

Press Releases

US Vice President Joe Biden Meets with the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCo) to Discuss Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor



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WASHINGTON, DC - June 30, 2014 - O'Melveny & Myers LLP has been one of the key law firms leading the creation of the APBCo IMPACT (Involving More Pro Bono Attorneys in our Communities Together) Project, a long-term program that has seeded and launched a series of new pro bono collaborations across the country designed to expand national law firm efforts to increase access to justice. The launch of the IMPACT Project resulted directly from a meeting held in September 2012 with Vice-President Joe Biden at which a small group of APBCo leaders, co-chaired by David Lash, O'Melveny's Managing Counsel for Pro Bono and Public Interest Services, engaged with the Vice-President in a wide-ranging discussion about issues of access to justice. The Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCo), a membership organization of full-time pro bono counsel and coordinators at major commercial law firms, met for a second time with Vice President Joe Biden in Washington, DC, last month to continue that discussion. Attending the small gathering on behalf of O'Melveny were Lash, who co-chairs the national APBCo IMPACT Project and served as one of the leaders of the discussion with the Vice-President (Firm Chair Brad Butwin attended the initial meeting in 2012), and partner Walter Dellinger.

APBCo recently issued the following press release regarding the meeting.

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US Vice President Joe Biden Meets with the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCo) to Discuss Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor

WASHINGTON, DC (June 27, 2014) — US Vice President Joe Biden met with the Board of Directors of the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (“APBCo”), and senior management leaders from board members’ law firms, in the Vice President’s Ceremonial Office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington D.C. The meeting, held on June 5, 2014, was the second occasion on which the Vice President met with APBCo to focus on access to justice issues and the significant role that pro bono counsel at law firms plays in the delivery of legal services to the poor.

The Vice President particularly was supportive of the efforts of the APBCo-member law firms to institutionalize their pro bono programs by employing full-time legal pro bono professionals who help ensure that representation of the under-served is a part of their firms' priorities and culture.

APBCo reviewed with the Vice President both the mission of the organization to enhance pro bono participation among the country’s major law firms and the unique IMPACT project (Involving More Pro bono Attorneys in our Communities Together) that APBCO launched in eight major cities around the country -- all of which arose out of the previous meeting with the Vice President held in September 2012. The Vice President was briefed about the IMPACT pro bono initiatives, each addressing unique and specifically identified needs in the home communities of the APBCo firms, and each having been launched in close cooperation with partnering legal aid agencies. APBCo detailed for the Vice President how these innovative public/private collaborations have enhanced pro bono efforts to meet the increasingly important needs of the low income communities in which APBCo member firms are located.

Specifically, the Vice President heard case summaries about the various programs launched by the IMPACT project, including those focused on domestic violence, "second chance" opportunities, small business legal advice, public benefits, immigration, and the problems of homeless youth. The Vice President was pleased to learn about the array of assistance to so many in-need clients, particularly the full pro bono representation to hundreds of clients in different critical areas of law. The Vice President reiterated his enthusiasm for APBCo’s mission and recognized the critical role of law firm pro bono programs in bringing much needed services to the poor. The APBCo firms pledged to continue to grow the reach and diversity of the IMPACT project, and to keep the Vice President apprised of the project’s progress.

The meeting was attended by APBCo board member law firms Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Brown Rudnick LLP, Crowell & Moring LLP, Cooley LLP, Dentons, Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson LLP, Kaye Scholer LLP, McDermott Will & Emery LLP, O'Melveny & Myers LLP, Pepper Hamilton LLP, Seyfarth Shaw LLP, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP & Affiliates, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP, and Vinson & Elkins.

Established in 2006 to support the professional development of full-time pro bono counsel at commercial law firms, APBCo has over 140 members from more than 95 U.S. law firms. The organization works to develop best practices in the field of pro bono practice management and to promote social justice and access to justice in the legal profession. For more information, please visit www.apbco.org.