

# Cozen O'Connor Attorneys Win Asylum for Mother and Son Escaping Violence in El Salvador

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CHICAGO, November 18, 2022 — Cozen O'Connor associates Matt DiCianni and Amy Doig recently won a significant pro bono victory in Immigration Court in Chicago.

Through Cozen O'Connor's pro bono partnership with the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC), DiCianni and Doig were able to represent and obtain asylum for a young mother and her son in their quest to leave behind a violent situation in their home country of El Salvador.

Doig first started this representation in 2016, but with the backlog in the Immigration Courts, the asylum hearings were delayed until 2022. DiCianni, who is fluent in Spanish and spent time teaching in El Salvador's bordering country of Honduras, helped the mother and son best present their harrowing story to the court and against long odds, based on prior case decisions, convinced the judge to grant asylum.

"Our clients — a young single mother and her 10-year-old son, were threatened with torture and death if her son refused to join a gang that regularly recruits young male children," Doig said. "Instead of facing almost certain violence, she chose to seek asylum in the United States."

"We are grateful for our pro bono partnership with Cozen O'Connor and join them in celebrating this win. Legal representation is critical to ensuring access to legal protections for asylum seekers. We encourage other attorneys to join us in advancing justice," NIJC Executive Director Mary Meg McCarthy said.

DiCianni added that he was particularly motivated in this case as a result of the time he spent in Honduras. "I had a real sense of how bad things can be in Central American countries like El Salvador for families who resist gang recruitment. I am delighted that we played a part in giving this mother and her son a chance at a better life. There have been more positive changes in the six years between the beginning of the case and its successful outcome, with the son now a 16-year-old junior at a well-respected Chicago high school and looking forward to attending college and pursuing his dreams."

DiCianni is an associate in Cozen O'Connor's Labor & Employment Department in the Chicago office. He focuses his practice on a wide range of labor and employment matters in both state and federal courts, including violations of the FLSA, breach of non-compete agreements, employment discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wrongful discharge. DiCianni received his J.D. from Notre Dame Law School (2013) and his B.A., with honors, from University of Illinois (2007).

Doig, who is also based in the Chicago office, is an associate in Cozen O'Connor's Commercial Litigation Department. She represents individuals and entities in litigated matters often concerning disputes such as breach of contract, property damage, personal injury, design defects, construction defects, construction management and design professional's work. Doig received her J.D. from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law (2013) and her B.A., *summa cum laude*, from DePaul University (2009).

## About Cozen O'Connor

Established in 1970, Cozen O'Connor has more than 925 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and middle market companies, Cozen O'Connor services its clients'

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