking asylum or fighting deportation," said Amy Ginensky, senior counsel at Troutman Pepper and head of the Pepper Center. "Our team has taken clients referred by many legal aid nonprofits in Pennsylvania and the region. Bringing in students from the Law School to work alongside seasoned attorneys who volunteer their time has helped us win victories for numerous clients."

"Without counsel, individual immigrants — many of whom are young children — can't navigate the difficult path to citizenship or permanent residence," said Joseph Sullivan, counsel and director of Pro Bono Programs at Troutman Pepper. "Through this partnership, our clients are able to obtain counsel from experienced legal professionals while law students are able to obtain real-world experience in an area they might not otherwise."

## A WINNING COMBINATION

Among the notable achievements of the Law School partnership was a successful Third Circuit appeal on behalf of a father and daughter from Guatemala who were challenging their forced return to Mexico under migrant protection protocols.

The appeal was argued jointly by professor Tobias Wolff and Troutman Pepper associate Mike DePrince. The decision held that “non-citizens subject to the MPP could challenge its application to them in federal court.” The opinion was written by Stephanos Bibas, a former professor at the Law School.

Lindsay Holcomb, a third-year law student, has worked on Troutman Pepper’s pro bono immigration cases since 2019. Holcomb, who is fluent in Spanish, has served as a translator for clients from Central America, performed legal research, drafted papers for submission to the immigration court and helped gather and draft character endorsement statements from friends and family for asylum and appeal cases. These statements play an important role in the immigration process, providing a portrait of what a client’s life might look like if he or she is released. Holcomb has helped more than 20 clients in this manner.

“Lindsay demonstrated single-minded dedication, professionalism and a passion for our clients’ immigration matters, all of which were taken on as pro bono cases by several Troutman Pepper lawyers,” said Andrew Rogoff, senior counsel at the firm who has worked closely with Holcomb. “Her devotion to our clients, hard work and the excellent service she provides are commendable,” he added.

Holcomb will graduate in May 2021 and plans to focus her practice on white collar defense and investigation but wants to continue donating her time to immigration issues.

“Working on these cases has impressed upon me all of the ways that lawyers can make a concrete impact in people’s lives. Often, these clients have been placed in detention and deprived of their liberty, and we’re able to get them back to their families, to their jobs,” said Holcomb.

“I play a small part in this process, but I am glad to be a part of it. It is a privilege to work with attorneys who have had incredibly accomplished careers, and who are now volunteering their time to help the people who need it most.”

## **HONORABLE HOURS**

“We have a 70-hour pro bono requirement for our students, and it is very direct-service oriented, putting our students in real life situations,” said Sarah Egoille, staff attorney at the Law School’s Toll Public Interest Center. “The opportunity with Troutman Pepper is a very popular one among our students. It provides a great connection for students heading to work at a firm after graduation, and it’s a great way for the students to see how attorneys who, after a distinguished career representing business clients, are engaging in a near full-time caseload of work on behalf of pro bono clients in need.”

In 2020, Troutman Pepper attorneys volunteered more than 6,000 hours on immigration matters in various locations across the country. Each year, Troutman Pepper attorneys dedicate thousands of pro bono hours in support of nonprofits, immigrants, military veterans, children, the wrongfully accused, and so many more. The firm is a signatory of the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge, acknowledging an institutional commitment to pro bono legal services for low income and disadvantaged individuals and families, and nonprofit groups. Learn more at [troutman.com/pro-bono](https://troutman.com/pro-bono).

### **About Troutman Pepper**

Troutman Pepper is a national law firm known for its higher commitment to client care. With more than 1,200 attorneys in 23 U.S. cities, the firm partners with clients across every industry sector to help them achieve their business goals. Read more about the firm's litigation, transactional, and regulatory practices at [troutman.com](https://troutman.com).

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