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# Hughes Hubbard & Reed

## Hughes Hubbard Pro Bono Client One Step Closer to Freedom

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**September 9, 2019** — A federal inmate for whom the firm won clemency under an Obama-era initiative is one step closer to freedom.

On Aug. 1, Martin Brandon Moore, 41, was released from a federal prison in Beaumont, Tex., and transferred to a halfway house in Miami, near his hometown of Fort Lauderdale.

Moore was sentenced to life in prison in May 2007 for possession of more than 50 grams of a mixture containing cocaine base and more than five kilograms of a mixture containing cocaine.

In 2014, the Obama administration launched the Clemency Project to provide pro bono support to federal inmates who would have received less prison time under current law. To be eligible, inmates must have served at least 10 years of their sentence for nonviolent crime, have a record of good behavior in prison and have no history of violence, among other criteria.

HHR attorneys were among the more than 1,000 lawyers at 323 firms and organizations nationwide that reviewed the initial screening of petitions to identify candidates for early release and represent them. HHR attorneys prepared petitions for qualified candidates, including Moore, and the Clemency Project's screening committee sent them to the U.S. Justice Department's Office of the Pardon Attorney.

In August 2016, President Obama commuted Moore's sentence to a term of 15 years; Moore was scheduled to be released in February 2020.

The Clemency Project ended after Obama left office in 2017. But, in December 2018, President Trump signed into law the First Step Act, a sweeping criminal justice reform bill that eases harsh sentencing rules for nonviolent offenders while easing their transition back to their communities.

Among the changes to sentencing rules, the First Step Act increased the amount of good conduct time (GCT)

prisoners could earn, from 47 to 54 days per year off their sentences. Because of a legislative drafting error, the Bureau of Prison (BOP) argued that the change in GCT did not apply immediately. For Moore, this amounted to 15 extra weeks off his sentence, which would allow him to be released about four months early and be able to spend the holidays with his family this year.

Moore asked HHR for help in securing the earlier release; the BOP ultimately recalculated Moore's sentence. Moore will be released from federal custody on Dec. 25, 2019. This release date also moved up his eligibility for placement in a residential reentry facility. Now he is able to live close to his family, get a job and restart his life.

In a phone conversation with Valerie Cahan on Aug. 8, Moore thanked HHR for its assistance over the past few years.

In addition to Cahan, Dan Weiner and Clinton Agresti represented Moore.

## **Related People**



**Valerie Cahan**



**Daniel H. Weiner**