

PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Attorneys Secure Victory for Pro Bono Client in Immigration Case

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Attorneys with Baker Donelson secured a major victory in the representation of a pro bono client before the United States Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review.

Jennie Silk, Mary Katherine Smith and Buck Wellford of the Firm's Memphis office represented a Honduran woman and her young son who had fled the country to escape gang violence. The Baker Donelson team requested relief for the family under the Hague Convention Against Torture, arguing that, were the family to be removed from the United States and returned to Honduras, they would likely be persecuted or tortured.

After a full evidentiary hearing, the Immigration Court granted relief under the Convention Against Torture, allowing the family to live in the United States permanently. **The ruling is especially notable given the recent changes in asylum law made by Attorney General of the United States Jeff Sessions, which eliminated many of the grounds that previously existed for the granting of asylum.**

Although this ruling was not a formal grant of asylum, it provides the clients with indefinite residency status in the United States and also the ability to work legally. This will allow the client to continue to provide the necessary financial support for another minor child she was forced to leave behind in her home country with her mother.

About Baker Donelson's Pro Bono Practice

Through its commitment to [pro bono](#) representation, Baker Donelson provides legal services to groups and individuals likely to be marginalized in the legal system due to economic barriers. Over the years, the Firm's attorneys have provided a variety of counsel to many populations including immigrants, refugees, the elderly and the impoverished. Baker Donelson's efforts include work on a wide range of matters, such as advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, death penalty litigation, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, and much more. The Firm has been instrumental in efforts such as expanding the HELP program, which operates recurring legal clinics at homeless shelters in about 30 cities nationwide; creating courts dedicated to handling minor legal matters common among the homeless; reining in modern day debtors' prisons operated by municipalities and the private probation services with which they contract; and spearheading and organizing volunteer lawyer programs across Baker Donelson's footprint. Many of the Firm's offices and individual attorneys are routinely recognized for their pro bono efforts, and Baker Donelson has twice been named a Beacon of Justice Award winner by the National Legal Aid & Defender Association.