

PRO BONO **HOT LIST** | A SPECIAL REPORT

As law firms continue to expand their services globally, so too have their pro bono programs, with lawyers volunteering in 2014 to help with immigration matters, natural disaster relief and human-trafficking cases. Last year also brought plenty of pro bono opportunities stateside. Attorneys devoted their time to gun-control cases, voter identification laws, free speech issues, abortion rights and same-sex marriage cases.



REED SMITH

Mobile Clinic in Haiti Delivers Hope

Jayne Fleming's trip to Haiti about six weeks after its devastating January 2010 earthquake led to a humanitarian relocation project at Reed Smith that made a big push during 2014.

During the trip, Fleming, who is pro bono counsel at Reed Smith, along with a medical and legal team learned of rapes occurring in displacement camps and in the streets.

"What we discovered was a population of vulnerable individuals who needed protection," Fleming said.

So Fleming helped create a mobile clinic to help rape survivors. For some, they sought humanitarian parole to the United States. For others, they did the legal work necessary to secure refugee status in Canada.

"The project essentially formed itself," she said.

From January through November 2014, Reed Smith lawyers spent 1,272 pro bono hours on the humanitarian parole project. To date, the Reed Smith team and several partner organizations have evacuated 60 women and child survivors of violence to safety. Of those, nine have been granted permanent asylum in the United States and 40 have been granted similar protection in Canada.

The firm is working on and plans to file six more humanitarian parole cases for Haitian rape survivors and one for an orphan who is HIV-positive.

The work last year included the noted case of a man named Jhony, who was

gang-raped in 2011 in Haiti by United Nations peacekeepers from Uruguay. The firm's efforts included work toward his humanitarian parole and meeting with Uruguay President José Mujica to discuss reparations.

During that same time frame, Reed Smith donated another 1,226 lawyer pro bono hours to J/P Haitian Relief Organization, founded by actor Sean Penn. The firm provides transactional advice to that organization including in such areas as intellectual property, contract and nonprofit law.

Since the earthquake, Fleming has traveled to Haiti some 30 times. On about half of those trips, she went with teams that included some combination of lawyers from Reed Smith and other firms, plus psychologists, physical therapists and photographers, to document conditions and for future advocacy efforts.

Part of the effort includes setting up mental health evaluations. Using video-conferencing software, Fleming, the survivor and an interpreter connect with at least two, and sometimes three, of the doctors who went with Fleming on her first trip to Haiti.

Those psychiatric reports provided evidence for the cases, Fleming said.

"It's an uphill battle to get humanitarian



parole granted from someone outside the U.S.," she said. "We really had to build very compelling cases based on the experiences of our clients."

Fleming's in-country investigative work, with help from her firm, sets Reed Smith's asylum project apart, said Holly Cooper, associate director of the Immigration Law Clinic and lecturer at the University of California, Davis School of Law. Cooper is also involved in the project.

"[Fleming] actually goes into the country and talks to the key players in those countries and does the investigative work herself," Cooper said.

—SHERI QUALTERS