



Pro Bono

Pro bono work is our responsibility not just as attorneys but as citizens. MTO lawyers take that responsibility seriously. The firm was one of the charter signatories to the American Bar Association's pro bono challenge and consistently devotes more than 3% of all attorney time to delivering needed pro bono legal assistance. We are proud to be one of the select group of firms to have received the ABA's coveted Pro Bono Publico Award.

MTO's pro bono practice is broad and diverse. Our litigators have handled ground-breaking impact litigation in immigration, public benefits, housing, voting rights, campaign finance, disability rights, gay rights, death penalty, and other matters. We represent individual clients in landlord-tenant, public assistance, school expulsion, prisoner's rights, immigration, criminal appellate, and debt collection cases. Our corporate lawyers advise non-profit organizations on intellectual property, employment, organizational, real estate, and tax matters as well as on bond issuances and financing.

Our pro bono efforts have reached overseas as well. In 2007, MTO attorneys led a one-week training program sponsored by the ABA and the MacArthur Foundation in London to train Sudanese lawyers to represent victims of rape, torture, and other abuses in the Darfur region. One of our litigation support professionals spent almost a month in Tanzania training lawyers, judges, and staff at the United Nations Rwanda Tribunal and Prosecutor's Office in the use of electronic case management and trial presentation technology.

MTO lawyers further support pro bono work through two different foundations. Our partners sponsor the [MTO Foundation](#), which funds two public interest law fellowships each year through Equal Justice Works, and provides grants to many legal services organizations. Our current MTO Equal Justice Works fellows work for Public Counsel in Los Angeles on affordable housing issues and for the National Housing Law Project in Oakland on ensuring compliance with the federal Violence Against Women Act. MTO's associates sponsor the [Paul Davis MTO Associate Fund](#), which provides grants to local community organizations.

Some of the firm's recent pro bono matters include:

- MTO represented several gay and lesbian couples and Equality California in their California Supreme Court petition challenging the constitutionality of Proposition 8, the voter initiative that sought to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. Though the Court upheld Proposition 8 on May 26, 2009, it also unanimously ruled that the more than 18,000 marriages that took place between June 16 and November 4, 2008 continue to be fully valid and recognized by the state of California.
- In June 2007, MTO filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of two immigrants challenging Immigration and Customs Enforcement practice of forcibly and involuntarily injecting immigration detainees with anti-psychotic drugs to facilitate their deportation. MTO's prosecution of the case resulted in the government's reversing its policy and announcing that it would not involuntarily administer such drugs in the future without federal court authorization, based on a physician's examination and recommendation. The ACLU Foundation of Southern California presented its Equal Justice Advocacy Award to the MTO team for its work on the case.
- MTO leads a city-wide litigation effort on behalf of hundreds of Los Angeles families receiving Section 8 assistance against landlords attempting to terminate their participation in the Section 8 program and circumvent rent and eviction controls.
- MTO was involved in four of the United States Supreme Court's most high-profile cases in the 2007 Term. In *Baze v. Rees*, we filed an amicus brief on behalf of medical experts in a case challenging the constitutionality of Kentucky's lethal injection protocol. In *United States v. Williams*, we filed an amicus brief on the constitutionality of the federal statute outlawing the solicitation or pandering of child pornography. In *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, we filed an amicus brief on behalf of international scholars in a case involving the constitutionality of Indiana's voter identification law. In *District of Columbia v. Heller*, we filed a brief on behalf of a gun violence prevention organization in a case involving the scope of the Second Amendment.
- MTO represents two condemned inmates in an Administrative Procedure Act challenge to California's lethal injection regulation. In December 2007, the California Superior Court declared the regulation invalid and enjoined the Department of Corrections from enforcing it. The Department's appeal of that decision is pending.
- MTO lawyers regularly represent foster care children in proceedings to facilitate their adoption into permanent homes. Since beginning this work, over 58 MTO attorneys have helped with over 179 completed adoptions.
- MTO submitted an important amicus brief in the California Supreme Court on behalf of various gay rights organizations in *In re Marriage Cases*, the landmark case establishing the right to same-sex marriage in California.



- MTO filed a class action in federal court challenging significant delays in the government's processing of applications for citizenship.
- MTO recently took on representation of a condemned inmate in Louisiana in connection with post-conviction challenges to his conviction and death sentence.
- MTO successfully opposed an effort to enjoin Arizona's Clean Elections Act, which provides for voluntary public funding of election campaigns, in the middle of the 2008 campaign.