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Keker helps ACLU target Trump orders

By Joshua Sebold
Daily Journal Staff Writer

Keker, Van Nest & Peters LLP has filed a lawsuit challenging President Donald J. Trump's executive order restricting immigration, assisting the American Civil Liberties Union in a pro bono capacity.

The lawsuit, filed last week, contends that Trump's order violated the U.S. Constitution. The firm is also preparing a complaint for Santa Clara County, challenging Trump's executive order to defund sanctuary cities, in another pro bono case. The firm expected to file that complaint late Friday.

Adam Lauridsen, a partner at Keker and one of the lead attorneys on the ACLU case, said the executive order violates the First Amendment. *Al-Mowafak et al. v. Trump et al.*, 3:17-cv-00557-WHO (N.D. Cal., filed Feb. 2, 2017).

"We believe it's unconstitutional and illegal to ban immigration by a particular religious group or to impose a specific bar on immigration based on nationality, which on its face is what we're dealing with," he said.

Lauridsen said the complaint also targets a State Department letter that provi-

sionally revoked all valid immigrant and nonimmigrant visas associated with the seven countries named in the order. In recent days, government officials have given disparate estimates on how many visas were invalidated by this action, ranging between "less than 60,000" and "more than 100,000."

The plaintiffs argue in their complaint that Trump is doing exactly what he pledged to do in his campaign, despite his recent statements that the order is not a ban on Muslims.

"The Executive Order and the Provisional Revocation Letter violate the First Amendment because they are thinly veiled attempts to discriminate against Muslims by barring them from entry to the United States," plaintiffs wrote.

This isn't the first time the Keker firm has worked on issues related to immigration. Representing immigrants and refugees has become a hallmark of the firm's pro bono practice in the last few years. The firm made representing children who were detained after fleeing violence in Central and South America a chief priority of its pro bono efforts beginning in 2014.

The ACLU litigation was filed as a

putative class action, with a variety of plaintiffs, including three students at California colleges who have been directly affected by the executive order.

The other plaintiffs are the ACLU of Northern California and Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay.

An ACLU press release indicated the Jewish family organization has been involved for years in helping refugees and immigrants from a variety of countries come to California, including the countries targeted by Trump's order.

Steven K. Taylor, the managing partner at Keker, said the firm's leadership was touched to see how many of their attorneys had taken the focus on immigration to heart, volunteering their personal time over the weekend in the immediate aftermath of Trump's order.

"We were thrilled last weekend when many of our attorneys, especially our associates, answered the call and got to the airports and helped whichever people they could," he said. "We're committed to our values, our obligation to defend the Constitution and to defend the rights of those being impacted by what we consider to be sweeping and unlawful actions."