

Bloomberg LP and Proskauer Serve LGBTQ Immigrant Survivors of Hate Violence

Proskauer For Good on February 21, 2019

According to the most recent FBI statistics, reported incidents of hate crimes [increased by 17 percent in 2017](#), rising for the third consecutive year. The FBI determined that the primary motivators of these crimes were race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.¹

When compounded with the [rise in anti-immigrant sentiment](#), and [recent changes in U.S. policy](#) that negatively impact immigrants seeking asylum relief, there is an enormous, urgent need for effective pro bono legal services among LGBTQ immigrants.

Given this context, Bloomberg LP and Proskauer are proud sponsors of [Lauren DesRosiers](#), an [Equal Justice Works](#) Fellow at the [Anti-Violence Project \(AVP\)](#), who is devoted to providing holistic legal services to LGBTQ immigrant survivors of violence. According to Lauren, “this project combats the further marginalization of these communities by creating channels whereby LGBTQ immigrant survivors of violence can be paired with pro bono attorneys and other forms of representation.”

To kick-off the project, lawyers from Bloomberg LP and Proskauer came together last week for training on the U Visa, which is a crucial form of immigration relief for crime victims who cooperate with law enforcement. Receiving a U Visa provides legal status and employment authorization to crime victims and qualifying family members, ultimately giving them a pathway to citizenship. Lauren conducted the training along with her colleague, Christina Peña from AVP, the only organization in New York that provides support and advocacy specifically for LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence. The two spoke comprehensively about the needs of LGBTQ immigrants, highlighting the ways in which lawyers can assist them in a culturally competent and trauma-informed manner. In addition to filing U Visas, the project will enable pro bono lawyers to pursue other forms of legal relief for this vulnerable population, to the extent available, including asylum. Lauren also will participate in broader programming in order to educate and engage lawyers and staff at Bloomberg LP and Proskauer on this issue. As Lauren explained, “Immigrant LGBTQ survivors of hate violence exist at a critical nexus of underserved communities and are at a high risk of estrangement from institutional systems of justice.”

1 In 2017, the [National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs \(NCAVP\)](#) recorded 52 individual reports of anti-LGBTQ homicide. The year before there were 28 individual reports in addition to the 49 lives claimed at the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida.

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