Insights: News Releases

Significant Verdict in One of First Civil Cases on Human Trafficking in Georgia

MAY 5, 2015

Kilpatrick Townsend Serves as Counsel in Case

ATLANTA (May 5) – On April 28th, a jury returned a verdict of $365,000 in damages in what is believed to be one of the first civil lawsuits in Georgia for labor trafficking. A team of **Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton** attorneys including Atlanta Office Managing Partner **Audra Dial**, Partner **George Murphy** and associate **Bill Meyer** tried the case. This case is one of only seven jury trials in a federal trafficking case in the United States that we have been able to identify.

In 2013, Ms. Dial was approached by an Atlanta non-profit that helps victims of human trafficking about filing a civil lawsuit on behalf of one of their victims against her traffickers. Ms. Dial had already been involved in the fight against human trafficking as a result of her leadership in the Junior League of Atlanta and was eager to get involved in this case. The firm's client, Thembi Dlamini, was enticed to Atlanta from her native Swaziland, a country in Southern Africa, in 2005 to purportedly work in Atlanta for two weeks to cater a couple's son's upcoming wedding. When she arrived in Atlanta, her passport and return plane ticket were confiscated and she learned that everything she had been told was lies and that she was brought to Atlanta to be the slave of this couple.

Ms. Dlamini was forced her to work 16 hours a day, taking care of the couple's grandchildren, cleaning their home and the homes of neighbors, and working in their construction business. She lived in these conditions for 20 months until she had enough and took the risk of telling neighbors and friends of her captors her true circumstances. Fortunately, they helped her escape. Ms. Dlamini's ordeal ended when she boarded a bus to Washington, D.C., where she ultimately reported her story to federal law enforcement officials. And, her captors were prosecuted and sentenced to jail for their crimes.

After winning summary judgment of liability against the traffickers, the case was set for a jury trial before Judge Duffey in the Northern District of Georgia. On April 27, the team selected a jury and presented Ms. Dlamini's case to a jury of 8 people (3 women and 5 men, including one lawyer). The verdict includes full compensation for Ms. Dlamini's lost earnings as well as $400 per day for each day of her captivity for the emotional distress.

For more information about Kilpatrick Townsend, please visit: www.kilpatricktownsend.com.

Follow the firm on Twitter: @KTS_Law.

###

Related People



George L. Murphy, Jr.

Atlanta, GA
t 404.815.6378
gmurphy@ktslaw.com