

Firm's Amicus Brief Opposes Efforts to Block Construction of the Obama Presidential Center

Publications

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On July 15, the firm submitted an amicus brief, pro bono, on behalf of 16 iconic Chicagoland museums and cultural institutions that oppose efforts to block construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park.

The plaintiffs in *Protect Our Parks, Inc., et. al. v. Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of the US Department of Transportation, et. al.*, No. 21-cv-2006 (N.D. Ill.) sought a preliminary injunction to stop the center. The brief argues that the court should deny that request. On August 5, Judge John Robert Blakey issued a one-page opinion denying the request, writing that the plaintiffs “have not met the standard for injunctive relief on their federal claims.”

“The Chicagoland Museums believe the Obama Presidential Center will be a cultural and economic treasure for Chicago that will benefit the public by bringing new amenities and positive development to the surrounding community, boosting the local economy, and serving as a magnet for visitors to the City and the region. It will serve as an enduring and powerful symbol of the promise of America and the American Dream. In other words, the public interest strongly favors allowing construction to move forward without any further delays,” the brief reads.

The brief highlights the area’s long and rich history of featuring these world-class institutions: “Museums provide major educational and economic benefits and advance the public’s interest in knowledge and understanding. The Chicagoland Museums offer benefits to the public, the City, and the Chicago Park District—and offer benefits to each other when they are clustered together. Each museum is truly a treasure and Chicagoland, its residents, and visitors are fortunate to have them.”

The brief is signed by Co-Managing Partner Randy Mehrberg, joined by Partners Daniel J. Weiss and Gabriel K. Gillett and Associate Elena M. Olivieri.

The Chicagoland museums and cultural institutions that joined the brief include the following: Adler Planetarium, The Art Institute of Chicago, Bronzeville Children’s Museum, Chicago Academy of Sciences/Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago Architecture Center, Chicago History Museum, DuSable Museum of African American History, Field Museum of Natural History, Illinois Holocaust

Museum & Education Center, Lincoln Park Zoo, Millennium Park Foundation, Museum of Contemporary Art, Museum of Science and Industry, National Museum of Mexican Art, The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture, and Shedd Aquarium.

This is the third brief the firm submitted in support of the Obama Presidential Center. In 2018, the firm submitted a brief in the district court on behalf of 11 museums in *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District*, and submitted a brief in the Seventh Circuit when the plaintiffs appealed their loss. WTTW reported on the latest brief.

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