

Selendy Gay Obtains Asylum for Pro Bono Client

08/23/24



In a significant pro bono victory, Selendy Gay obtained asylum for a transgender woman who fled to the U.S. after experiencing persecution in her home country, the Dominican Republic, due to her gender identity and sexual orientation.

The team drafted an extensive brief arguing that the client was entitled to asylum because of the persecution she had suffered as a result of her membership in two protected groups: Dominican transgender women and women who cannot escape their abusive relationships. The team further argued that it was unsafe for her to return to the Dominican Republic due to the country's culture of discrimination and violence against transgender women and female domestic violence victims and because the police are unwilling and unable to protect transgender women and victims of domestic violence due to that culture.

In addition to the brief, Selendy Gay submitted five supporting witness affidavits based on extensive interviews of relevant witnesses in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, an expert report from a professor who specializes in Dominican LGBTQ+ issues, letters from the client's doctors, police and hospital reports from the Dominican Republic, and more than 2,500 pages of country conditions reports.

Based on their review of Selendy Gay's extensive brief and supporting evidence, the Department of Homeland Security elected not to oppose our client's request for asylum, and the presiding judge chose to forego a hearing, including live witness testimony, and issued a grant of asylum from the bench.

This swift ruling, based solely on the strength of the briefing, affidavits, and other supporting evidence Selendy Gay submitted, allowed our client to avoid a lengthy trial and eliminated her fear of being forced to return to her home country.

The Selendy Gay team was led by partner Lauren Zimmerman and included associates Hannah Miles, Jack Collins, and Anna Nabutovsky and summer associates Tori Borlase and Eui Young Kim.

Attorneys

- Lauren Zimmerman

- Hannah Miles
- Jack Collins

Practice

- Public Interest and Pro Bono