

Lowenstein Chair Says Lawyers, Clients Applauding Immigration Initiative

Lowenstein's Gary Wings, who teamed up with the chairman of Paul Weiss to announce a big pro bono push for asylum seekers in *The New York Times*, said "somebody had to stick up" for the rule of law.

By Dan Packel
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Before Lowenstein Sandler chairman and managing partner Gary Wings joined with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison chairman Brad Karp to pen an op-ed for *The New York Times* Monday on the U.S. border crisis, both firms had prioritized immigration work as part of their pro bono advocacy.

But when President Donald Trump and members of his cabinet took the position that family separation—which came to an end with an executive order last Wednesday—was mandated by law, Wings felt the need to speak out.

"It struck me that somebody had to stick up for the private bar and say that an administration that claims to be speaking for the law is not actually abiding by protections the Constitution provides for citizens and noncitizens," he said.

Wings said work on behalf of unaccompanied minors, in partnership with nonprofit Kids in Need of Defense, has been a "cornerstone" of the firm's pro bono practice for the last decade. And since early May, a team of 20 Lowenstein lawyers has been working on getting representation for minors being held in New York.

Last Tuesday, frustrated with the administration's rationales for its "zero tolerance" policy, Wings reached out to Karp and suggested an industry effort standing up for the rule of law. Paul Weiss was already working on something and Karp suggested

a collaboration, Wings said. (Karp was traveling on business in Ecuador on Tuesday and unavailable for an interview.)

As the current crisis unfolded and the Trump administration's position evolved—via the executive order and a Sunday tweet urging an end to due process for immigrants altogether—the op-ed went through multiple iterations. Ultimately, a total of 34 law firms pledged their



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commitment to helping reunify families and ensuring representation for legitimate asylum seekers.

Wings said the overwhelming positive response he and the firm have received since the op-ed was published has validated the decision to speak out.



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“We believe this kind of stance is consistent with who we are,” he said. “It’s who we’ve always been.”

Clients, employees, and lawyers beyond the 34 firms included on the list have reacted favorably, Wings added.

“We’ve been getting emails throughout the night and through the day from lawyers wanting to participate,” he said. “We’ve also been getting many, many emails from our employees about how heartened they are [to be at a] firm that was willing to take a stand on this issue.”

This is not the first time in recent years that both Wings and Paul Weiss’ Karp have waded into national conversations over divisive social and political issues.

Karp and Paul Weiss partner Christopher Boehning had another New York Times op-ed earlier this year urging support for legislation repealing civil

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immunity for gun sellers and manufacturers. While that missive was published in the aftermath of the deadly March school shooting in Parkland, Florida, Karp first mobilized his firm after the 2016 mass

shooting in an Orlando nightclub, firing off a firm-wide email and committing to a partnership with the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

Karp and Wings **both hit the “send” button again** after Neo-Nazis marched in Charlottesville, Virginia,

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last August, with Karp telling employees that the firm would work to “ensure that the rights, dignities and freedoms of all our citizens are fully respected and vindicated.”

Wings told the firm after Charlottesville that name partner Alan Lowenstein had built Lowenstein on the “foundation of his strongly held belief in equality and social justice.”

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