

# TRAILBLAZERS

## GENERAL LITIGATION 2023

### WARREN W. HARRIS BRACEWELL LLP



#### **What was the genesis of the idea/path that has made you a trailblazer?**

This litigation was started with the efforts of trial lawyers like Tommy Fibich, Annie McAdams, and David Harris in seeking relief for sex-trafficking victims under federal and state statutes that give these victims causes of action against defendants who knowingly benefit from sex trafficking. We serve as appellate counsel to address the complex issues of statutory interpretation presented by this litigation, and we have helped to develop the proper interpretive arguments to ensure these victims have access to these statutory remedies.

#### **What sort of change has resulted from the concept?**

Prior to this litigation, the interpretation of the federal and state sex-trafficking statutes had rarely been addressed by courts. In addition, the application of these statutes to technology companies presented unresolved legal issues concerning the interaction between these statutes and Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. We have helped courts navigate these challenging legal issues and have obtained important rulings defining the ability of sex-trafficking victims to pursue these civil remedies.

#### **What bearing will this have on the future?**

Our cases have resulted in opinions that have set the standard for the future of this litigation. The recent Seventh Circuit opinion in *G.G. v. Salesforce.com* confirms that sex-trafficking victims will get their day in court on claims against parties that knowingly benefit from participating in a venture which the party knew or should have known has engaged in sex trafficking. This case clarifies several important legal points where there is little guidance from appellate courts regarding the elements of beneficiary liability claims and the interaction between these claims and Section 230.