

Press Release

Akerman Receives Southern Legal Counsel Award for Pro Bono Achievement

October 29, 2021

Akerman LLP is pleased to announce that the law firm has received Southern Legal Counsel's (SLC) Access Justice Impact Award for pro bono work across Florida. This award is given to a firm that embodies SLC's mission through its service to pro bono clients. Akerman attorneys were honored by the public interest law group for a variety of work over the last two years, including:

- Helping transgender people through the legal process of changing their names, through full representation and clinics.
- Working on an *amicus curiae* brief, filed on behalf of SLC and the ACLU of Florida, supporting the position that a panhandling ordinance was unconstitutional as a violation of free speech. Ultimately, the Attorney General and the appellate court agreed.
- Drafting comments opposing federal rule changes that would have allowed emergency shelters and other facilities to consider a client's biological sex in determining placement in protective shelters. Early this year, the Biden Administration officially reversed those rules, thus ensuring access to needed services for LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming/non-binary people.
- Akerman is co-counsel in a case that challenges the suspension of driver's licenses for failure to pay court costs related to municipal ordinance

violations. SLC had successfully challenged fees that were improperly ordered in Marion County. Akerman and SLC are working to ensure that other clerks around the State cease suspending drivers' licenses for failure to pay municipal fees, which could impact thousands of low-income Floridians whose driver's licenses were erroneously suspended because they could not afford to pay a fee that should not have been imposed in the first place.

“Supporting our communities through pro bono remains a top priority for our firm, and we are extremely proud of the Akerman lawyers whose hard work has earned them this tremendous recognition,” said Scott Meyers, Akerman Chairman and CEO.

“We are so grateful to be able to work with a legal services provider like SLC,” said Gina DelChiaro, a partner and the firm's Director of Pro Bono Initiatives. “The compelling pro bono work done by our lawyers on behalf of the people of Florida is a testament to the Firm's prioritization of community service, and to the critical partnership of organizations like Southern Legal Counsel.”

About Akerman

Akerman LLP is a top 100 U.S. law firm recognized among the most forward-thinking firms in the industry by *Financial Times*. Its more than 700 lawyers and business professionals collaborate with the world's most successful enterprises and entrepreneurs to navigate change, seize opportunities, and help drive innovation and growth.

About Southern Legal Counsel

Southern Legal Counsel is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that works proactively to ensure fairness, social justice and government accountability for Floridians through focused, high-impact initiatives, policy advocacy and civil litigation.