Assisting Holocaust Survivors

For the past several years, Latham & Watkins has partnered with Bet Tzedek Legal Services, and more recently with the Holocaust Survivors Justice Network, to assist Holocaust survivors in applying for German government social security pensions available under the law known by its German acronym ZRBG. In addition, we have worked to assist Holocaust survivors in applying for the related German Ghetto Work Payment (GGWP) program benefit, created by the German government to provide a one-time payment to Holocaust survivors who conducted voluntary work in Nazi-controlled ghettos during World War II.

Under the GGWP government directive, first announced in October 2007, Holocaust survivors—many of whom are in their late 80s or older and live on fixed incomes—may be eligible for a one-time payment of 2,000 euros. This latest program was designed to provide a benefit to survivors whose ghetto labor had not to date been recognized under other programs and who may have been unsuccessful in seeking ZRBG benefits.

A number of Latham offices have been among the leaders of this multi-firm effort to help Holocaust survivors. Led by Pro Bono Counsel Amos Hartston, teams of Latham attorneys and paralegals from across our US and German offices participated in clinics and home visits and provided other support for the ZRBG and GGWP programs. In total, more than 250 Latham attorneys and 30 paralegals from our Chicago, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Los Angeles, New Jersey, New York, Orange County, San Diego, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. offices took part in this initiative, providing more than 5,600 hours of pro bono legal services to Holocaust survivors.

Leading our office teams are partner Bruce Prager, associates Stephen Amdur, Will Reckler, Bethany Turke and Virginia Tent and secretarial coordinator Anna Bravo in New York; associate Kira Dabby and paralegals Kim Barrett and Judy Calderon in New Jersey; associate Mia Sussman in Washington, D.C.; Pro Bono Counsel Amos Hartston and associate Julie Gerchik in Los Angeles; associate Jennifer Reass and paralegal Rob Dickson in Orange County; associates Dan Lenerz and Adrianna Kripke in San Diego; associate Soleil Teubner in San Francisco; partner Brad Koller in Chicago; partner Dirk Kocher and associates Frederick Staudacher, Jan Spangenberg, Astrid Link and Julia Wahrenord in Hamburg; and counsel Thies Deike and Mathias Fischer and associates Annette Rosskopf, Thomas Kunze, Christian Badura and Britta Füchtenbusch in Frankfurt.

The program expanded rapidly across the United States and other countries in 2009, with thousands of survivors screened for eligibility under the GGWP program. In addition, Bet Tzedek and the Holocaust Survivors Justice Network have partnered with Latham in New York, Los Angeles and Germany to provide additional support for applications in GGWP and ZRBG cases.