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# Hughes Hubbard & Reed

## Firm Participates in Historic Clemency Program

News & Events | Pro Bono

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Hughes Hubbard is participating in an historic program to secure commutations for federal prisoners sentenced under harsh laws enacted at the height of the war on drugs.

Clemency Project 2014 provides pro bono assistance to federal prisoners who would likely have received a shorter sentence if they had been sentenced under recently revised guidelines. Hughes Hubbard attorneys screen inmates for eligibility and, if eligible, file clemency petitions on their behalf.

"This clemency initiative is unlike anything the government has done before," said associate Valerie Farnum, who led the effort to get Hughes Hubbard involved. "It's also unlike anything the firm has done, and we are excited to be participating in this historic effort."

The Justice Department announced the sweeping new initiative in April 2014, offering to prioritize clemency applications for qualified federal inmates. To be eligible, inmates must have served at least 10 years of their sentence for a nonviolent crime, have a record of good behavior in prison and have no history of violence, among other criteria.

In its first month, more than 18,000 federal prisoners applied, roughly the same number who had applied for commutations over the previous 12 years. By March 2015, more than 35,000 inmates -- about 16 percent of the federal prison population -- had applied to have their sentences shortened under the initiative.

President Obama has commuted the sentences of 30 drug offenders under the new initiative, the largest group of prisoners to be granted early release under his administration.

Hughes Hubbard attorneys are among the more than 1,000 lawyers at 323 law firms and organizations worldwide reviewing the initial screening of petitions. The process for each firm varies. At Hughes Hubbard, attorneys sift through the applications to identify candidates for early release and represent them. If the attorneys determine the client qualifies for clemency under the initiative, they will prepare a brief memo for the screening committee of

Clemency Project. If the committee agrees with the assessment, Hughes Hubbard attorneys will prepare a petition. The committee then bundles the petitions and sends them to the DOJ's Office of the Pardon Attorney.

Of the 10 cases in Hughes Hubbard's New York office, three are likely to go to petition and one is pursuing an application for compassionate release in lieu of clemency. In addition, the firm's DC office is working on two cases that are pending.

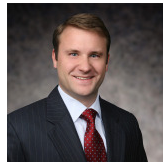
"While this initiative is not a silver bullet, it does have the potential to spark a much-needed reform in our criminal justice system," said Neil Oxford, who supervises the program. "We're very proud of our role in addressing some of these draconian sentences."

Farnum and Andrew Schwenk coordinate the program. Others working on the program include Derek Adler, Scott Christensen, Ed Little, Bryan Sillaman, Marc Weinstein, Robert Funkhouser, Greta Fails, Ariel Kapoano, Mike DeBernardis, Tamara Kraljic, Tien Pham and Sam Salyer

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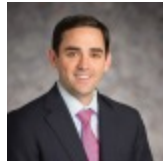
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