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Our national firm continues to demonstrate exceptional strength across all practice areas, achieving landmark victories and expanding our reach nationwide. As we close out an extraordinary year, I'm proud to share some of our most significant accomplishments.

Among the highlights: we resolved the largest ERISA matter in U.S. history with a **\$69 million settlement** for UnitedHealth Group plan participants; we secured the largest verdict in U.S. history against a gun dealer with our **\$62 million jury award** in *Baltimore City v. Polymer80*; and we were recognized by *Benchmark Litigation* as the **Labor and Employment Law Firm of the Year** for the third time in six years.

Our success is predicated on our excellence, commitment to social justice, and diversity. **As of January 1, 2025, our firm of 97 people is 67% female and 43% people of color.** This diversity gives us individual and collective strength in every case we handle.

Congratulations to everyone for the firm's incredible achievements. Our success can only happen as a collective with some of the most talented, intelligent, and impressive lawyers and staff in America.

– David Sanford, Co-Founder and Chairman

\$5B+

Recovered Nationwide

Across employment and whistleblower matters

\$69M

ERISA Settlement

Largest in U.S. history

\$62M

Jury Award

Largest against any gun dealer

97

Team Members

67% female, 43% POC

2025 Year in Review

This past year marked a transformative period for our firm as we achieved unprecedented victories for our clients while positioning ourselves for even greater impact ahead. From record-breaking ERISA settlements to groundbreaking military sexual assault litigation, our teams demonstrated the power of strategic advocacy and unwavering commitment to justice. As we look toward 2026, we’re expanding our reach, sharpening our strategies, and preparing to tackle complex civil rights challenges ahead.

Financial Mismanagement & ERISA Litigation

Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight’s ERISA practice was named a 2025 Benefits Practice Group of the Year by Law360, recognizing the team’s groundbreaking litigation wins and significant legal work that resonated throughout the industry in 2025. Our ERISA practice achieved its best year yet with the \$69 million UnitedHealth settlement—the largest single-plan ERISA settlement ever for breach of fiduciary duty. This landmark victory benefited approximately 350,000 plan participants and capped a remarkable journey since our first ERISA filing in 2017.

\$150M+	1M+	10	\$1.5B
Total Recovered	Plan Participants	Active Class Actions	Potential Damages

Since launching this practice in 2015, we’ve represented more than one million plan participants and recovered more than \$150 million. The firm’s novel approach to ERISA law—challenging poor investment performance as a breach of fiduciary duty—has reshaped the field and given attorneys at the firm firsthand experience in litigation. We’re maintaining momentum with 10 active class actions representing potential damages approaching \$1.5 billion. In April, we filed against Discount Tire for failing to replace one of the worst-performing target date suites in the market for over 15 years. In May, we filed against TIAA for retaining eight underperforming funds with more than \$2 billion invested, in some cases where the exact same funds were available with lower fees.

Whistleblower & Qui Tam

The Whistleblower and Qui Tam practice achieved significant milestones in 2025, positioning the firm at the forefront of emerging enforcement priorities. As trade policy continues to dominate headlines and regulatory scrutiny intensifies across financial services and digital markets, our team is uniquely positioned to help whistleblowers navigate complex fraud schemes—from customs and tariff evasion to healthcare billing fraud, financial misstatements, and digital advertising manipulation.

We are looking forward to expanding our practice by continuing to help our clients receive large rewards for their brave actions in coming forward to expose fraud. Our focus spans traditional False Claims Act cases in healthcare and government contracting, as well as cutting-edge areas like private credit fraud, non-bank financial institutions, and emerging schemes in auto lending and Buy Now, Pay Later companies. We’re also closely monitoring developments in state-level fraud, China-related compliance issues, and sanctions violations, with money laundering serving as a critical through-line across our enforcement work.

Our team grew strategically to meet increasing demand, adding experience, diversity, and expertise. **Summer Guo** joined from the SEC, bringing valuable government perspective, while both **Sarah Chu** and **Frank Xu** have taken on important roles in active litigation. For 2026, we’re staying ahead of regulatory curves by providing the government with enforceable cases while cultivating relationships that transcend political cycles, ensuring we end 2026 as a stronger, more capable team.

Our Practice regularly works with these Agencies		
SEC Securities and Exchange Commission	DOJ Pilot Department of Justice Pilot Program	CFTC Commodity Futures Trading Commission
FTC Federal Trade Commission	DOJ Criminal Department of Justice, Criminal Division	CFPB Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
FinCEN Financial Crimes Enforcement Network	OCC Office of the Comptroller of the Currency	FIRREA Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act
International Enforcement Agencies		

Sexual Violence, Title IX & Victims' Rights

Our Sexual Violence, Title IX, and Victims' Rights group solidified its position as a national leader in 2025, becoming one of the most recognized firms handling military sexual assault cases. We currently represent 45 service members sexually abused by an Army doctor, 34 former U.S. Coast Guard Academy students, and 7 women abused and videotaped by an Army gynecologist.

This year brought a groundbreaking settlement using a novel causation theory, successfully arguing that our client's father's recent death resulted from sexual abuse he suffered fifty years ago. We also recently filed a complaint in the case *Amelia Cunningham v. Colgate University*, in which our client alleges that she was harmed because Colgate University ignored abuse by its women's lacrosse coach. We also became counsel of record in the case *Janning v. Southwest Airlines, Co., et al*, a case in which our client, a pilot for the airlines, alleges that she experienced dangerous sexual misconduct mid-air and faced retaliation when she reported it.



Partner [Christine Dunn](#) discusses one of the cases and her representation of the victims

In 2025, we also witnessed the Maryland Supreme Court upholding the Child's Victims Act of 2023 (CVA), which creates a "lookback window" for childhood sexual abuse. In addition, with California opening a civil window in 2026 and other states potentially following suit, we're positioned to seek justice for significantly more survivors while establishing ourselves as go-to experts through targeted speaking engagements and widespread media coverage.

Asian American Litigation & Finance

The Asian American Litigation and Finance Practice Group achieved exceptional growth in 2025, closing the year with landmark results and growing national influence. Throughout the year, the practice group secured final approval of a \$4.9 million settlement in *Song and Ji v. Weee!*, a major wage-and-hour class and PAGA action on behalf of Asian and immigrant delivery drivers against the largest online Asian supermarket, and reached a significant settlement in *Zhang v. Reliance Memory* that further reinforced the Group's strength in representing Asian American executives and professionals in high-stakes employment matters.

In addition to case successes, the Asian American Litigation and Finance Practice also strengthened its partnership with national and regional bar associations and community organizations.

We enter 2026 with unprecedented momentum and infrastructure to handle complex, multi-jurisdictional matters at scale. The explosive growth of AI has created new civil rights battlegrounds—algorithmic bias, retaliation against whistleblowers, and the systematic undervaluation of talents of Asian heritage. Continued anti-Asian hate and the overall political dynamic also disproportionately affect AANHPI workers around the country, underscoring the importance of our legal presentation. Drawing on deep cultural fluency, language capabilities, and trusted community relationships across major U.S. markets, our practice is positioned to lead the next generation of impact litigation and advocacy on behalf of Asian American workers, executives and whistleblowers across industries.

Discrimination & Harassment

2025 proved another successful year for our Discrimination and Harassment Practice Group. In *Ko v. Swiftly Systems*, we secured a preliminary injunction reinstating our client as Chief People Officer just days after her termination following an EEOC complaint. When the Second Circuit refused to stay the reinstatement, the case settled shortly after—proving the power of aggressive early-stage advocacy.

Looking ahead, we're implementing data-driven case selection while creating litigation efficiencies to increase trial opportunities. We remain committed to representing vulnerable populations, particularly those targeted by current policy changes, while launching focused campaigns against companies with discrimination patterns—especially in tech. Our December 2025 American Airlines Cadet Academy filing, representing 18 former cadets, signals our expansion into for-profit education and consumer protection.

Public Interest Litigation

Throughout 2025, our Public Interest Practice Group continued its efforts to address systemic injustices through critically important impact litigations. In *Mayor and City Council of Baltimore v. Polymer80, Inc. and Hanover Armory, LLC*, Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight helped secure the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore a \$62 million verdict against Hanover Armory for its actions selling ghost guns and fueling violent crime across the city. This is the largest jury verdict against a gun dealer in U.S. history.

In our lawsuit against the State of Tennessee for its mistreatment and abuse of disabled youth in Juvenile Justice custody, we defeated the State's motions to dismiss, secured favorable discovery rulings, and have continued to keep the pressure on the State through discovery. Our Opioids Litigation team defeated the pharmacy benefit manager's (PBMs) Fourth Circuit appeal, allowing the City of Martinsville's case against the PBMs for facilitating the opioid crisis to resume in earnest in Virginia State Court. In addition to leading Martinsville's case against the PBMs, our team has also negotiated settlements and helped our local government clients navigate participating in national settlements with other opioid defendants.

Public Interest Highlight Leonard Peltier Clemency

In January 2025, Leonard Peltier was granted clemency by President Biden following decades of advocacy. Co-Vice Chairman **Kevin Sharp** represented Mr. Peltier for five years, filing clemency petitions addressing constitutional violations in his original 1977 trial in each of 2019, 2021, and 2024.



“Leonard’s step outside the prison walls today marks a step toward his long overdue freedom and a step toward reconciliation with Native Americans.”

– Kevin Sharp, Co-Vice Chairman

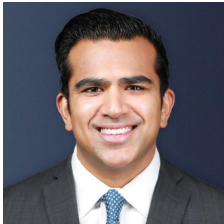
Wage Theft & Overtime Violations

The Wage and Hour Practice Group secured impressive settlements in 2025, including the \$15.5 million resolution in the California Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) case, *Abrishamcar v. Oracle America*. As a result of this substantial settlement, millions of dollars have been paid to current and former Oracle employees, as well as the State of California. The lawsuit alleged that the technology company violated certain California Labor Code sections with respect to the company's sales commission plans and practices. In addition, we obtained final approval of the \$4.9 million class action settlement in *Song v. Weee!*, a California wage and hour case brought on behalf of delivery drivers who asserted that workers were misclassified and denied earned wages and meal breaks among other violations.

We are also litigating *Strain v. Southwest Airlines*, a case asserting that the defendant failed to timely pay baggage and cargo handlers. On January 13, 2026, the Court granted our motion to conditionally certify a federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) collective action. Notice will be sent to potential action collective members, giving them an opportunity to join the FLSA suit. The Complaint seeks more than \$100 million in liquidated damages, as well as equitable and injunctive relief, attorneys' fees and costs, interest, and other appropriate relief.



Partner Promotions: Alok Nadig and Sharon Kim



Alok Nadig represents individuals and classes in discrimination, harassment, and public interest litigation. His work includes matters involving gender discrimination in male-dominated industries, large-scale wage and labor violations, retaliation against senior

executives, and asylum claims brought by LGBTQ individuals fleeing persecution.

Nadig earned his J.D. *cum laude* from New York University School of Law and his B.A. and Bachelor of Music *magna cum laude* from Northwestern University, where he was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. He previously clerked for the Honorable Pamela K. Chen of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York and the Honorable Carlos F. Lucero of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.



Sharon Kim focuses her practice on financial services litigation, public interest litigation, and employment discrimination and retaliation matters. She played a key role in the firm's representation of the family of Hae Min Lee in a high-profile victims' rights case

portrayed in the Serial podcast and HBO documentary.

Kim is a graduate of Harvard Law School, where she worked with the Criminal Justice Institute and the Education Law Clinic, and interned with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the Boston Regional Office of the SEC, and the General Counsel's Office of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Senior Litigation Counsel: Ting Cheung and Kasi Wautlet



Ting Cheung focuses her practice on employment law, whistleblower and qui tam matters, and complex civil litigation, including wrongful death and sexual violence claims. Fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese and trained in both Hong Kong and U.S. law, she frequently

represents Asian American employees and whistleblowers in high-stakes matters.

Cheung received her LL.B. from the University of Hong Kong and her LL.M. from Harvard Law School, where she served as a student attorney and interpreter assisting Cantonese-speaking clients. She has served since 2020 as an expert for the World Bank Group's Women, *Business and the Law* project and previously was an East Asian Legal Studies Visiting Scholar at Harvard Law School.



Kasi Wautlet represents individuals, classes, and governmental entities in employment discrimination, public interest, and complex civil litigation. Her work has included disability rights class actions, opioid litigation on behalf of local governments, and employment

matters involving pay equity, retaliation, and wrongful termination.

Wautlet earned her J.D. *cum laude* from New York University School of Law, where she was a Robert McKay Scholar and recipient of the full-cost-of-attendance Ehrenkranz Scholarship, and her B.A. *summa cum laude* from Arizona State University. She clerked for the Honorable Alistair E. Newbern of the U.S. District Court of the Middle District of Tennessee and externed for the Honorable Chip Frensey in that same Court.

Pro Bono: Championing Justice Beyond the Courtroom

Our commitment to social justice extends far beyond client representation. In 2025, we devoted millions of dollars in lodestar value and six-figure out-of-pocket expenses to pro bono work advancing civil rights, criminal justice reform, immigration relief, and LGBTQ+ equality.

Historic Victories

The year brought successful conclusions to two landmark efforts. We achieved the most significant ruling for victims' rights in Maryland history when Adnan Syed's murder conviction was reinstated in our representation of the Hae Min Lee family. We also secured clemency for Leonard Peltier on President Biden's final day in office, culminating years of advocacy.

Systemic Justice Reform

A seven-attorney team is pursuing compassionate release for three individuals incarcerated for life following a 1988 Kansas City explosion that killed six firefighters. With significant evidentiary concerns surrounding the original convictions—including testimony from incarcerated witnesses offered rewards for cooperation—we're fighting for clients who have maintained their innocence for decades.

Protecting Vulnerable Communities

Our LGBTQ+ practice group launched a Name and Gender Marker Pro Bono Project, partnering with Whitman Walker Health Clinic to assist transgender individuals in legally affirming their identities. The team successfully helped two clients in 2025 and expanded capacity for 2026.

Andrew Melzer led our amicus brief work supporting LGBTQ+ rights organizations challenging executive orders targeting transgender, intersex, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming individuals, drawing on historical and archival research to defend fundamental rights.

Immigration & Individual Representation

Shaun Rosenthal secured employment authorization for a client who fled El Salvador. **Al Powell** obtained a green card for a 21-year-old client from Guatemala. **Paul Knight** challenged a discriminatory Maryland disbarment in his representation of a client in DC Bar reinstatement proceedings.

Community Impact

Our attorneys staffed multiple community clinics providing free legal advice on employment, housing, family law, and other civil matters. **Saba Bireda** successfully re-enrolled her 17-year-old client in high school and developed comprehensive support plans to ensure on-time graduation.

Through **Ting Cheung's** initiative, we contributed expertise to the World Bank Group's Women, Business and Law Project, examining legal frameworks addressing violence against women in Canada and earning recognition for advancing women's economic opportunities worldwide.

Supporting Our Communities

The firm supported and contributed to organizations throughout the United States in 2025, including:

- Chinese American Lawyers Forum
- Corps Africa
- Equal Rights Advocates
- Georgetown University Law Center
- GW Law BLSA
- Impact Fund
- Lucinda Palmer Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Maryland Crime Victim's Resource Ctr, Inc
- National Crime Victim Law Institute
- National Employment Lawyers Association
- National Women's Law Center
- Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem
- NY County Lawyers Association
- NYC Bar Fund
- NYU Labor and Employment Center
- Stanford Deborah Rhode Center on the Legal Profession
- The Anti-Fraud Coalition
- Women's Bar Association of DC Foundation
- YMCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley

Recent Awards and Recognitions

Forbes

America's Best-in-State Lawyers

David Sanford – selected as one of only two attorneys in New York recognized for Employment Litigation

Chambers & Partners

Labor & Employment:
Mainly Plaintiffs

David Sanford – Band 1 (NY)
Qiaojing Ella Zheng – Up and Coming (CA)

Super Lawyers (2025)

New York Metro

David Sanford · **Jeremy Heisler**
Michael Palmer · **Andrew Melzer**
Russell Kornblith · **David Tracey**
Andrew Macurdy

Rising Stars/NY Metro:

Carolyn Guentert · **Kate MacMullin**
Nicole Wiitala · **Alok Nadig** · **Sharon Kim**

San Diego Metro

Charles Field

Rising Star/San Diego Metro: **Cara Van Dorn**

Northern California

Qiaojing Ella Zheng

Washington, DC

Kate Mueting · **Vince McKnight**
Paul Knight · **Christine Dunn**

Rising Stars/DC: **Frank Xu** · **Shannon Henris**

The National Black Lawyers (2025)

Top 100 Lawyers
Schwanda Rountree

Benchmark Litigation

Labor & Employment
Law Firm of the Year
(third time in six years)

Labor & Employment
Litigator of the Year Finalist
Russell Kornblith

Top 50 Labor & Employment
Litigators (National)
David Sanford

Best Lawyers in America® (2025)

Employment Law – Individuals
David Sanford · **Christine Dunn**
Brent Hannafan

Employment Law – Individuals
(Civil Rights Focus)
Kevin Sharp

Litigation – Labor & Employment
Kate Mueting · **Christine Dunn**
Brent Hannafan

Qui Tam Law
Vince McKnight

Litigation Stars – National

Labor & Employment
Jeremy Heisler · **Russell Kornblith**
Vince McKnight · **Andrew Melzer**
Kate Mueting · **Michael Palmer**
David Sanford · **Kevin Sharp**

Civil Rights and Human Rights
David Sanford

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® (2025)

Labor & Employment Law –
Employee

David Tracey · **Qiaojing Ella Zheng**
Leigh Anne St. Charles
Carolyn Guentert · **Kate MacMullin**
Alok Nadig · **Nicole Wiitala**

Litigation – Labor &
Employment
David Tracey

Mass Tort Litigation/
Class Actions – Plaintiff
Russell Kornblith

Profiles in Leadership

Mentoring Leadership Award
Kate Mueting

Q1 Emerging Leader Award
Carolyn Guentert

Asian Leadership Award
Qiaojing Ella Zheng

Law360

Editorial Advisory Board: Employment
Authority on Discrimination
Schwanda Rountree

LGBTQ+ Bar (2025)

40 Best LGBTQ+ Lawyers Under 40
Alok Nadig

ALM | LAW.COM

Southeastern Legal Award: On
the Rise in Tennessee – Honoree
Leigh Anne St. Charles

Fighting for You Across the Country



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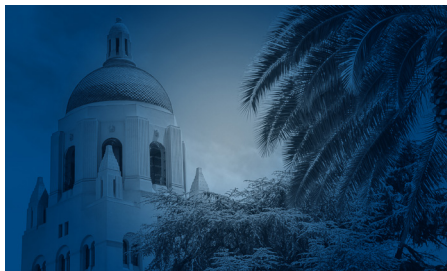
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Suite 3100
Nashville, TN 37203
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Heisler
Sharp
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