

**Weil**

Our Finest Hours  
**Pro Bono**  
**2014**







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# Weil's Pro Bono Report 2014

At Weil, we pride ourselves on doing great work for all our clients – and we count among our most valued clients those we represent because they are experiencing severe injustice or abuse and cannot afford quality legal assistance. We believe it is our obligation to aid society's most vulnerable individuals by volunteering our skills and providing the legal resources to help them fight adversity and unfairness. Even as the global economy slowly improves, many in our communities and across a number of continents have been left behind to face dangers that include homelessness, discrimination, and life-threatening ills such as malnutrition. Weil also believes it is essential to support organizations that are working toward crucial goals on behalf of society, such as a sustainable environment or economic development in endemically poor neighborhoods or nations.

To ensure that we make a significant difference in these areas, our goal is to have all lawyers at the Firm perform 50 hours of pro bono work each year. Toward that end, every partner is expected to work on a pro bono matter every year, and every new attorney – including lateral partners – is required to take on a pro bono matter. Last year alone, Weil performed over 80,000 hours of pro bono work, the equivalent of more than 40 full-time lawyers. Our pro bono programme is not confined to our US offices – the same goal and the same requirements apply to partners and staff in our 10 offices outside the United States.


One of the most rewarding aspects of our pro bono work is the chance to collaborate closely with our pro bono partners, the organizations that refer matters to us and often work side by side with us. These groups, dedicated to the public good, make it possible to achieve our common goals in such areas as criminal justice reform, human rights, community and economic development, children's welfare, civil and constitutional rights, health and environmental issues, and asylum and immigration.

Last year, Weil attorneys once again demonstrated their empathy, skill, and dedication, and together with our partner organizations changed many lives for the better. These successes included winning asylum for those persecuted in their home countries; protecting the rights of tenants on the brink of homelessness; pressing for the release of prisoners wrongfully convicted of crimes; securing meaningful educational opportunities for special-needs students; finding new ways to use the techniques of corporate finance to help charities to grow and develop; and supporting the search for solutions to the world's ecological problems. We take great pride in these achievements and invite you to explore a sampling of them. You will understand immediately why the time we spend on our pro bono work we call "our finest hours."

Barry M. Wolf  
Executive Partner

Peter King  
Co-Chair  
Pro Bono Committee

Steven Alan Reiss  
Co-Chair  
Pro Bono Committee



# Asylum

Weil has long taken on a sizable number of asylum matters referred through national and local legal service organizations. We recognize the desperate circumstances from which our clients seek refuge and work to keep them safe from political, cultural, religious, and other types of persecution in their homeland.

## The Gambia

A Gambian couple living with HIV/AIDS, ordered deported 17 years ago, was granted asylum to remain in the United States. A Weil pro bono team represented the couple and was assisted by the HIV Law Project, the referring organization, and its supervising immigration attorney.

In addition to living with HIV/AIDS, the wife suffered female genital mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia, which is a basis for seeking asylum in the U.S. The couple feared a similar fate for their four daughters, who were born in the U.S., if they were forced to return to The Gambia.

When Weil was first brought on to the case in 2008, the couple was effectively ineligible for asylum relief due to the procedural posture of the case. The Weil team persuaded the Office of Chief Counsel of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to join its motion to the Board of Immigration Appeals to reopen the case, a significant victory in itself because it is the U.S. Government's policy to join a motion "only under

exceptional and compelling circumstances."

The Board of Immigration Appeals granted the joint motion to reopen *sua sponte* and remanded the case to Immigration Court in New York.

In preparation for the hearing on the merits of the couple's case, the Weil team gathered evidence on The Gambia, FGM, and HIV/AIDS from healthcare providers and experts, and submitted pre-hearing briefs, affidavits, and exhibits. At the merits hearing, the team conducted direct and redirect examinations of the couple and defended them during ICE counsel's cross-examination.

On November 5, 2013, the Immigration Court granted the couple's asylum application, and ICE counsel waived the right to appeal. The granting of asylum provides the couple with a path to citizenship, allows them to remain in the U.S. to receive the care they need to control their HIV/AIDS, and prevents the endangerment of their four U.S.-born daughters.



## Ethiopia

An Ethiopian professor and his family have been granted asylum and are now reunited in the United States after spending nearly two years apart. Scholars at Risk (SAR) referred the matter to Weil, whose attorneys successfully represented the Ethiopian citizen in his affirmative claim for political asylum. Our client, a professor of language and literature at Ethiopia's leading university, was a vocal critic of the Ethiopian government's ethnic policies. As a result of the government's hostile response to his opposition, our client fled Ethiopia and risked imprisonment or worse if he were to return. Our client's wife and three children remained in Ethiopia, awaiting their opportunity to be reunited with him.

In the fall of 2012, after Weil prepared his application for asylum and represented him at his interview, our client received notice that he had been granted asylum. Immediately thereafter, Weil began the process of preparing derivative applications for our client's wife and three children. In late February 2014, the last of our client's family members was finally approved to join our client in the United States. Now, after nearly two years apart, our client and his family are reunited. With support from SAR, our client has already begun building a professional life for himself in the U.S. as a visiting professor at a prestigious California university.

## Guatemala

After a seven-year fight, Weil won asylum for a Guatemalan youth fleeing gang violence. Our client was a teenager when he was attacked by members of one of the predominant gangs that control and terrorize Central America. Subsequently, gang members sent him death threats and a demand that he join their ranks. Seeing no other option, our client left his home and family and fled to the United States, where at the age of 17, he filed an asylum application in late 2006.

The case has had a long and complicated procedural history and has been an uphill battle. That is partly because a recent Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) decision held that young individuals who have been subject to recruitment efforts by criminal gangs but who have refused to join for personal, religious, or moral reasons do not constitute a "particular social group" that satisfies the standards for a grant of asylum. An immigration judge granted asylum in 2007, but the BIA reversed that decision. Weil then filed a successful motion to vacate and remand the BIA's decision to take advantage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, which provides that unaccompanied minors can have their cases determined by an asylum officer from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). However, USCIS denied jurisdiction because our client was no longer a minor by the time he filed his asylum application. The case was sent back to the same immigration judge who, on November 13, 2013, granted asylum once again. This time, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement attorney deferred to the judge and waived appeal, ending a seven-year fight for asylum.



“O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.”

— Thomas Paine

## Sri Lanka

Weil achieved a significant victory for a pro bono client from Sri Lanka who was seeking asylum from persecution by the Sinhalese majority government. The client was tortured and physically harassed repeatedly from 2005 to 2010 due to his Tamil ethnicity and political activity on behalf of Tamil civil rights in Sri Lanka. After two rounds of briefing that spanned more than two years, a hearing was held in September 2013 in which the client gave testimony about the abuse that he suffered in Sri Lanka. At the conclusion of the hearing, the court indicated its willingness to grant asylum and did so in November 2013.



# Human Rights

The struggle to protect human rights wherever they are under assault has been a longtime focus at Weil. In partnership with non-governmental organizations, our attorneys assist in human rights matters across a wide spectrum of issues around the world, ranging from neglect of the disabled to the death penalty.

## Easing the Way for Haiti's New Disability Rights Law

Weil worked with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice and the Organization of American States (OAS) to train Haitian judges, government officials, and civil servants on how to effectively implement a new Haitian law on the rights of persons with disabilities. Prior to traveling to Haiti to deliver the French-language training, the Weil team developed extensive materials and presentations in French that focused on the legal and practical issues that arise in creating public policies to implement the new disability rights law, which is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Members of the Weil team traveled to Haiti in June and July 2013 under the auspices of the OAS and presented these materials in several two-day training sessions that the OAS organized. A cross-border team involving members of Weil's New York, Washington, Paris, and London offices was involved in bringing this challenging engagement to a successful outcome.

## Freeing a New York Woman from a Toxic Marriage

In a referral from Her Justice, Weil assisted a Bronx woman escaping an abusive marriage. The mother of a year-old son and separated from her husband, the woman sought help with obtaining a simple divorce. There was no property to distribute, she was not seeking maintenance, and she had already obtained orders of custody and child support, which she wished to continue. However, service of the divorce papers could not be completed because the woman's husband refused to disclose his address and the court denied the Weil team's motion for service by publication. When the husband filed a petition to decrease his obligation to support his son, the Weil team expanded the scope of its representation to include the child support matter. In addition, the Weil team seized the opportunity to discontinue the divorce action, which had been filed in the Bronx, and filed a new action in Manhattan to be able to serve the husband with divorce papers when he appeared in the child support matter. The husband's petition to reduce his child support obligation was dismissed, and the woman and her son have started a new life.



## Analyzing Human Rights Issues in Polish Tax Law

The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights inaugurated another season of educational and interventional programs in Poland with its clinic on "Human Rights and Taxes." The purpose of the clinic is to educate students by analyzing the compliance of Polish tax law with the legal standards of the Polish Constitutional Court and with human rights standards contained in the European Convention on Human Rights, especially as they pertain to the right to a fair trial, the right to respect for private life, and the right to effective remedy. The program also draws attention, and searches for effective solutions, to problems that individual taxpayers may have with regulation and Polish tax law. Conducted by a Weil tax partner from the Warsaw office, the weekly seminars at the Foundation take the form of workshops for which a group of students has been selected. The Foundation encourages the submission to the clinic of matters of tax law that may involve the violation of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Polish Constitution. In cases characterized by widespread violations and landmark significance for the practice and teaching of tax law, the Foundation will institute action to address the specific concerns of those taxpayers.

## Resettling an Iraqi Transgender Refugee

Weil attorneys, with the assistance of a student team from New York University and the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project, succeeded in securing resettlement of a highly vulnerable Iraqi transgender refugee who was a victim of gender-based violence and had to flee to Amman, Jordan. Thanks to the efforts of the Weil and NYU teams, the refugee was resettled to Vancouver, Canada.



“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home.”  
— Eleanor Roosevelt





## Community and Economic Development

Weil assists the homeless, the near-homeless, the elderly poor, and other vulnerable citizens in our communities to help prevent the suffering caused by injustice and isolation. Our attorneys also work with organizations committed to empowering small businesses and revitalizing neighborhoods.

### Extending Housing Aid for Hurricane Sandy Evacuees

In partnership with The Legal Aid Society, a Weil pro bono team succeeded in halting an attempt by the City of New York to cut off hotel rental assistance payments to 488 households displaced by Superstorm Sandy. As a result of the suit, the City was required to continue the hotel payments for five additional months, sparing the households from imminent homelessness.

Weil and The Legal Aid Society obtained a temporary restraining order against the City on April 29, 2013, and the New York Supreme Court directed the City to continue to pay the hotel rental assistance for the evacuee households. The lawsuit maintained that the City created the hotel rental assistance program to provide shelter until permanent, safe, and sustainable housing was obtained for the evacuees, but that the City failed to provide the promised help in securing alternative housing. The City challenged the temporary restraining order, but after a hearing, the court ruled that the stay would

remain in effect, requiring the City to continue payments. The court set a briefing schedule and hearing for Weil and The Legal Aid Society's request for a preliminary injunction. On May 15, 2013, the court granted a preliminary injunction in favor of the Sandy evacuees.

On September 27, 2013, the court vacated the order, finding that the City did not have budgeted funds to continue the program because the Federal Emergency Management Agency had agreed to reimburse the City for the program only through September. By this time, the majority of the evacuee households had successfully relocated to permanent housing. Of the approximately 100 households remaining in the program at the time the City terminated payments, most were in the process of securing permanent housing. With the number of households in hotels significantly reduced, a faith-based not-for-profit organization was able to step in and provide additional assistance to the remaining households.



## Stopping a Mother's Unjust Eviction

A Weil pro bono team dedicated to housing matters in New York City has prevailed again, this time successfully defending a mother of four in an eviction proceeding before a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) hearing officer. The woman, who lives with her children in a NYCHA housing complex in the Bronx, was facing eviction on non-desirability grounds following an incident between her ex-husband, who did not reside in the NYCHA housing complex, and the New York City Police Department.

During an altercation with the NYPD at the NYCHA housing project where the woman lived, her ex-husband appeared to place a gun in a book bag belonging to one of the woman's two children, who were playing nearby in the courtyard. Alerted to the commotion by a neighbor, the woman rushed her children and their belongings back to her apartment, unaware that her ex-husband had stashed his gun in one of her children's bags. After finding the gun at the apartment, the police arrested the woman along with her ex-husband. The charges against the woman were later dropped, but NYCHA commenced an eviction proceeding against her for violating its zero-tolerance policy concerning the presence of guns on NYCHA premises.

At the eviction hearing, Weil's pro bono team was able to show that the gun had been brought into the apartment completely by accident, and that the woman would never knowingly bring a gun into her apartment, and, indeed, is terrified of guns after having been shot in the arm several years earlier. Importantly, the Weil team also demonstrated that she had no other housing options; eviction would lead to homelessness and likely require the family to be separated, with the children being cared for by different family members. Finally, Weil was able to show that the woman had no current relationship with the ex-husband and that the only reason she had never formally divorced him was because she could not afford the expense of a divorce proceeding. The NYCHA hearing officer agreed with the Weil team's argument, denied the eviction, and permanently excluded the ex-husband from the woman's apartment.

## Honoring Patients' End-of-Life Treatment Choices

Weil represents DC Appleseed, a non-partisan policy organization, in an ongoing public policy initiative to promote a better understanding of, and respect for, patients' wishes concerning end-of-life care by healthcare providers in the District of Columbia. After conducting dozens of interviews with stakeholders, including doctors, nurses, hospice administrators, and assisted living providers, our project team found that, for a variety of reasons, most healthcare providers are not aware of seriously ill patients' wishes concerning end-of-life care, and that in some cases, even when these wishes were known, they were not being followed. To address this issue, Weil is working with DC Appleseed and others to draft and promote so-called MOLST (Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment) legislation, which has been enacted in more than 40 states, to facilitate end-of-life treatment discussions between patients with serious illnesses and their doctors, and then have any decisions concerning end-of-life care documented in a medical order that will be included in the patient's chart and available to most treating providers.



“Bleak, dark, and piercing cold, it was a night for the well-housed and fed to draw round the bright fire, and thank God they were at home; and for the homeless starving wretch to lay him down and die.”

— Charles Dickens

## Community and Economic Development

### Winning Rent-Increase Exemptions for Low-Income Seniors

As part of an ongoing partnership with the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, and in-house attorneys from Morgan Stanley, Weil attorneys regularly assist low-income senior citizens in applying for exemption from rent increases under New York City's Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program. On a monthly basis, two teams consisting of one Weil attorney and one Morgan Stanley attorney meet with senior citizens at the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House to

advise and assist them in filling out paperwork related to SCRIE applications. Weil attorneys then submit qualifying applications to the New York City Department of Finance and engage in any necessary follow-up work to ensure that the applications are granted. Once an application is granted, the client's rent amount is frozen, and the City of New York provides the client's landlord with a property tax credit equal to the amount of rent increases that the landlord otherwise would have been permitted to charge.



### Reining in Unprincipled Puppy Sellers

Since 2007, Weil has represented consumers from around the country who alleged that a Florida retail pet store engaged in a scheme to dupe consumers into purchasing unhealthy, genetically defective puppies bred in puppy mills. Our clients alleged that the pet store misrepresented the health, quality, and origins of puppies and then refused to reimburse consumers for veterinary expenses. In 2009, Weil negotiated a favorable settlement that required numerous changes in the pet store's business practices, which were to be monitored by the Florida Attorney General's Office. However, new instances of the defendants' selling unhealthy puppies emerged soon after the settlement and again in 2013.

Weil filed motions to enforce the settlement and for sanctions in both years. In 2009, the court granted our motion, and in 2013, we reached an agreement on behalf of our clients to impose more stringent requirements for disclosure to the Attorney General's Office, Weil, and consumers, and to further limit the pet store's ability to purchase animals from certain breeders. Weil obtained a six-figure payment in settlement, which was distributed in part to Weil's clients and to a more recently victimized consumer, with the remainder donated to The Humane Society of the United States, an organization dedicated to improving the health, safety, and well-being of animals.



## Providing Assistance for Low-Income Entrepreneurs

### Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project

Over the past several years, Weil has teamed with attorneys from the in-house counsel's office of CBS Corporation and the City Bar Justice Center Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project (NELP) to provide pro bono legal counseling in a clinic setting to small business entrepreneurs in New York City. NELP provides free legal assistance to low-income micro-entrepreneurs interested in starting a small business or who have an existing one. The clinics bring these entrepreneurs together with pro bono attorneys to provide legal services otherwise unavailable to them due to cost concerns. At the clinics, teams of Weil and CBS attorneys offer guidance on general corporate matters, commercial leasing, and contract, tax, and intellectual property issues. Entrepreneurs come from all over New York City to seek help in building successful businesses. Attendees of this year's clinics included musicians, architects, and jewelry designers, as well as owners of childcare, education-related, automotive repair, and software development businesses. The clinic provides a rewarding opportunity to help aspiring individuals realize their dreams.

### Start Small Think Big

Weil continued its partnership with Start Small Think Big (Start Small) in 2013, assisting New York City small business owners and micro-entrepreneurs in their efforts to create sustainable and profitable businesses. Established in 2010 and located in the heart of the South Bronx, Start Small's mission is to help low- and moderate-income individuals in New York City start and build small businesses so that they may accumulate assets, increase financial security, and contribute to the economy. In 2013, the organization helped nearly 900 low-to-moderate-income entrepreneurs and small business owners start and expand businesses. It facilitated 30 seminars (with a total of more than 600 attendees) that covered the financial and legal issues most commonly faced by low-income entrepreneurs with businesses in the conception or early-stage phase of development. Through its partnership with Weil and other top-tier law firms, corporations, not-for-profit organizations, and government, Start Small engaged more than 300 highly skilled financial and legal volunteers who collectively provided over 300 entrepreneurs with almost 4,000 hours of one-on-one financial and legal services. Weil's focus on issues related to the growth and development of small businesses and helping low-income entrepreneurs has fit well with Start Small's goals.



## Community and Economic Development

### Giving Fair-Trade Groups a Solid Foundation

Weil is advising on two projects connected with the growing market for fair-trade goods, which aims to secure fair prices and working conditions for farmers and craftsmen in poor countries. In one project, we are advising a leading supplier of fair-trade products to U.K. and U.S. retailers on its governance structure. In the other, introduced by Advocates for International Development (A4ID), we are acting for the Fairtrade Foundation in

negotiating a Service Level Agreement for the provision of product certification services to the new Indian Fairtrade Foundation. These projects will help develop the international market for fair-trade products and services to the benefit of small-scale producers everywhere, but particularly in developing countries where fair access to economic opportunities and markets is crucial to the journey out of poverty.



### Offering the Homeless Seed Money for a Micro-Business

Weil is advising Vital Regeneration on the agreements for a joint venture with Westminster Council and Dolphin Square Foundation that aims to give homeless people a job and a roof over their head. The organizations are collaborating to set up a vehicle that will provide seed funding in the form of a grant or loan to homeless people so that they can start their own small-scale micro-businesses. This funding will be complemented where possible by the

provision of secure accommodation. Once such businesses have become established, further funding will be provided with the intention of obtaining a return on investment. The charity hopes to prove that this innovative model is workable so that it can attract wider investor interest and be scaled up to the benefit of ever greater numbers of homeless and unemployed people – another good example of Weil's contribution to the emerging field of social finance.



## Attacking Malnutrition with Millions of Nutrient Packets

Responding to the needs of malnourished children in developing countries whose diet consists almost exclusively of maize, Valid Nutrition has developed an emergency, potentially lifesaving nutrient-packed brown paste called Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). Eaten straight out of the packet, RUTF supplies some of the protein, fats, and micronutrients without which children can be at risk of anemia, vitamin A deficiency, and stunted growth. Valid's new, community-based approach to treating malnutrition involves local manufacture of the foods in developing countries wherever possible. Weil assisted the company in getting its product off the ground, advising it on the structures and collaborations it wanted



to establish in regions where malnutrition occurs, on trademarks to ensure it could protect the ethical identity and quality of its product, and, as it grew, on establishing subsidiaries and an international organization. Valid has already produced close to 20 million sachets of RUTF and estimates that these have been used to treat some 200,000 children, with several thousand lives saved. Referred to Weil through Advocates for International Development (A4ID), which offers development organizations legal advice from its network of attorneys and raises awareness about the role law can play in fighting global poverty, Valid Nutrition was recently named a winner of Ashoka's Nutrients for All competition.

## Community and Economic Development

### Shutting Down a Scheme to Target SRO Tenants

Attorneys from Weil and MFY Legal Services obtained a significant victory for Brooklyn single-room occupancy (SRO) tenants in January 2013, when a New York state appellate court ruled that our clients were entitled to rent-regulation protections and reinstated a class action against the clients' landlord and a counseling center that was the prime tenant.

Weil and MFY represent a putative class of tenants in an SRO hotel in Brooklyn that the complaint alleged is covered by the rent stabilization laws. The tenants allege that their landlord and the other defendants tried to evade rent stabilization, and profiteer, by turning half of the hotel into a "three-quarter house" – an unlicensed purported "sober-living" facility – at the expense of people who are struggling with illness, addiction, or homelessness. Under the alleged scheme, the counseling center doubled up the residents in the tiny rooms and obtained the full rent for each resident from New York City's Department of Human Services; illegally evicted residents; harassed the residents in various ways, including removing room door locks; and forced the

residents to attend treatment sessions at the counseling center in violation of New York's Mental Hygiene law and in disregard of whether the treatment was needed or was being given elsewhere, and then billed Medicaid for each of the unlawfully coerced treatment sessions.

In its January 16, 2013 decision, the Appellate Division, Second Department, reversed the trial court's dismissal of the complaint, reinstated the vast majority of the plaintiffs' claims, and remanded the matter to a different trial court judge due to the "bias" against the plaintiffs shown by the original judge. The court also reinstated claims that the residency agreements the plaintiffs were compelled to sign were void on numerous grounds and that the defendants had created an unlawful "illusory tenancy" to evade the rent stabilization laws. The Appellate Division's ruling came just weeks before the landlord was due to seek warrants of eviction against the plaintiffs in housing court based on the trial court's now-reversed ruling. The litigation is continuing.



### Opening Doors for the Disabled in Texas Nursing Homes

On behalf of private plaintiffs, a Weil pro bono team, along with co-counsel from Disability Rights Texas and the Center for Public Representation, successfully reached an interim settlement of a putative class action against Texas state officials in federal court on August 19, 2013. The U.S. Department of Justice joined the lawsuit against the state and played an integral part in the negotiations. The lawsuit alleges that Texas state officials have violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal laws both by segregating these individuals in nursing homes and by failing to provide them with the treatment and services they needed while there. The interim settlement agreement contains a number of commitments

by the state that will improve living conditions for thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been confined to Texas nursing facilities. These commitments will more fully integrate them into the community, including by expanding their options for community living and their opportunities to engage in community activities to the extent possible, and by ensuring that medical, nursing, and nutritional management services and supports are available in the community. The interim agreement is designed to resolve as many issues as possible related to the lawsuit for a limited period, while still allowing the parties to seek a comprehensive agreement and a permanent resolution of the lawsuit.



## Helping a Disabled Family Keep Its Home — and Its Dogs

In a matter referred by the Humane Society, a Weil team successfully defended a family whose landlord tried to terminate their tenancy for keeping three dogs. The Weil team initially defended the case, which was brought by the landlord in Bronx Housing Court, by filing a motion to dismiss on multiple grounds, including lack of subject matter jurisdiction and waiver. Given our clients' disabilities and need for the emotional support provided by their dogs, the Weil team filed a complaint against the landlord in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York alleging violations of the Fair Housing Act and New York State and City Human Rights Laws. The team was able to negotiate a settlement of both the housing court and federal district court actions that allowed our clients to remain in their home with their dogs.



## Saving a Family from Eviction

In a matter referred by The Legal Aid Society, Weil took over the representation of an injured individual involved in a long-standing dispute with his landlord over the condition of his Washington, D.C. apartment. The landlord, a corporation managing a large building with a number of aggrieved tenants, sought to evict our client, including his wife and children, after he refused to pay higher rents imposed by the landlord following a number of promised repairs that were never made.

In response to the landlord's commencement of eviction proceedings, the tenant asserted counterclaims seeking damages relating to the poor condition of the property. After ten months of litigation in D.C. Superior Court, and on the eve of a scheduled jury trial, Weil successfully negotiated a very favorable settlement on behalf of our client in which the landlord ultimately agreed to pay the tenant \$20,000 and release all claims against him.

## Awards

The Legal Aid Society's 2013 Pro Bono Publico Awards

*National Law Journal's* 2013 Pro Bono Hot List – Honored for Work with Hurricane Sandy Victims

Lawyers for Children America – Recognition for Outstanding Pro Bono Work

"Help & Hope Award" for Pro Bono Services to CancerCare

GOAL's Community Service Award 2013

*Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* in its 2014 Excellence in The Law Awards

Her Justice 2014 Commitment to Justice Legal Team Award recognizing pro bono assistance to mothers and their children who are facing poverty and abuse



## Criminal Justice Reform

Using our legal skills to free the innocent and reverse other grave errors of the criminal justice system is one of the most rewarding, and daunting, areas of pro bono work. We are privileged to work with partners such as the Innocence Project and local public defenders to help them set aside unjust convictions and sentences.

### Vacating a Prisoner's Harsh Mandatory Sentence

A special victory in Rhode Island federal court for a Weil pro bono client resulted in the vacating of a long mandatory federal prison sentence and quick release of our client on February 13, 2013. Weil's client was serving a sentence of almost 16 years in prison for a relatively minor offense under the previously mandatory Federal Sentencing Guidelines. The harsh sentence was mandated because of two minor prior convictions, including a bar fight that had occurred when she was in college.

Weil took this case at the personal request of a New York federal district court judge, who learned of the matter through a course on sentencing he teaches at New York University Law School. The judge cautioned that the chances of victory were slim. Even the Rhode Island judge who originally sentenced our client had noted that this "was one case where the guidelines work an injustice" that the court was unable to counteract.

When the Weil team took the case, our client had already served nearly ten years of her sentence and had completed a remarkable transformation. While in prison, she dedicated her time to improving both her own life and the lives of her fellow inmates, including organizing a program

through which they made thousands of craft items for the children's ward of a local hospital. She had been given highly responsible jobs in prison, and even the prison staff was supportive of Weil's efforts to lighten her sentence.

The Weil attorneys initially prepared an executive commutation request to President Obama. In researching other options they found that all appeals and habeas relief options had been exhausted, and the Weil team instead developed a novel approach using seldom-used Federal Rules and habeas procedure to move the court to reopen the case. Weil also negotiated with the United States Attorney's Office to lessen any opposition it would assert.

Shortly after our motion for relief was filed, the federal court in Rhode Island held a hearing, with our client present, at which the judge acknowledged mistakes in this case and expressed happiness that our motion allowed them to be corrected. The court vacated the 16-year sentence and resentenced our client to time served. This allowed our client to spend the last 11 days of her mother's life at her side. *The New York Times* highlighted the victory in a story published on March 28, 2013.



### Arguing for the Innocence of a Death-Row Inmate

In conjunction with the Innocence Project, Weil is representing Tyrone Noling, an inmate on death row in Ohio who has consistently maintained that he had no role in the 1990 murders of an elderly couple in their home by an unidentified intruder. For the past seven years, attorneys from Weil's Washington, D.C. office have worked with the Ohio Innocence Project, the Office of the Ohio Public Defender, and the Office of the Arizona Federal Public Defender to pursue all possible paths to exoneration. These have included a petition for *certiorari* in the United States Supreme Court and appeals in Ohio state court seeking full DNA testing of certain evidence. A Weil lawyer argued an appeal in the Ohio Court of Appeals in February 2014 seeking leave to file a motion for a new trial based on newly discovered evidence of contemporaneous admissions of guilt by a neighbor of the victims. That neighbor has since been convicted and executed for an unrelated murder. The intermediate Ohio court ruled in favor of Mr. Noling, partially reversing a decision below and ordering a hearing to consider the need for an evidentiary new trial hearing, but Mr. Noling has appealed that decision to the Ohio Supreme Court in an effort to obtain additional relief. That appeal remains pending.

### Wrestling with Polish Prosecutors to Free a Wronged Champion

Weil represented Roman Wroclawski, a former Greco-Roman wrestling world champion who was charged in Poland with embezzling the funds of a number of companies he owned before his emigration to the United States. Having settled in Phoenix, Arizona, Mr. Wroclawski trained American wrestling Olympians, local policemen, and even Navy SEALs on a volunteer basis, making him something of a local celebrity. Almost 20 years after the alleged embezzlement, Polish prosecutors filed criminal charges against him and vigorously sued in U.S. federal court for his extradition to Poland. Despite local support in Phoenix, Polish authorities won a partial extradition order, and the Washington-based public defenders who handled the extradition trial approached us for assistance with the case.

The allegations against Mr. Wroclawski were based predominantly on hearsay evidence, since virtually none of the prosecution's witnesses could remember the facts of the case after so many years. Despite such weak evidence, Mr. Wroclawski was held in custody for several months in the U.S. before being extradited to Poland, where he was incarcerated for several more months during his trial. The Polish court of first instance convicted him, and even though the sentence was relatively lenient, U.S. immigration regulations would have eventually barred him from returning to the U.S. and reuniting with his family and his supporters in Arizona. Weil attorneys defended Mr. Wroclawski in these criminal proceedings before the courts of first and second instance. After the appeal was filed, the statute of limitations expired just prior to the court of appeals issuing its final judgment. As a result, Mr. Wroclawski was free to return to the U.S. and resume his passion for wrestling with the participation of his local enthusiasts.



An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.

— Mahatma Gandhi

## Criminal Justice Reform

### Ending the Cruelty of Solitary Confinement

Weil is working with the Center for Constitutional Rights to represent prisoners presently being held in solitary confinement at California's Pelican Bay State Prison. The case has been certified by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California as a class action and raises claims for cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment and violation of procedural and substantive due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. The class includes hundreds of prisoners who have been held in solitary confinement – alone in cramped,

windowless cells for 22½ to 24 hours a day – at the prison's Security Housing Unit (SHU) for more than 10 years and are serving indefinite terms under the solitary confinement regime at Pelican Bay. Since 2011 hundreds of prisoners in California, including plaintiffs in the class action at the SHU, have fought to address the conditions and effects of long-term solitary confinement, which mental health experts have stated causes deep suffering and long-lasting psychological damage.



### Defending the Right to Effective Capital Representation

Weil was asked to take on the representation of a Florida death-row inmate in 1989, a matter that has become our longest pro bono litigation. Over the years, Weil has steadily pursued challenges to our client's conviction and death sentence in state and federal courts. Most recently, Weil asked the United States Supreme Court to review our client's claims that the penalty phase conducted jointly with his co-defendant denied him his constitutional right to an individualized sentencing determination. We also asked the Court to review our client's claim that he did not receive the effective assistance of counsel during that penalty phase because his trial counsel – having never before tried

a capital case – did not conduct a constitutionally adequate background investigation and failed to uncover significant mitigating evidence, including the serious and sustained abuse he suffered as a child. The petition for *certiorari* on those claims is currently pending before the Court. Finally, in the Florida state courts, Weil has been pursuing claims under *Brady v. Maryland* that evidence recently uncovered from the prosecutor's files would have made a difference at sentencing had it been disclosed to defense counsel. Weil has briefed and argued those claims, and we are awaiting a decision.



## Devoting One Full Year to Criminal Public Trial Work

In 2013 Weil enabled an attorney in the Paris office, Alexandre Vermynck, to spend a year in criminal public trial work as First Secretary of the Paris Bar's Conference des Avocats. One of the highlights of his year defending those facing the greatest deprivation was leading a legal battle in the French courts to allow lawyers access to the file of any client held in police custody. Along with the 11 other Secretaries of the Conference and with the support of the Paris Bar, on December 30, 2013, Mr. Vermynck won a change in Paris criminal court rules so that in-custody police interrogations conducted before the lawyer had been provided with the client's criminal file were deemed null and void. This judgment, overturned by the Paris Court of Appeal on March 24, 2014, led to a lively public debate resulting in the Minister of Justice pledging that he will grant more rights to individuals kept under police custody.

A second battle involved the defense of the rising number of young Muslims pursued for terrorist activities. A growing number of young European Muslims have joined the civil war in Syria alongside jihadi groups. The French government fears that these fighters represent a threat when they return to France, and on December 21, 2012, it enacted a law that enables French courts to incarcerate anyone who joins or tries to join terrorist groups outside French territory. Based on this law, many young Muslims are being held in precautionary detention and will be tried in 2014, when Mr. Vermynck and other French lawyers will raise pertinent issues on behalf of their clients. These include: What is the most appropriate sanction for this new type of offender, and what is the right balance between security – protecting citizens from young radical Muslims who may have been taught to handle weapons – and freedom, which may involve the right to engage with one side or another in a foreign civil conflict? Finally, these cases will spark a debate over why many young people, some of whom originally had no links with Islam, end up rejecting Western values.

## Training Appellate Advocates for Poor Defendants

For several years Weil has been participating in the Volunteer Appellate Defender Program, which offers four associates from each sponsoring law firm the opportunity to represent indigent defendants (brief and argue) in the appeal of a felony conviction in the New York Supreme Court Appellate Division, First Department. Top-notch appellate litigators provide in-depth training and supervision in appellate advocacy at the Offices of the Appellate Defender in Manhattan. Associates in all departments of the Firm are welcome to participate.

In one recent matter, for example, a Weil associate briefed and argued an appeal challenging, among other things, a defendant's sentencing proceedings based on ineffective assistance by conflicted counsel. Weil argued that counsel's representation was rendered ineffective when the trial attorney directly contradicted his client's pro se claims of ineffective assistance and the trial court expressly adopted his representations over the defendant's in denying the pro se motion. Although the First Department ruled against our client, Weil subsequently briefed an application to the New York Court of Appeals seeking leave to appeal because the First Department's decision conflicts with decisions from the other Departments. A New York Court of Appeals judge recently ordered a hearing on the leave application, which remains pending.





## Civil & Constitutional Rights

Challenges to civil and voting rights threaten our democratic existence and the promise of liberty to all. Weil has long offered legal assistance across a broad spectrum of civil and constitutional rights matters, including voting rights abuses and the unlawful treatment of prisoners.

### Continuing the Fight for Voting Rights in Florida

Weil, along with attorneys from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the American Civil Liberties Union, represented Mi Familia Vota Education Fund, as well as two registered voters in Florida, in their fight to stop the purge of alleged non-citizens from the Florida voter rolls during the lead-up to the 2012 election. Weil's attorneys brought suit in federal court, arguing that the state had not received pre-clearance from the Department of Justice to undertake the voting purge, which therefore violated Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Just two months before the November election, the judge denied the Florida Secretary of State's motion to dismiss, which effectively ended the purge through the election. After the election, and particularly in light of the June 25, 2013 decision by the United States Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*, Weil has continued to work with its pro bono partners and clients to monitor more recent attempts by the Secretary of State to continue the voter purge in Florida.

### Questioning a Law That Muzzles Gun-Reform Advocates

Weil's Miami office worked with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in providing research and legal analysis regarding a Florida law enacted in 2011 that provides for steep, unique penalties leveled against individual local government officials, and arguably prohibits local governments from creating any ordinances or administrative rules concerning guns. The research and analysis provided by Weil lawyers helped the Lawyers' Committee and its coalition partners to understand the scope and legality of the preemption law, garner the support of elected officials at a local level, and avoid a chilling effect on officials' willingness to participate in related initiatives.

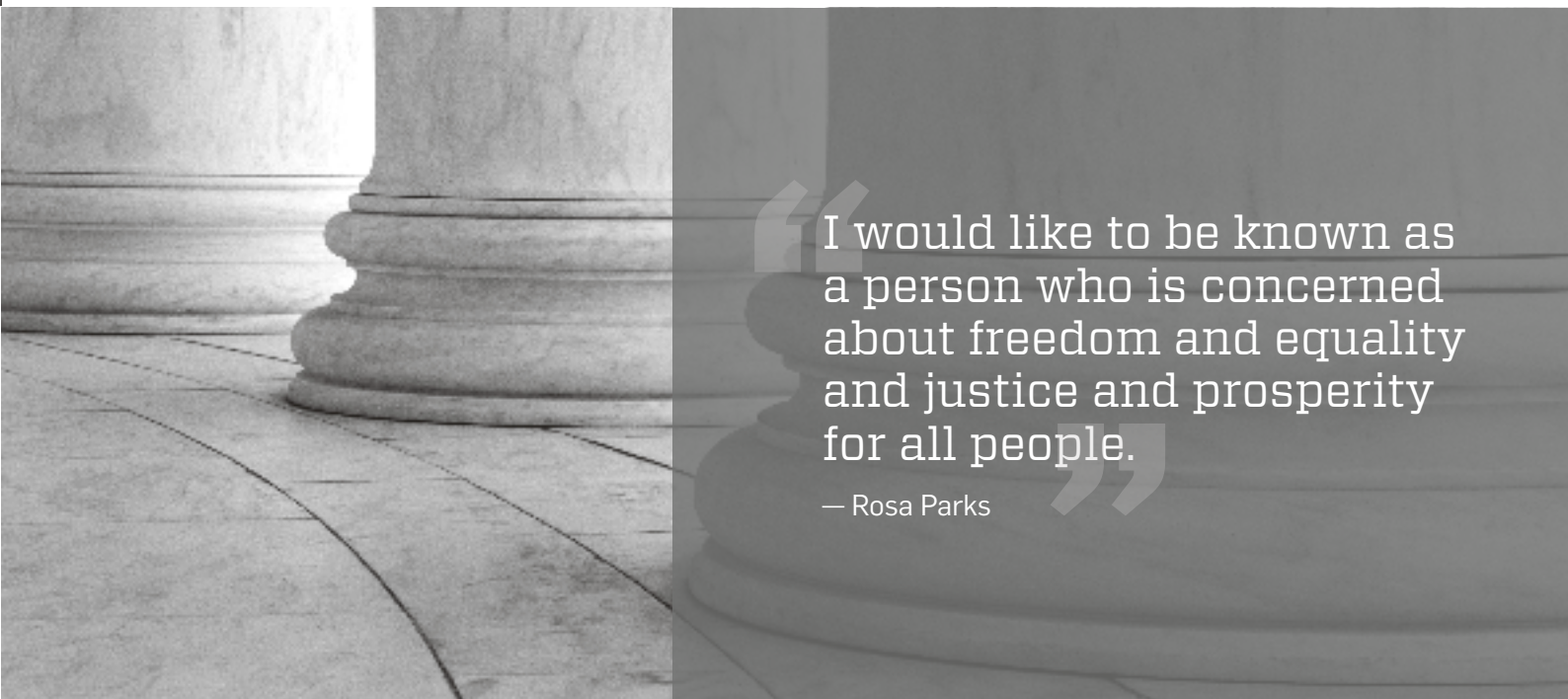


## Pressing for Fairer School Funding

In a matter referred by the Texas Civil Rights Project, a Weil lawyer argued in state appellate court on behalf of parents of students in the Clint Independent School District near El Paso, Texas. Based on the Texas Constitution, these parents are seeking funding for two high schools in less affluent parts of the school district that is roughly comparable on a per student basis to funding for a smaller high school in the most affluent area of the district. The trial court dismissed the case for failure to exhaust administrative remedies before the Texas Commissioner of Education, and the appeal seeks reinstatement and remand. No ruling has been released by the court.

## Challenging the Treatment of Hearing-Impaired Inmates

Weil, along with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and BelzleyBathurst Attorneys, is representing a putative class of deaf and hard-of-hearing inmates who have filed suit against, among others, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Kentucky Department of Corrections. The suit alleges that the defendants' refusal to provide appropriate services and accommodations violates the First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and other federal and state statutes. The defendants have answered the complaint, and the case is currently in the discovery phase.



“I would like to be known as a person who is concerned about freedom and equality and justice and prosperity for all people.”

— Rosa Parks

## Safeguarding the Free Exercise of Religion in New York

An *eruv* is a largely invisible unbroken demarcation of an area through which certain activities may be conducted outside the home on the Jewish Sabbath and Yom Kippur. In a significant series of litigations concerning attempts by three Long Island municipalities to block the creation of an *eruv*, Weil's New York office, on behalf of the East End Eruv Association and individuals, filed lawsuits in federal court against the municipalities for violations of the plaintiffs' First Amendment free exercise rights and other federal and state laws. Specifically, the plaintiffs' free exercise rights are violated by the municipalities' interference with the plaintiffs' contracts with utility companies for the right to use utility poles to attach the nearly invisible plastic strips that help to create the *eruv*. In February 2014, the Second Circuit ruled in favor of Weil's clients, affirming denial of a motion to intervene by a third-party group opposed to an *eruv*. In June 2014, Weil secured another important victory, when the district court issued a ruling that Weil's client and the utility companies have authority under state law to enter into contracts for the attachment of the plastic strips to the poles and that nothing prohibited them from entering into such contracts in at least one of the municipalities, where an *eruv* has now been created. The litigations continue actively on other important issues, including the resolution of a separate action brought by third-party opponents, and issues related to the First Amendment and local sign laws.




# Environmental

Recognizing the historic threat of climate change, Weil is significantly involved in environmental issues globally, as well as with local environmental matters that affect the health and safety of the communities in which we work and live. We support initiatives that offer ecologically sound ways to further economic development in developing nations.

## Leveling the Playing Field in the U.N. Climate Talks

The Legal Response Initiative (LRI) is a pro bono collaboration and charity that Weil co-founded with other leading firms in 2009. An international network of lawyers from leading firms, chambers, and universities, LRI provides legal advice to the world's least developed countries to support their negotiation of a fair deal in the hugely complex United Nations climate treaty talks. Weil attorneys continue to support LRI's efforts. The network offers low-income developing countries free access to legal services to enable them to engage on a more level playing field during international climate negotiations. LRI also expands

homegrown legal capacity in developing countries through free training events and materials, and it has dealt with almost 250 legal queries and trained 130 people. In March 2014, LRI won the "Best Education or Campaign Initiative" award at the U.K.'s annual Climate Awards, the leading forum in the U.K. for recognizing achievements in the climate field. The LRI was the only project with a legal focus to be recognized. It has won a number of awards, including British Legal CSR Project of the Year in 2010. Our support for the LRI is an example of the impact Weil can have on environmental issues at the highest strategic and international level.



“The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery – not over nature but of ourselves.”

— Rachel Carson



## Transforming African Life with Solar Lights

Many people in the world's poorest nations think of basic lighting as a luxury, but in reality it is a necessity. Lack of lighting greatly affects economic development, limiting household income and hindering business opportunities. In Africa, 600 million people live without electricity, and for their lighting they are forced to rely instead on kerosene, candles, and battery-powered lights. Families and businesses in Africa spend \$10.5 billion a year on kerosene lighting.

As a leader in the rapidly developing field of social finance and impact investing, Weil has advised on a pro bono basis the philanthropic foundation of a leading global private equity fund on its recent innovative investment in SunnyMoney. A trading subsidiary of the charity Solar Aid, SunnyMoney aims to increase access to solar lights and eradicate the kerosene lamp from Africa by the end of this decade. It is the largest vendor of solar lights in Africa, selling more than one every minute at an average price of \$8 to \$10 per light. Our support of the investment in SunnyMoney will help transform the lives of its customers by eliminating the expense and fumes associated with kerosene; significantly unburdening a poor household's budget, 10 percent to 30 percent of which is spent on kerosene; freeing people to work and study longer in a safer and cleaner environment; and considerably reducing a household's environmental impact and carbon footprint.

## Supplying Rwanda with Eco-Friendly Cookstoves

Weil is advising social enterprise EcoZoom on the financing, manufacturing, and contractual arrangements for the supply of clean, safe, and energy-efficient cookstoves to 700,000 families in Rwanda in the largest-ever distribution of this kind to be implemented in a 12-month period. Traditional cookstoves are inefficient and costly to run as well as bad for the user's health. Replacement with cleaner, cheaper-to-run, more efficient models will greatly improve the beneficiaries' lives and help the environment. Our role involves providing cross-practice advice on a number of crucial contracts and agreements.

## WEILGREEN

WEILGREEN, the firmwide environmental initiative, continued to raise awareness and identify and implement greener business practices in 2013-2014. Earth Week 2014 activities in New York included participation in New York Cares Spring Day by cleaning up city parks, screening films on topics such as plastic bag consumption in the U.S. and the vanishing of honeybees worldwide, offering an urban beekeeping presentation and honey-sampling table, and providing a bike-share information table at which the Firm distributed Citi Bike passes to employees.

Earth Day activities in a number of offices included a lunch panel videoconference hosted by the D.C. office with experts opining on ways to reduce our environmental footprint; a Green Margaritas & Munchies Happy Hour in Dallas; fundraising in Houston to help maintain Discovery Green, a 12-acre downtown public park; sponsorship by the Silicon Valley office of its annual Recycled Art Project contest at local schools; and the distribution of free LED light bulbs in Miami and several other offices.

Green practices are the rule in many of Weil's international offices. Budapest, which has distributed large tote bags with a Weil logo that are made of 100 percent recycled and eco-friendly materials, says it takes resource and energy conservation so seriously that "every day is Earth Day." The Frankfurt office, which is LEED certified, uses "real" dishes and glasses in the kitchens, as does the London office, whose caterer has been encouraged to use fair-trade and organic produce and patronize local suppliers, and whose cleaners use "Ecover" eco-friendly cleaning products.

WEILGREEN's work continues throughout the year, spearheaded by its Green Committees. Weil also helps to promote environmental solutions and share green best practices on a broader community level through its membership in groups such as the Law Firm Sustainability Network.





# Children

Weil assists groups that advocate for children who have special educational needs, face severe health crises, or are caught in adoption or custody disputes, to name just a few issues. Our mission is to help these children achieve stability in their lives and realize their full human potential.

## Reforming Children's Palliative Care Policy in Russia

Weil's Budapest and Warsaw offices assisted the Russian Children's Palliative Care Foundation, an organization that promotes the development of palliative care in Russia for children, adolescents, and young adults with life-threatening or debilitating illnesses, as well as their families and loved ones. Through one of its initiatives, the Foundation advocates for the right of parents in Russia to be with their seriously or terminally ill children as they are being treated in intensive care. Russian hospitals currently do not permit parents to be with, take care of, or even visit their ill children in intensive care.

To support its law reform efforts in Russia, the Foundation asked neighboring countries to research and provide a description of local laws and policies governing the right of parents to be with their seriously ill children as they are being treated in intensive care. Weil's Budapest and Warsaw offices conducted thorough research and provided a detailed description and analysis of the related Hungarian and Polish legal backgrounds. In addition, to raise awareness of the practical challenges that legal reforms and implementation in this area could face, the offices researched how palliative care is actually delivered in Hungary and Poland, including non-regulated practices that have been implemented by some major hospitals.



## Special Education Pro Bono Project

Below are two of the many successful matters handled this year as part of Weil's Special Education Pro Bono Project, a partnership with New York Lawyers in the Public Interest (NYPLI), in which the Weil team represents special-needs children in New York City who require additional educational services or private schooling because of their disabilities.

### Winning the Right to a Medically Safe School Life

Weil secured a victory on behalf of a New York City special education student, following a multi-day hearing including testimony from five witnesses. The student, a nonverbal 11-year-old boy diagnosed with diabetes, adrenal insufficiency, hypothyroidism, and Down syndrome, had been able to attend public school only when accompanied by a "one-to-one" nurse who monitored his condition and administered medications as necessary.

For the 2013-2014 school year, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) sought to replace this one-to-one nurse with a non-medically trained "health paraprofessional" coupled with the school's two nurses, directly contravening the recommendations of the student's doctors. Weil challenged this decision as one that would not allow the student to safely attend school and would force the student's parents to home-school him.

In a written decision, the impartial hearing officer held that the DOE failed to meet its burden of demonstrating that the proposed accommodations were reasonably calculated to enable the student to receive educational benefits and, further, that the parents had demonstrated that the DOE must provide the student with one-to-one nursing services for him to remain in school.

### Meeting an Autistic Child's Educational Needs

Since 2010, Weil has successfully represented the mother of a special-needs student who suffers from autism in obtaining a free and appropriate education from the New York City Department of Education. Because of his disabilities, the student requires a unique learning environment only available at a private school, which his mother would be unable to pay for herself. Each year, however, the DOE recommends that the student be placed back in a public school, even though the recommended public school placements lack the necessary programming and services to meet his individualized educational needs. For the past four years, Weil has used the impartial hearing process to ensure that the student can remain in private school where he has made significant educational progress and that the full cost of his tuition, nearly \$100,000 a year, is paid by the DOE.



## Children


### KIND: Helping Three Haitian Children Secure a Stable Life

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) is a national not-for-profit organization that serves unaccompanied immigrant children who are facing the possibility of being deported from the United States. Many of these children have suffered abuse, neglect, abandonment, or persecution in their home countries.

In a recent matter referred through KIND, attorneys from Weil's Boston office successfully represented three children originally from Haiti who were in danger of being deported but whose circumstances merited Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, or SIJS, which confers the right to remain in the country. The three siblings, who are now 18, 17, and 4 years old, entered the U.S. with their father, who subsequently became unable to take care of them due to mental health issues. The children were granted temporary admission to the U.S. based on humanitarian considerations and, along with their father, were sent to live with a family friend in Massachusetts. When the friend was unable to care for the children, they were placed in foster care.

The Weil team obtained a special finding of facts establishing that they were dependent upon the court system, that reunification with one or both parents was not viable due to abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and that it was in the children's best interests to stay in the U.S. The team used the finding to help the children apply for SIJS in federal immigration court. Through multiple applications, filings, exhibits, and meetings with the children, their foster mother, a social worker, and the lawyer representing them in the state custody hearing, the Weil team completed the documentation for each child and prepared them all for their United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) interviews in Boston in April 2014. Following the interviews, the children were told on the spot that their applications would be granted and that their green cards would follow.

With the federal removal proceedings terminated, the children are secure in the knowledge that their new, stable home life in the U.S. will not be ended by deportation. They still reside with their foster mother, who is also of Haitian descent, and the two elder siblings have performed extremely well in school, earning almost straight A's and planning to apply to college.



“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.”

— Maria Montessori





## Not-for-Profits

Weil is proud to provide essential legal assistance on a wide range of issues to many of the world's leading charitable organizations. Our help enables them to fulfill their mission of working to better the lives of the disabled, ill, and disadvantaged.

### Not-for-Profit Practice Group

Weil's commitment to the not-for-profit sector is supported by the Firm's Not-for-Profit practice group. Founded in 2006, the group consists of Weil lawyers from a wide array of practice specialties. It works to marshal and align the vast spectrum of Weil's not-for-profit efforts, while also providing a source of collective experience and expertise in the not-for-profit arena. As a result of the group's efforts, the Firm's pro bono transactional practice has emerged as an industry leader, recognized as a premier provider of legal services for the not-for-profit sector.

The group, in cooperation with Weil's Pro Bono Committee, hosted its ninth annual Not-for-Profit Board Governance Symposium in May 2014. The symposium, now a marquee event within the not-for-profit community, focuses on good governance and practical solutions in an era of heightened expectations, rigorous regulatory scrutiny, and financial stress confronting this all-important sector.

### Developing an App to Save Teens from 'Sexting'

Weil advised the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), one of the U.K.'s best-known charities dedicated to the protection of children, on an innovative phone app to combat the problem of "sexting," where young people generate and share indecent images of themselves on their cell phones, putting young girls under considerable emotional stress and damaging peer pressure. We advised the NSPCC on drafting and negotiating a development agreement for a mobile application designed to encourage young people to contact the charity about sexting abuse and to empower them to resist pressure to share indecent images of themselves. The successful drafting and negotiation of the mobile application development agreement, plus further legal advice in relation to the NSPCC's applicable privacy policy and terms of use, led to the launch in October 2013 of the "Zipit" application, which has been taken up enthusiastically by the target audience of young women. The NSPCC was particularly impressed with the quality of our work and honored us with their NSPCC Champion award in relation to this matter.

## Not-for-Profits

### Helping a Legal Assistance Group Find Room to Grow

Founded in 1990, the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) provides high-quality, free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers who cannot afford attorneys. The comprehensive range of services provided by the not-for-profit organization includes direct representation, case consultation, advocacy, community education, training, financial counseling, and impact litigation. NYLAG has 76 intake sites located in courts, hospitals, and community-based organizations in all five boroughs of New York City as well as in Westchester and Rockland Counties and on Long Island. Weil represented NYLAG in its negotiation and signing of a sublease that increased the available space at its headquarters in downtown New York City, enabling it to provide more programs to address the growing need for its services. In addition, Weil, along with 11 other law firms and the UJA-Federation of New York, provided NYLAG with temporary accommodations following the inundation caused by Hurricane Sandy, until the organization could move back into its main offices in January 2013.

### Pairing an HIV/AIDS Support Group with the Right Partner

Weil advised longtime pro bono client HIV Law Project, Inc. on its affiliation with Housing Works, Inc. HIV Law Project was the leading independent not-for-profit organization providing legal advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS through direct legal services and policy advocacy efforts and has been a pro bono client of the Firm for many years. During that time Weil attorneys have been involved in matters affecting the organization and also provided assistance on cases handled by HIV Law Project for its clients. HIV Law Project undertook a strategic review and determined that it could strengthen funding for its mission and realize certain economies of scale if it became affiliated with another not-for-profit organization that shared its objectives. The Weil team helped our client evaluate not-for-profit organizations as potential affiliation partners, advised on negotiations, and structured a transaction that allowed the HIV Law Project to become part of Housing Works quickly and efficiently.

### Advising a U.K. Charity for the Homeless

Established in 1989, Homeless International is a U.K.-based charity devoted to the challenge of providing affordable housing and solutions to urban poverty in Africa and Asia. Weil has advised Homeless International in relation to a variety of its financial arrangements and fundraising activities for a number of years and is currently advising Homeless International in relation to the establishment of a new fundraising entity in the U.S., the ultimate purpose of which will be to provide microfinance solutions in Africa and Asia. This bespoke project involves cross-border teams spanning the Corporate, Finance, and Tax groups in Weil's New York and London offices.

### Celebrating Centuries of Jewish Life in Poland

In 2013 the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw opened its doors to the general public. The museum is a public-private venture between the Polish Minister of Culture, the city government of Warsaw, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland. Weil has been assisting the Association on a pro bono basis from the onset of this venture. Under a three-party agreement the building was constructed and financed by the city of Warsaw and the Ministry of Culture, while the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland took responsibility for the permanent exhibition within the building. Work on the museum building – one of Warsaw's most exciting public buildings – was completed at the beginning of 2013. Work on the exhibition is almost finished, and the official opening is scheduled for October 2014.

Weil's lawyers designed the public-private partnership as well as the three-party agreement, and will continue to assist the Association in all legal matters concerning the production of the permanent exhibition, all on a pro bono basis. The museum is presently being used to host a number of cultural events, including concerts and temporary exhibitions, that are related to the Polish-Jewish relationship and its history.

“Benevolence is a duty. He who frequently practices it, and sees his benevolent intentions realized, at length comes really to love him to whom he has done good.”

— Immanuel Kant





## Weil Externships

The Firm is particularly proud of its externship programs, which allow full-time associates the opportunity to work exclusively on pro bono matters with leading public service and charitable organizations for a period of several months.

Because of the expanded time frame of our externship assignments, associates are able to witness and appreciate the difference their efforts make, and the knowledge and skills they acquire on these assignments enhance not only their sense of social responsibility but also their legal acumen.

The Legal Aid Society Criminal Practice Program, where volunteer attorneys assist Legal Aid in its representation of approximately 220,000 indigent defendants, is among the more recent externships introduced at Weil. Providing free legal service to the Bronx community of New York, our assignments include criminal defense work on misdemeanor cases, research and investigations, preparing witnesses, and arguing motions.

Examples of some additional externships offered at Weil include:

- Weil corporate associates work at Lawyers Alliance for New York with a wide variety of clients, advising on matters ranging from economic and community development projects and contract and lease negotiations to mergers of not-for-profits and financial reorganizations.
- Weil's externship program at the New York City Law Department provides litigation associates the opportunity to assist the Office of the Corporation Counsel with depositions, motions, and trials.
- At Legal Services NYC, Weil litigation associates help disadvantaged New Yorkers while gaining valuable, hands-on litigation experience in areas such as housing, bankruptcy, Social Security disability, and parental and children's rights.
- Weil and the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program (DVAP), a joint program of the Dallas Bar Association and Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, work together on the Lend-A-Lawyer Program assisting low-income Dallas residents with their legal problems. While onsite at the DVAP offices, our attorneys handle civil cases, participate in weekly legal clinics, and work closely with DVAP's mentoring lawyers to aid clients. Weil's Dallas summer associates also assist staff in providing legal services to the poor, spending an evening of their clerkship at a DVAP legal clinic.
- Weil's New York summer associates are given the opportunity to participate in the Firm's pro bono summer externship program by spending two weeks at a public interest organization. These externships afford summer associates the opportunity to attend pro bono training programs, work alongside staff attorneys, conduct administrative hearings, assist on appeals, and interview clients. Apart from externships, summer associates are also assigned pro bono cases under the supervision of attorneys in the various practice groups through which they rotate.



## 50-Hour Plus Performers

Honoring the attorneys and paralegals who have performed 50 hours or more of pro bono service in 2013.

Pierre-Adrien Achard  
Diana A. Aguilar  
Melody E. Akhavan  
Jonathan E. Algor, IV  
Nelly Almeida  
Matthew D. Altemeier  
William Sutton Ansley  
Daniel E. Antalics  
Tayyibah Arif  
Candace Arthur  
Karina Aust-Niewiadomska  
Lara B. Bach  
Lawrence J. Baer  
Alison Bain-Lucey  
Karen N. Ballack  
Adam B. Banks  
Christopher D. Barraza  
Justin Bart  
Layne S.R. Behrens  
Corey D. Berman  
Jon-Paul A. Bernard  
Agustina Berro  
David Berz  
Cheri E. Bessellieu  
Andrea Bidegaray  
Kimberly S. Blanchard  
Sarah Blanchard  
Natalie Rajkovic Blazer  
Joanna Bliss  
Jared Bobrow  
Benton B. Bodamer  
Jerzy Bombczynski  
Matthew G. Bonini  
Blanka Borzsonyi

Stephen Bosco  
Kevin Bostel  
Peter Boulle  
Scott R. Bowling  
Patrick Brendon  
Allison M. Brown  
Robert Brown  
Alexis Brown-Reilly  
Yehudah L. Buchweitz  
Miriam Buhl  
Amanda Burns  
Blair Cahn  
Konrad L. Cailteux  
Gregory Capone  
Anne M. Cappella  
Bill Kam Chan  
Celine Chan  
Herbert Chan  
Todd Chandler  
Brian Chih Kaung Chang  
Todd B. Chelius  
Robert N. Chipfield  
Eileen Hren Citron  
Alexa Clinton  
Gary Coad  
Sara Coelho  
Paul T. Cohn  
Reed Collins  
Samuel Jason Comer  
Claire K. Comfort  
Marco Compagnoni  
Annemargaret Connolly  
Melanie Conroy  
Rose Constance

Justin L. Constant  
Deborah Jane Cooper  
Jill M. Corrigan  
Jessica Costa  
Ramen Costa  
Yvanna Custodio  
Brian J. D'Amico  
Debra A. Dandeneau  
Stephen Dannhauser  
Mariel S. Dator  
Erika del Nido  
Timothy E. DeMasi  
Paul T. DeRousselle  
Paullette C. Deruelle  
David M. DesRosier  
Jessica Diab  
Noemi Diaz  
Kelly DiBlasi  
Catherine T. Dixon  
William T. Dong  
Danielle D. Donovan  
Katherine Doorley  
Clementine Dowley  
Kristen M. Echemendia  
Nina Edelman  
Harvey M. Eisenberg  
Michael A. Epstein  
Michael J. Esposito  
Christopher Evans  
Courtney Patrice Fain  
Ian Ferreira  
Paul A. Ferrillo  
Jonathan K. Fisch  
Barrington Fishley

*Weil staff members are equally critical to our pro bono work. From the Marketing Department's creative insight for our publications and the events and technical staff who assist with the Firm's trainings, to our paralegals and administrative colleagues who provide critical support to the attorneys, every member is a valuable contributor to our pro bono success.*



Jared Foley  
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