

Winston & Strawn Releases *2022 Pro Bono Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative Report*

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Chicago – May 25, 2022 – Winston & Strawn LLP has released its ***2022 Pro Bono Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative Report***. The publication outlines the CEASE Initiative’s most significant wins and ongoing matters over the past two years in key areas of racial justice and equity.

Launched in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, Winston’s CEASE Initiative pledges to devote 100,000 pro bono hours through 2025 to racial justice and equity matters, with a primary focus on issues and programs impacting Black people. The CEASE Initiative pursues pro bono projects that most effectively address five critical areas for change:

- **Criminal Justice and Criminal Justice Reform**
- **Educational and Vocational Opportunity**
- **Access to the Political System**
- **Social Welfare**
- **Economic Development**

“For social justice to be real, our words are only as important as our actions,” said Racial Justice & Equity Council Co-Chairs and Winston Partners **Bryan C. Goldstein** and **Angela A. Smedley**. “We believe this report offers concrete proof that taking the right actions on behalf of those in need of strong advocacy is the best—in fact, the only—way to create lasting change.”

The 2022 report highlights matters in each category, including the following:

Criminal Justice and Criminal Justice Reform

- Reaching a settlement agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that curtailed its use of illegal traffic stops and mass arrest practices nationwide.
- Winning an important appeal that affirmed the Fourth Amendment’s protection against unreasonable searches and seizures—helping to safeguard private citizens from illegal police intrusions.

Educational and Vocational Opportunity

- Negotiating a historic settlement agreement with the University of California to stop using standardized test scores when making admission decisions and awarding scholarships.
- Working with Cabrini Green Legal Aid to help hundreds of Chicagoans with felony convictions—that were found unconstitutional—clear their records.

Access to the Political System

- Collaborating with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) to win a federal court ruling requiring the State of Illinois to adopt new legislative maps that better represent the State's Latinx community.

Social Welfare

- Representing The Federation of Southern Cooperatives to ensure Black farmers receive the USDA funds Congress allotted to them. In March 2022, Winston won a reversal in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals of an order that had denied Winston's motion to intervene on behalf of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives to defend the law granting debt relief to Black farmers.
- Assisting in forming and securing federal tax-exempt status (and advising on corporate and contract issues) for the Black Homes Matter reparations fund that compensates Detroit homeowners who were unjustly dispossessed of their homes and wealth from 2011 to 2015 due to illegally inflated property taxes.

Economic Development

- Providing legal services to ensure the formation of Fifth Star Funds, a social enterprise that provides equitable access to early-stage venture capital and reinvests 100% of its returns.
- Supporting the National Center for Law and Economic Justice with a class action against the Louisiana Workforce Commission alleging rampant due process violations in the administration of unemployment benefits.

“Winston's CEASE Initiative has lent greater depth and significance to the firm's longstanding commitment to pro bono work,” said Winston Senior Pro Bono Counsel **Gregory A. McConnell**. “We are uniquely privileged to serve these clients, and we look forward to devoting even greater energy to setting things right for those harmed by the weight of historical and ongoing discrimination.”

[Read the 2022 Pro Bono Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative Report.](#)

About the Pro Bono Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative

Founded in September 2020, Winston's Pro Bono Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative has pledged to devote 100,000 pro bono hours through 2025 to racial justice and equity matters, with a primary focus on issues and programs impacting Black people. This pledge of hours is a significant expansion of Winston's longstanding commitment to racial justice and equity and represents a \$50 million investment over five years.

To date, Winston has contributed more than 25,000 hours to achieving the goals of the CEASE Initiative. The firm has made significant progress expanding existing and establishing new relationships with public interest organizations to cultivate opportunities that advance CEASE Initiative goals. Winston has built a strong foundation for the innovative work undertaken by its attorneys to address racial disparities and help build better societal and economic systems.

Winston & Strawn LLP is an international law firm with 16 offices in North America, South America, Asia, and Europe. More information about the firm is available at www.winston.com.

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