

AS SEEN IN *Forbes & Fortune*

BOSTON LEADERS IN LAW



Righting Wrongs

Recovering government funds while protecting those who report fraud is all in a day's work for the Whistleblower Law Collaborative LLC.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ATTORNEYS BRUCE C. JUDGE, DAVID W. S. LIEBERMAN, LINDA C. SEVERIN, SUZANNE E. DURRELL, ROBERT M. THOMAS, JR., AND ERICA BLACHMAN HITCHINGS.

“Put yourself in the shoes of someone who works for a company that may be engaged in fraud,” says attorney Robert M. Thomas, Jr., cofounder of the Whistleblower Law Collaborative LLC. “What can they do about it? Who should they talk to? What risks do they face? The reality is that whistleblowers have many tools at their disposal, but they won’t know this until they talk to an expert.”

Cofounded in 2003 by Thomas and Suzanne E. Durrell, both former prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Whistleblower Law Collaborative has a long track record of successfully representing clients who have brought waste, fraud, abuse, and misconduct to the attention of government agencies. The firm has recovered more than \$6.8 billion for the government, with clients receiving a significant portion of these claims.

“The bulk of our cases involve health care fraud with Medicaid and Medicare,” says Durrell. “Billions of taxpayer dollars have been lost to fraud in these programs, and we’ve had large successes against multinational biopharmaceutical corporations. But fraud can happen anywhere the government spends money—such as infrastructure and defense contracting—as well as in areas the government regulates, such as the securities and commodities markets. Our team is equipped to handle any of these complex cases.”

With more than 180 years of combined experience, the Whistleblower Law Collaborative has successfully represented dozens of clients under the False Claims Act (FCA) and other whistleblower programs. Working on a contingency fee basis, the firm only accepts cases after a rigorous screening process, so when the team presents a case to the government, prosecutors tend to listen.

“We can anticipate whether or not a case will be of interest to prosecutors,” Thomas says. “Prosecutors are busy people. They know from experience that we screen our cases well. It helps us get a fair hearing for our clients.”

PROTECTION TO THE END

While whistleblowers are generally allocated between 15%-25% of any award or settlement, the investigation and prosecution process can take years. Not surprisingly, many potential clients are reluctant to file claims out of fear of retaliation from their employers or others. It’s not an unfounded concern, and the Whistleblower Law Collaborative has represented many clients who have been walked out of the building after noticing possible government fraud and bringing it to the attention of company management.

“People worry about what will happen to them and their families if they stick their necks out,” Thomas says. “There are protections in place for whistleblowers, and it’s often possible for clients to have total anonymity throughout the process. In other situations, such as FCA cases, we can protect their identity until it’s too late for their employer to engage in punitive behavior.”

Now in its 20th year, the firm is as passionate as ever about helping clients navigate the legal process.

“Clients come to us in turmoil,” says Durrell. “Some have already lost their jobs because they spoke up. It’s gratifying to help them through difficult times and to see them rewarded for doing the right thing.”

Whistleblower
LAW COLLABORATIVE

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