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## D.C. Access to Justice Commission Honors Firms that Qualified for the 2022 Raising the Bar in D.C. Leadership Circle

*Recognized firms donated a record-breaking \$7.3 million during 2022 to local legal services organizations to meet legal needs that continue to grow despite the waning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Financial support for civil legal aid from the private sector remains critical as D.C. residents face long-term effects of the pandemic and incentivizes public support for civil legal aid.*

Washington, D.C. – The D.C. Access to Justice Commission is pleased to honor the 40 firms that qualified for the Raising the Bar in D.C. Campaign in 2022. Honorees each donated a benchmark percentage of revenue to local legal services organizations in 2022.

Together, the honored firms donated \$7.3 million (an all-time record for the Campaign) to organizations that serve low-income District residents with legal needs that were at crisis-level before the pandemic and have continued to intensify in its wake.

Among the core missions of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission is to encourage funding for local civil legal services. The Commission's signature effort around private funding is the Raising the Bar in D.C. Campaign, which recognizes financial support provided by area law firms to local legal services organizations. The Commission launched the Campaign in 2010 to set a standard for area law firms to aspire to when giving to civil legal services organizations, and recognized its first set of Leadership Circle firms in 2011. The Commission is grateful to Ernst & Young that, from the Campaign's inception, has provided pro bono support in collecting data from participating firms.

The Campaign recognizes firms at three levels – Platinum, Gold and Silver – for donating .11%, .09%, or .075% of D.C. office revenue, respectively. Because of the structure of the Campaign, firms of all sizes have the opportunity to and do participate, and firms must increase their giving when their revenues increase to continue to qualify for each level of giving. Since the Campaign began, the

number of participating firms has grown substantially from the initial 23, and aggregate giving has increased more than \$4.1 million. This is a powerful statement of the commitment across the District's private bar to ensuring that every individual, regardless of income, has equal access to justice.

"The leadership of D.C. law firms is crucial in helping guarantee access to justice in the District," said Peter B. Edelman, Chair of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission. "These essential funds directly support D.C. legal services organizations who ensure that thousands of District residents can receive legal assistance in critical areas such as housing, domestic violence, family law, consumer fraud, and more. Their work is a critical part of the District's safety net." Added James J. Sandman, Vice Chair of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission, "While the Covid-19 pandemic has officially come to an end, its lingering social and economic effects continue to exact a disproportionate toll on the District's low-income communities. The demand for legal services remains high – and is still growing, as demonstrated by an uptick in requests for legal assistance in housing and domestic violence cases, among other areas."

Giving by the private bar through the Campaign complements and incentivizes the D.C. government's public appropriation for legal services through the Access to Justice Initiative and reflects the private bar's confidence in the strength of the work of the local legal services community. "The enduring commitment of D.C. law firms to supporting our civil justice system has resulted in a robust public-private partnership, and we will continue to work together toward ensuring all D.C. residents, regardless of income, have access to justice," said Chair Edelman.

The Commission is gratified that the Campaign will recognize six additional firms from its 2021 list, including four firms whose participation had briefly lapsed and two new firms, Brown & Peisch PLLC and Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP. We also extend special thanks to the 26 firms that were able to sustain their level of giving from the previous year, as well as the three firms (Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, and Lowenstein Sandler LLP) that increased a level in 2022.

In its letter congratulating Leadership Circle firms, the Commission urged each firm to redouble its efforts to provide leadership and financial support in the face of a growing need for legal services:

*Your support is critical to addressing the civil legal needs of D.C.'s most vulnerable communities, helping ensure that our low-income neighbors facing life-altering events such as eviction, the loss of public benefits, domestic abuse, and consumer fraud have access to free, expert legal assistance.*

The list of firms and their levels follows.

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**RAISING THE BAR IN D.C.  
A FUNDING CAMPAIGN FOR LEGAL SERVICES**

**SPONSORED BY THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION**

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**LEADERSHIP CIRCLE 2022**

**PLATINUM LEVEL DONORS**



Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP  
ArentFox Schiff LLP  
Arnold & Porter  
Beveridge & Diamond PC  
Brown & Peisch PLLC  
DLA Piper LLP (US)  
Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP  
Henrikson Law PLLC  
Jones Day  
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP  
Katz Banks Kumin LLP  
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