

Pro Bono

BCLP SECURES THE RETURN OF AN ABDUCTED 10-YEAR-OLD CHILD TO MEXICO UNDER THE HAGUE CONVENTION

Jul 14, 2026

As part of our ongoing pro bono work, BCLP secured the return of an abducted child to Mexico under the Hague Convention.

BCLP represented the Petitioner, a father of Mexican citizenry, on a Petition for the Return of a Child pursuant to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction — one of the most time-sensitive and demanding areas of international family law. In the midst of an ongoing custody dispute in Mexico, the father's ex-wife, the Respondent, fled Mexico to the United States with the couple's 10-year-old daughter.

BCLP argued that there was no question that the child's country of habitual residence was Mexico and that the Respondent's removal of the child to the United States was unlawful and in direct violation of the father's custodial rights. The Respondent baselessly argued that returning the child to Mexico posed a "grave risk" to the child's mental and physical wellbeing, and further attempted to invoke the child's own alleged objection to return as grounds for denial of the petition. With only days to prepare to counter both arguments, our team withstood the pressure with calm and met the challenge.

On June 10 and 11, 2026, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri held a trial on the merits of the Petition. The first day of trial alone spanned nearly eleven hours, during which both sides presented opening statements, live testimony from a number of witnesses, and documentary evidence, and the Court conducted an in-camera examination of the minor child — a testament to the complexity and intensity of the proceedings. Our team navigated every stage of this high-pressure litigation with precision and composure.

Chief District Judge Stephen R. Clark granted the father's petition in full and ordered the immediate return of the child to Mexico — reuniting a father with his daughter after nearly a year apart and roundly rejecting the Respondent's defenses. The Court further denied the Respondent's emergency motion for a stay of the return order pending appeal — recognizing that the father had been wrongfully deprived of contact with his daughter for nearly a year as a result of the Respondent's unilateral abduction.

The BCLP team included Partner **Jennifer Berhorst** (Kansas City), Associates **Grace Martinez** (Kansas City) and **Hannah Demand** (St. Louis), Paralegals **Alexis Gonzalez** (New York) and **Angie Garland** (St. Louis), and legal practice assistant **Charlotte Hepworth** (Kansas City).

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