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## Simpson Thacher and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice Overturn Unconstitutional North Carolina Law Criminalizing Voting

On April 22, 2024, Simpson Thacher and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) secured a decisive victory for their clients in a federal lawsuit in North Carolina District Court challenging a North Carolina law criminalizing voting. The win overturned a racially discriminatory law that made it a Class I felony for North Carolina residents to vote if they are on parole, probation or post-release supervision for a felony conviction, even if they mistakenly believe they are eligible to vote. Virtually every other election crime punishable as a Class I felony in North Carolina requires intent. Under this strict liability law, there had been high-profile prosecutions which chilled countless eligible voters with criminal convictions from exercising their right to cast a ballot. This fear of prosecution impeded voter engagement efforts by the North Carolina A. Philip Randolph Institute and Action NC, who were the Plaintiffs in the suit. The lawsuit was originally filed in September 2020.

The team successfully argued that this law, which dates back to the nineteenth century, violated the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In her decision, U.S. District Court Judge Loretta Biggs found it “extraordinary and telling” that the state did not dispute the discriminatory origins of the law or its current discriminatory impact on Black voters. She also noted that vagueness around the strict-liability nature of the law, enabled North Carolina district attorneys to “pursue their personal predilections” in deciding whether to enforce the law.

After Simpson Thacher and SCSJ moved for summary judgment, the North Carolina legislature amended the law on a prospective basis for elections after January 1, 2024. The Simpson Thacher team included Partner **Jon Youngwood**, Senior Counsel **David Elbaum**, Associate **Jacob Lundqvist** and Pro Bono Attorney **Nihara Choudhri**.

## Simpson Thacher Obtains Appellate Victory and Five Year Final Order of Protection for Domestic Violence Survivor Client

Simpson Thacher secured vital protections for a domestic violence survivor in a successful appeal to the New York State Appellate Division: Second Department, which resulted in entry of a final, five year order of protection for the Firm's client, who suffered years of abuse at the hands of her ex-husband. Simpson Thacher had appealed the lower court's determination that only a suspended judgment should be entered in petitioner's case, rather than an order of protection, even though the court had previously found the petitioner's testimony credible about the physical injuries she suffered as a result of her ex-husband's attacks against her. These included when he used dangerous instruments to whip and strike her, sometimes in the presence of the parties' child. On appeal, the Second Department unanimously held, as the Simpson Thacher team had argued, that the ex-husband's acts of abuse constituted "aggravating circumstances" under the law, warranting entry of a five-year final order of protection rather than the suspended judgement.

Litigation Associate **Alison Sher** briefed the case and appeared at oral argument in the Appellate Division. The Simpson Thacher team also included Litigation Partner **Martin Bell**, Associate **Libbie Hamner**, and Pro Bono Counsel **Susan Cordaro**. The case was referred to the Firm by Sanctuary for Families.



## Simpson Thacher Wins Two Year Sentence Reduction for a Client Suffering From Schizophrenia

On May 28, the New York Appellate Division, First Department, reduced our client's prison sentence for manslaughter in the first degree from 12 years to 10 years in the interests of justice. Our client has suffered from severe mental health issues, including schizophrenia, since he was a teenager. After experiencing physical and emotional abuse by his parents, he was placed in the foster care system. He eventually became homeless and went years without appropriate mental health treatment. He instead attempted to ease his pain with drugs and alcohol.

In 2017, our client suffered a psychotic episode in which he believed that another homeless individual had stolen his backpack containing his identification documents. He hit that individual in the head with a long metal object, which ultimately led to the individual's death. This incident was extremely out of character for our client, who had never previously been convicted of any violent offenses. The team included Litigation Partner **Rachel Sparks Bradley**, Pro Bono Attorney **Nihara Choudhri**, and Associates **Margerite Blase** and **AJ Tagliaferri**.

## Simpson Thacher and Civil Rights Groups Challenge Louisiana Law Mandating School Posting of Ten Commandments

Simpson Thacher, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana, Americans United for Separation of Church and State ("AU") and the Freedom from Religion Foundation ("FFRF") filed a lawsuit on June 24, 2024, challenging a new Louisiana law requiring that the Ten Commandments be displayed in every public school classroom. The Complaint for *Roake v. Brumley*, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana, asserts that the newly enacted statute violates longstanding U.S. Supreme Court precedent and the First Amendment. The Complaint further alleges that the new law "substantially interferes with and burdens" parents' First Amendment right to direct their children's religious education

and upbringing, and that, in approving and mandating the display of a specific version of the Ten Commandments, goes against the doctrine of separation of church and state.

The lawsuit, brought on behalf of a multi-faith group of nine Louisiana families with children in public schools, highlights the religiously coercive nature of the displays mandated by the new law. The complaint seeks a declaratory judgment that the law is unconstitutional and a permanent injunction to prevent its enforcement. The Simpson Thacher team includes Litigation Partner **Jon Youngwood**, Senior Counsel **Janet Gochman**, and Associates **Jordan Krieger** and **Nicholas Prendergast**.

### London Office Launches New Weekly Clinic in Westminster

The London Office launched a new clinic in the spring of 2024 in partnership with the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre (SWLAC). The SWLAC Clinic operates weekly on Thursday evenings in Westminster and serves those living in the area who earn the minimum wage or are in receipt of benefits and cannot afford solicitor fees. Clinic volunteers offer general advice on matters relating mostly to housing, employment and family law. Simpson Thacher Paralegal **Tilda Santin** coordinates the Firm's schedule and provides invaluable assistance to the clinic's operations. Simpson Thacher volunteers thus far have included Partners **Clare Gaskell** and **Vasanth Padaki**, Counsel **Spencer Patton**, Associates **Sandy (Seungyeon) Anderson**, **Joe Donaghey**, **Jennifer Falconer Hall**, **Camilla Gelson-Thomas**, **Edward Godwin**, **Ella Hammond**, **Ndjodi Ndeunyema** and **Amy Volz**, and Paralegals **Alexander Clement**, **Melissa Comyns**, **Harriet Hoban**, **Catrin Howells**, **Munyiva Mbai**, **Denise Nantongo**, **James Phillips** and **Tullis Ross**.

### Spotlight: 2024 Public Interest Summer Fellow, Marissa Bucci

Summer Associate **Marissa Bucci** will be working with a youth-focused Connecticut nonprofit organization called Domus as part of her 2024 Public Interest Summer Fellowship. Domus aims to provide community programs and training to support at-risk youth, with a particular focus on workforce development, juvenile justice, youth violence prevention, and education. As part of her work, Marissa will conduct legal research for a new Connecticut law that seeks to expand access to diversionary alternatives for children who commit minor crimes. She hopes to speak with local attorneys in the immigration and public defense fields to gain insights on how the new law could impact undocumented youth and the current criminal legal system process. These opportunities will enable Marissa to create a legal memo for the new juvenile diversion law.



### Simpson Thacher Team Completes Trial in Mississippi in First Amendment Challenge

Simpson Thacher and the ACLU of Mississippi challenged a Lafayette County, Mississippi permitting policy on First Amendment grounds. The Lafayette County Courthouse grounds have long been a site of protests, rallies and other community activities, including in the summer of 2020 protests and counter-protests regarding the Confederate monument on the Courthouse grounds. In July 2020, local documentary filmmaker, photographer, visual artist and educator, John Rash, applied for a permit to use the Courthouse grounds for his evening PROJECT(ion) event, a part of the annual Oxford Fringe Festival. Lafayette County subsequently amended its policies to prohibit all nighttime activity on the Courthouse grounds, along with other limitations, and denied Mr. Rash's permit. We are challenging the constitutionality of the permitting policies, seeking to ensure that Mr. Rash and his fellow Lafayette County citizens are afforded their full First

Amendment rights to engage in political speech in a public forum.

In August 2020, the Northern District of Mississippi denied our motion for a preliminary injunction. We subsequently amended the complaint and proceeded with discovery, including taking the deposition of several Lafayette County officials and law enforcement officers. In early 2021 the parties filed cross motions for summary judgment, which the court denied. After several trial postponements, in October 2022 the parties agreed to engage in renewed summary judgment briefing. In August 2023, the case was reassigned to a new judge and a trial commenced in early March 2024. The team put on 10 witnesses, did opening and closing statements and put in evidence. We expect a decision after post-trial briefing concludes. The team included Senior Counsel **Janet Gochman**, Associate **Allison Draikiwicz**, and Litigation Partner **Jon Youngwood**, who called the trial “An amazing adventure in what might be the federal courthouse in the poorest possible location in America.”



Jon Youngwood, Janet Gochman and Allison Draikiwicz, with Josh Tom from the ACLU of Mississippi and his colleagues

## Clinic Roundup

### Simpson Thacher Hosts In-Person Immigration Clinic in New York for 23 Community Members

On April 17, volunteers from Simpson Thacher, Morgan Stanley, and Apollo collaborated with Catholic Migration Services and New York Lawyers for Public Interest (NYPLI) to host a limited scope immigration screening clinic to help determine community members' eligibility for various forms of immigration relief. The participating teams were able to accommodate a range of different languages—including English, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Wolof and Pular. Together, volunteers interviewed 23 community members, many of whom have now worked with Catholic Migration Services to seek further assistance with their asylum applications as well as additional referrals and support.



Simpson, NYPLI and CMS staff at the clinic

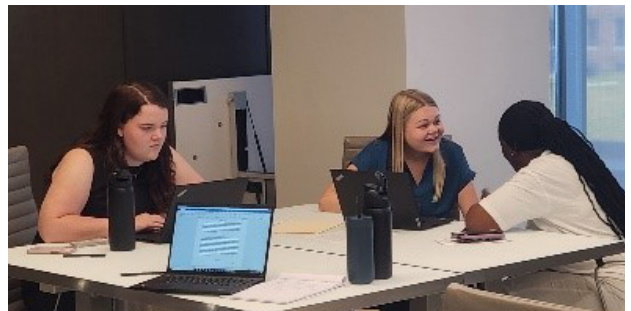
The Simpson Thacher volunteers included Partners **Mark Brod**, **Olga Gutman**, **Jaclyn Starr**, Associates **Isaac Cattan**, **Raelissa Glennon-Zukoff**, **Adrienne Jang**, **Suzanne Kaufman**, **Joann Kim**, **Lynnewood Shafer**, **Christine Marshall**, **Cary Milanes**, **Juan Olavarria**, **Gerardo Párraga**, **Melissa Vallejo**, **Rebecca Wang**, **Khalia Williams**, **Amy Zhou**, **Evan Zuckerman**, Pro Bono Counsel **Susan Cordaro**, Staff Attorney **Jorge Batlle** and Senior Writer **Elizabeth Fuerstman**. Paralegals **Sydney Denson**, **Rae Docherty**, **Will Langdon**,

**Kate Margiotta, Maude Peters, Santiago Valenzuela, and Pro Bono Coordinator Maria Gonzalez,** provided invaluable interpreting assistance.



## Washington, D.C. Office Legal Clinic Assists Seniors with Life Planning Documents

On June 25, the Washington, D.C. office hosted a life planning documents clinic for low-income seniors in the D.C. area to prepare wills, healthcare and financial powers of attorney for the clients referred to us by Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE). Associates **Toyin Edogun** and **Nathan Gonzalez** and Summer Associates **John Cary, Cait Corie, Stillman Hanson, Jr., Tony Howze-Edge, Caroline Kincaid, and Madison Zardiackas** participated in the Clinic.



Summer Associates Madison Zardiackas and Caroline Kincaid speaking with their client

## Houston Office Volunteers Attend Veterans Clinic

Houston Volunteer Lawyers (HVL) hosts a weekly legal advice clinic for Veterans in Houston at the VA Hospital where attorneys meet with veterans to provide advice and counsel on various issues including estate planning, family law, and VA benefit-related issues. Summer Associates **Katelyn Anderson, Tamesha Derkach, Thomas Gebremichael, Nikola Hew, Nima Mohammadi, Sydney Shearouse, Erika Sloan** and **Falyn Weiss** all staffed the Veterans Clinic this summer.



Summer Associates Tony Howze-Edge and Stillman Hanson, Jr. and associate Toyin Edogun working with their client



Summer Associates Nima Mohammadi and Erika Sloan with HVL volunteer attorney and their client

## Los Angeles Office Clinic Provides Family Law Advice to Veterans

On May 29, Simpson Thacher partnered with Levitt Quinn, an LA-based Nonprofit Family Law Center, to support their efforts in interviewing 12 participants on issues including divorce, child support, custody and visitation, and marital property. Volunteers also assisted in crafting personalized legal plans and referral packets for clinic participants. Partners **Chet**

**Kronenberg and Heidi Mayon**, Associates **Jason Anterasian, Jesse Feng, Mariella McCormack**, and **Madison Santoli** participated in the clinic.



Volunteers in the New York Office receive training before meeting with their pro se asylum applicants

### Volunteers in the New York Office Prepare Pro Se Asylum Applications for 11 Community Members

On June 5, in collaboration with Catholic Migration Services and New York Lawyers for Public Interest, teams from Simpson Thacher and Morgan Stanley worked on the preparation of pro se asylum applications for 11 community members with viable immigration claims. Simpson Thacher volunteers included Associates **Daria Balaeskoul** and **Raelissa Glennon-Zukoff**, Summer Associates **Brittney Ajaj, Timothy Bajno, Rebecca Bitar, Ophelia Bonar, Collier Curran, Chinwe Ihejirika, Ryo Kawashima, Lindsay Mangines, David Marantes, Caitlin O’Flanagan, Maya Schaer, Joseph Sciales, Kelsey Shelofsky, Grace Shin**, and SEO Law Interns **Dayo Adeoye, Audrey Ahn** and **Malik Seelal**, Paralegal **Santiago Valenzuela**, and Billing Supervisor **Masha Vengerovskaya**.

### Palo Alto Office Hosts In-Office Expungement Clinic

In the Palo Alto office, volunteers worked with Community of Legal Services of East Palo Alto on June 25 to conduct interviews and draft declarations in support of clinic participants’

expungement applications. The following Summer Associates participated: **Allison Abney, Maya Bar, Matthew Chang, Iris Choi, Danica Fong, Jacob Greenberg, Shahrukh Hameed, Edward Lee, Fiona Sands, Lina Shim, Isabelle Yuan**, and **Jared Zurong Tay**.

### New York Office Volunteers Prepare Emergency Grant Applications for Low-Income New Yorkers

On June 25, Simpson Thacher teams partnered with Legal Services of NYC to prepare emergency grant applications, known as “one-shot deals,” that can prevent low-income tenants from being evicted. Specifically, One-Shot Deals are a flexible single-use grant provided by the City, which can cover various emergency expenses that directly or indirectly lead to homelessness. This includes expenses such as rent arrears, restoring electricity, covering the cost of moving, or recovery from a fire. Volunteers included Summer Associates **Jane Brandon Morrison, Isabella Bocardo, Rae Docherty, Mary Elbanna, Brent Larson, Austin Sacker, Joseph Sciales, Nathaniel Shulman, Benjamin Wackerman** and SEO Law Interns **Dayo Adeoye, Thomas Gebremichael**, and **Malik Seelal**.

### Firm-wide Legal Clinics

The Firm and Volunteers of Legal Service joined forces on June 18 to help renew 13 applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients. DACA status allows immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children with no status, to avoid deportation and secure a work permit, social security number, and driver’s license, enabling them to live and work in the U.S. openly and



legally. Volunteers included Associates **Adrienne Jang, Leila Khamees** and **Alexandria Vasques**, Summer Associates **Isabella Bocardo, Marissa Bucci, Joseph Donohue, Claire Fennelly, Danica Fong, Diana Gazaryan, Claire Heckler, Jared Levine, Elaine Miao, Matthew Molinsky, Caitlin O’Flanagan, Cameron Oliver, Kamron Samiian, Charlotte Simon, Erika Sloan, Emma Taylor, Benjamin Wackerman**, and SEO Law Intern **Thomas Gebremichael**.

On June 20, volunteers worked with Brooklyn Defender Services on drafting letters and other legal materials to clear applicants’ improper records of child maltreatment from the Statewide Central Register, which may expand their access to employment opportunities among many other benefits. We thank for their participation Associates **Toyin Edogun** and **Adrienne Jang**, Summer Associates **Aishat Adekunle, Collier Curran, Mary Elbanna, Elaine Miao, Cameron Oliver, Benjamin Wackerman, Sophie Yanez, Sunny Yao** and SEO Law Intern **Dayo Adeoye**.

On June 26, volunteers from multiple Simpson Thacher offices came together remotely to assist applicants referred by the Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity in completing 14 Philadelphia pardon applications, aiming to provide relief from the challenges that result in receiving a criminal conviction. We thank Counsel **Meredith Dodd**, Associates **Erin Camia, Hannah Daniels, Alan Fenyes, Nathan Gonzalez** and **Spencer Goodson**, Summer Associates **Caylea Barone, Travis Box, Marissa Bucci, Blair Buchanan, Marie Ceske, Isabella Cheng, Tamesha Derkach, Abigail Finn, Hixon Frank, Jasmyne Hinson, Anna Kilby, Allison Kunstler, Lindsay Mangines, Collin Mitchell, Benjamin Olson, Cecilia Poston, Maddie Regulska, Joe Reinhardt, Joshua Strong, Falyn Weiss, Gianni Whiteside** and **Will Wood III**.

Finally, On May 16, May 30, and June 27, we hosted Safe Passage Project clinics, screening unaccompanied immigrant children for legal relief, along with corporate clients including BlackRock, Blackstone, Link, and Pfizer. Simpson Thacher participants included Partners **Jaelyn**

**Starr** and **Borja Marcos**, Senior Counsel **Beate Krieger**, Associates **Emelyn Avina, Ariana Bagherian, Alexis Capati, Rebecca Carroll, Gilles Delporte, Raelissa Glennon-Zukoff, Libbie Hamner, Adrienne Jang, Jeana Johnston, Suzanne Kaufman, Leila Khamees, Joann Kim, Wale Oriola, Taliah Rodriguez, Amanda Torres-Dietrich, Alexandria Vasques** and **Taylor Wettach**, Summer Associates **Aishat Adekunle, Timothy Bajno, Rebecca Bitar, Marie Ceske, Corina DeFeo, Tamesha Derkach, Mary Elbanna, Chinwe Ihejirika, Aujin Kim, Elaine Miao, Jane Brandon Morrison, Jennifer Park, Ruhy Patel, Charlotte Simon, Erika Sloan, Benjamin Wackerman, Falyn Weiss** and **Sunny Yao** and Senior Writer **Elizabeth Fuerstman**.



## Awards, Events and Mentions

### New York Office’s Toiletry Drive Supports Migrants and Other Food Insecure New Yorkers

In May, the Firm’s STB United for Justice Community Engagement Committee launched its

first toiletry drive in the New York Office to support the NY Common Pantry, an organization providing services to hundreds of thousands of migrants, and others in New York City, who face hunger, food insecurity, and homelessness. Running in the month of May, the collection was valued at \$1,200, which when added to the larger spring collection efforts, served roughly 800 families. Associate **Nicolle Heagney**, and professional staff **Alison Melaugh, Lorna Haughton** and **Mehall Moloney** organized and facilitated the drive.



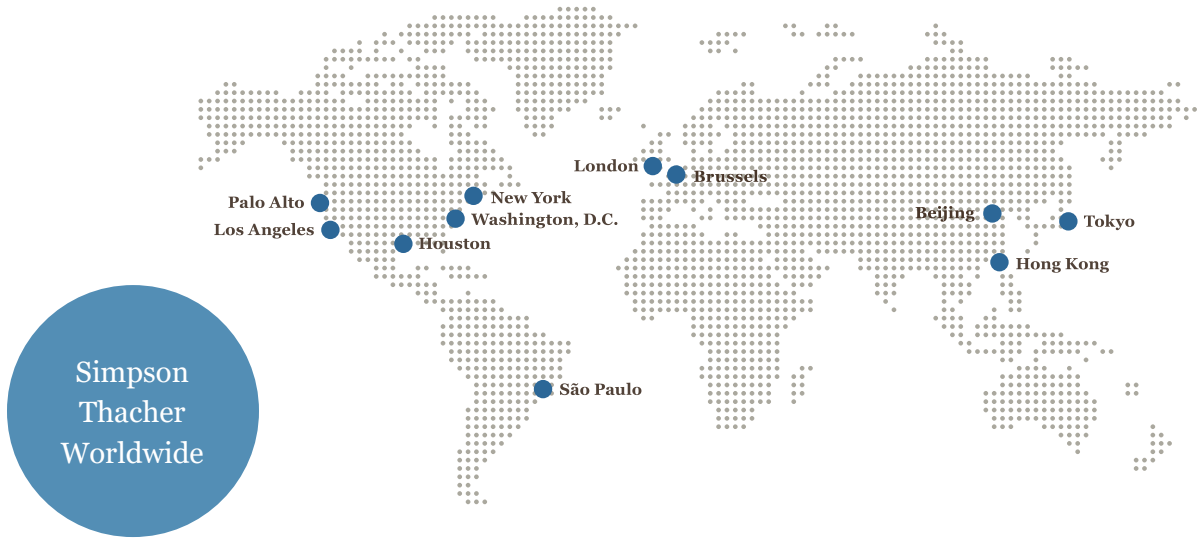
## Simpson Thacher Has 24 Attorneys on the 2023 Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll

Twenty-four Simpson Thacher lawyers were included in this year's Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll for their pro bono efforts in 2023. This honor, bestowed on behalf of the District of Columbia Courts in partnership with the DC Access to Justice Commission and the DC Bar Pro Bono Center, recognizes lawyers who have contributed 50 hours or more of pro bono work to those who cannot afford legal counsel. The additional distinction of High Honor Roll is given to individuals who contributed 100 or more hours.

The following Simpson Thacher lawyers were recognized in this year's Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll for high honors: Partners **David Blass** and **Vanessa Burrows**, Associates **Claire Cahoon, Allison Davido, Claire DiMario, Laurel Fresquez, Noah Gimbel, Nicole Palmadesso, Nicholas Prendergast, Samantha Sergent, Christine Tillema, Elizabeth Trask, Andrew Ward** and **Tina Zheng**. The following Simpson Thacher lawyers were recognized with honors: Partner **Rajib Chanda** and Associates **Kelsey Henderson, Sherif-Robert Hesni Jr., Ebonee Johnson, Michael Kalinin, Kate Lambroza,** and **Brice Stewart**.

Please send  
news items, comments  
or suggestions regarding  
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