

Federal Judge Rules in Favor of Asylum Seekers

August 2019

On August 2, 2019, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia struck down a rule issued by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security barring refugees crossing between ports of entry from seeking asylum, finding that the rule was inconsistent with federal immigration law. Williams & Connolly represented nine asylum seekers, including three children, who challenged the rule along with a number of other plaintiffs represented by Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition, Hogan Lovells, Human Rights First, the National Immigrant Justice Center, and RAICES. The plaintiffs had been illegally barred from seeking asylum because they entered the United States outside of an official border point. Judge Randolph Moss held that the rule violated the Immigration and Nationality Act's provision that any migrant "physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States ... whether or not at a designated port of arrival" can apply for asylum. Judge Moss is the first judge to issue a final ruling vacating the Administration's rule. In response to the ruling, partner **Ana Reyes** issued a statement, "We thank Human Rights First and NIJC for the opportunity to work with them in support of their important advocacy on behalf of refugees everywhere."

The Williams & Connolly team included **Ana Reyes**, **Ellen Oberwetter**, **Thomas Hentoff**, **Mary Beth Hickcox-Howard**, **Luke McCloud**, **Matthew Heins**, and **Vanessa Omoroghomwan**.

Click [here](#) to read Human Rights First's press release.

Click [here](#) to read coverage by *Law360*.

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