

News

RECENT PRO BONO VICTORY: TIBETAN MONK GRANTED ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES

Jul 25, 2024

In a significant pro bono victory, Partner Noah Weissman and Associate Bret Ruber successfully secured asylum for a Tibetan monk who fled from Tibet after facing arrest and physical abuse at the hands of the Chinese police for possessing photos of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama. He arrived in the United States in 2016 and promptly applied for asylum in 2017.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) implemented a new asylum interview system, however, shortly after our client's application. Instead of the previous first-in, first-out approach, they adopted a last-in, first-out system. Under this system, the most recent applicants received interviews first – potentially leaving our client without an interview indefinitely.

In the summer of 2023, our legal team acted, filing a lawsuit against USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security to demand an asylum interview. Shortly after this litigation was filed, USCIS scheduled an interview for May 2024, and both parties agreed to dismiss the legal action without prejudice.

Our client endured a rigorous six-plus hour interview in May, followed by additional questions from the asylum officer a few weeks later. In June, he returned for a second three-plus hour interview. Earlier this month, he received the long-awaited notice that he had been granted asylum in the United States.

The success of this case was a collaborative effort, with significant contributions from Associates Jane Ernst and Diana Kabbani, Paralegal Alexis Gonzalez, retired Partner Jim Altman and former Associate Brooke Cooke.

MEET THE TEAM



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