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AILA Presents the MAVNI Litigation Team of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver, & Jacobson LLP with the 2018 Jack Wasserman Memorial Award

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WASHINGTON, DC - The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) will recognize the MAVNI Litigation Team of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP with the 2018 Jack Wasserman Memorial Award for excellence in litigation in the field of immigration law this week during AILA’s Annual Conference in San Francisco.

Thousands of immigrant U.S. soldiers answered the nation’s call for military recruits with specialized language or medical skills, signed eight-year enlistment contracts with the U.S. Army, and were promised they would be eligible for expedited naturalization through the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program. But approximately 2,500 MAVNI recruits have been unable to apply for naturalization or have their naturalization applications adjudicated due to onerous preconditions imposed on them by USCIS and DOD policies.

After learning about the plight of these soldiers from retired LTC Margaret Stock, who originally spearheaded the MAVNI program that recruited them, Fried Frank assembled a team of litigators that launched the first federal class action lawsuit, *Nio et al. v. DHS et al.*, in May 2017 in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and filed a related class action lawsuit, *Kirwa et al. v. DOD et al.*, in the same court in September 2017. The lawsuits challenge the lawfulness of the policies that have caused a variety of harms to the MAVNI recruits and their families, including lost immigration status, lack of work authorization, inability to obtain driver’s licenses, and travel restrictions, among other harms.

The Court appointed the Fried Frank team as class counsel in both actions and issued preliminary injunctions that have provided interim relief, enabling hundreds of soldiers to apply for naturalization. Fried Frank has spent thousands of hours litigating the case and working with individual class members to advise them of the litigation and their rights.

The Fried Frank team is led by Jennifer Wollenberg, Douglas Baruch, and Joseph LoBue of Fried Frank's Washington, D.C. office. Other invaluable team members include litigators Neaha Raol, Shaun Gates, Kate St. Romain, Karen Grisez, Brendan McNamara, Natalia Szlarb, Elizabeth Woods, Kayla Stachniak Kaplan, Helene Gogadze, and Melis Kiziltay Carter.

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The American Immigration Lawyers Association is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

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