

**For Immediate Release
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Latinos in Prince William County File Lawsuit Against Prince William County seeking to Rescind Anti-Immigrant Resolution

Washington, DC, October 10, 2007...Latinos in Prince William County and the Woodbridge Workers' Committee filed a lawsuit against Prince William County, its Board of Supervisors, the County Executive and the Police Chief seeking declaratory and injunctive relief to halt its implementation and enforcement of its recently passed anti-immigrant resolution, Resolution 07-609.

The lawsuit was filed by Howrey LLP, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) and the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

On July 10, 2007, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 07-609 which grants local police broad authority to inquire into the immigration status of individuals, authorizes county-level employees to gather, maintain and share information regarding the immigration status of individuals seeking public benefits, and may limit county services that immigrants receive.

The lawsuit, filed today in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, claims violations of the U.S. Constitution, federal statutes, and the laws of Virginia and requests declaratory and injunctive relief to halt its implementation and enforcement. The complaint was brought on behalf of 16 individuals and their minor children as well as the Woodbridge Workers' Committee. The complaint alleges that the Resolution is an unconstitutional attempt to circumvent the federal government's authority to regulate immigration and that it enacts a discriminatory scheme in violation of the Equal Protection Clause to the United States Constitution.

"This ordinance, which expresses the worst instincts of a few in the county, is destroying the basic fabric of community life," said Cesar Perales, PRLDEF President and General Counsel. "Latino children should be taught to trust police. Not to fear they might take their parents away."

Howrey LLP is one of Washington, DC's top firms noted for its strong litigation practice. Partners John Niels, former President of the DC Bar and Christina Guerola Sarchio, incoming Vice President for External Affairs of the Hispanic National Bar Association and immediate Past President of the DC Hispanic Bar, will lead the effort.

Commenting on the case, Sarchio said, “the governing body of Prince William County has taken it upon itself to devise a way to handle immigrants in their community in a way that goes against the U.S. Constitution and federal law. It infringes upon Congress' power to regulate immigration, a power unquestionably reserved to the Federal government. Putting aside the fact that all of our ancestors were immigrants at one point, the action the PWC Board of Supervisors has taken here is discriminatory and illegal.”

“This Resolution demonstrates a disturbing animus toward immigrants that contradicts what America is, a nation of immigrants,” said Laura E. Varela, Director of the Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project at the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. “The Resolution promotes racial profiling and is causing a great deal of fear and unrest among both U.S. citizens and immigrant residents who live in Prince William County.”

The Washington Lawyers’ Committee, which joins Howrey in the suit, has for more than 35 years provided legal services to address issues of discrimination in the areas of equal employment, fair housing, public accommodations, public education, asylum and refugee rights, and disability rights. The Committee often teams with Howrey on community matters.

PRLDEF has previously brought legal challenges to such legislative acts and ordinances based on violations of the U.S. Constitution’s Supremacy Clause, the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment, and, long-standing federal preemption principles.

For updates, please consult <http://www.stoppwc.org>

- 0 -

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5,000 civil rights cases, in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other aspects of urban life. <http://www.washlaw.org/>

PRLDEF, established in 1972, has won landmark civil rights cases in education, housing, voting, migrant, immigrant, employment and other civil rights. PRLDEF has fought for the right of non-English speaking students to get a good education, against housing discrimination in city-owned apartments, and to open up employment opportunities for all people. <http://www.prldef.org/>