

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

NEWS RELEASES

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Husch Blackwell Teams with the Council of the Great City Schools to Win Best Brief Award from the Education Law Association

A team of Husch Blackwell attorneys, plus legal, legislative and research staff from the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) and local counsel from the Pacifica Law Group, won the 2021 August Steinhilber Award for “Best Brief” from the Education Law Association (ELA).

The Husch Blackwell team wrote an amicus curiae brief in support of a preliminary injunction in the case of *Washington v. DeVos* on behalf of Husch Blackwell client CGCS. The brief successfully argued that the United States Department of Education (USDOE) had attempted to unlawfully rewrite important emergency legislation to support its own spending priorities rather than those of Congress. It demonstrated that the USDOE sought to divert hundreds of millions of dollars that Congress intended to support public schools grappling with the pandemic, including thousands of schools in Council member districts, to private schools, regardless of the financial need of private school students. Finally, it discussed the practical impact that such a diversion would have had on urban public schools and its students.

One reviewer commented, “The nomination letter (for this brief) is very impressive and speaks to the purpose of the award . . . ‘it is the very type of brief that Gus Steinhilber himself would have recognized as a scholarly work adding value and context to this dispute . . .’”

The brief-writing team was comprised of John W. Borkowski, Scott Schneider, Aleksandra O. Rushing, Mary E. Deweese, Paige C. Duggins-Clay and Shmuel B. Shulman, members of Husch Blackwell’s Education practice; Gregory Wong of the Pacifica Law Group; and the CGCS team of Legislative Counsel Julie

Wright Halbert, Michael Casserly, Jeff Simering, Manish Naik and Moses Palacios. CGCS is a coalition of 75 of the nation's largest urban public school systems and is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools.

The criteria for ELA's award included Quality of Writing (including logical structure of argument, paragraphs, and sentences; conciseness and clarity; emphasis of key points; use of headings and quotations) and Quality of Analysis (including presentation of the theory of the case and its limits; presentation of the doctrinal context; focus on points relevant to the Court; use of precedent; inclusion of relevant authority; discussion of relevance to education generally).

The team will be recognized during ELA's annual conference October 20-23, 2021.