Steptoe Partners with HRC to Combat Attacks on LGBTQ Equality

October 8, 2019

Overview

(October 8, 2019, Washington, DC) — Steptoe & Johnson LLP has expanded its partnership with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) by taking on complex litigation matters involving the rights of the LGBTQ community. On October 4, HRC announced its partnership with Steptoe and six other law firms to combat attacks on LGBTQ equality in the United States and abroad.

HRC and the firms will work to pursue strategic litigation in state and federal courts to aggressively address discriminatory actions by those who target the LGBTQ community. By working together, the organization and these firms will utilize the courts to hold accountable entities and governments that target individuals with discriminatory laws, regulations and policies.

Steptoe Pro Bono Counsel Paul Lee said: “Steptoe is proud to expand our partnership with the Human Rights Campaign by taking on complex litigation matters involving the rights of the LGBTQ community. Equal protection under the law is a bedrock constitutional principle, and one we look forward to fighting for alongside the HRC.”

Steptoe has a long history in engaging with HRC on issues and amicus briefs in important cases. In 2017, Steptoe partnered with HRC to draft an amicus brief in the US Supreme Court case Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, involving the baker who refused to provide a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. Working with HRC, Steptoe successfully won the support of 37 businesses – companies including Airbnb Inc., American Airlines, Apple, and Amazon.com Inc. – on the brief to argue that a decision favoring the baker would weaken anti-discrimination laws and hamper businesses’ abilities to protect their employees from discrimination.

Previously, Steptoe drafted an amicus brief on behalf of the California National Organization of Women and Feminist Majority in the battle over Proposition 8, which denied same-sex couples the right to marry.

“As the largest LGBTQ civil rights organization in the world, it's incumbent upon the Human Rights Campaign to fight against discrimination at every turn,” said HRC president Alphonso David. “By adding domestic and international impact litigation to our approach, we will wield a critical tool to fight against oppressive legislative and policy measures through the courts. Our new litigation strategy is a natural extension of the legal advocacy the Human Rights Campaign has been doing for nearly four decades, and it will help us better advocate for LGBTQ rights and our more than 3.5 million members and supporters.”

Steptoe is committed to fostering a firm culture that is welcoming and supportive to members of the LGBTQ+ community. Earlier this year, HRC recognized Steptoe’s commitment to equality with a perfect score on the 2019 Corporate Equality Index.

About Steptoe

In more than 100 years of practice, Steptoe has earned an international reputation for vigorous representation of clients before governmental agencies, successful advocacy in litigation and arbitration, and creative and practical advice in structuring business transactions. Steptoe has more than 500 lawyers and other professional staff across offices in Beijing, Brussels, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington. For more information, visit www.steptoe.com.