

Press Release

Akerman Launches Akerman Racial Justice Initiative, Pledges to Fight Justice System Inequality

September 1, 2020

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, announces the launch of the [Akerman Racial Justice Initiative](#) (ARJI), pledging the firm’s commitment to help dismantle systemic racism in the justice system. ARJI aims to eliminate structural prejudice in the justice system through various philanthropic partnerships and pro bono services focused on serving communities of color.

“At Akerman, we stand united against all forms of racism, discrimination, and violence,” said Akerman Chairman and CEO Scott Meyers. “We stand with the many Americans who have been the victims of racial injustice. It has been said that the ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people. Akerman will not be silent. And together we will act.”

ARJI will allocate time and resources to address the longstanding racial inequities in the justice system, including challenging racially discriminatory policing practices. Akerman has engaged in national and local partnerships and significant pro bono participation, including a partnership with the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance (LFAA), a coalition of law firms dedicated to working with other organizations to dismantle systemic racism in the law and in government institutions. Akerman is also among a group of law firms joining the ACLU of Louisiana’s

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litigation campaign to challenge racially discriminatory practices by law enforcement. Recent efforts by ARJI include actions to increase law enforcement accountability and transparency through matters such as Section 1983 litigation in Florida. Additionally, Akerman filed amicus briefs in two New York cases on behalf of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) to support the repeal of former Section 50-a of the New York Civil Rights Law, which shielded law enforcement records from the public.

Akerman's Pro Bono Initiative supplements the work of the ARJI through a variety of projects that focus on criminal justice and serving communities of color. Akerman lawyers provide pro bono representation, including matters focused on minority-owned small businesses and nonprofit organization whose missions fight systemic racism and advocate for equality. The firm also has increased its pro bono work on behalf of individuals impacted by the inequities of the criminal justice system, including engagements involving fair sentencing, parole, and expungement.

Akerman has partnered with various organizations seeking to end systematic injustice, including Rising for Justice, The Promise of Justice Initiative, Georgia Justice Project, WeThrive, Measures for Justice, Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY). In addition, Akerman is assisting Teens of Color Abroad (TOCA) in its mission to bridge the gap between college study abroad opportunities and students of color.

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. Akerman is known for its results in middle market

M&A and complex disputes, and for helping clients achieve their most important business objectives in the financial services, real estate and other dynamic sectors across the United States and Latin America.