

Righting Corporate Wrongs: One Law Firm's Fight for Justice

Halunen Law

Stories like these make great TV dramas. An employee discovers that his company is making faulty car batteries that are being used in military vehicles in Afghanistan. After bringing it to the attention of management, he gets fired.

A healthcare professional notices that Medicare patients are routinely getting billed for physical therapy services that were never performed. His tip helps the government recover millions of dollars in false medical claims.

A professional football player publicly supports the issue of marriage equality. After disregarding warnings to keep his mouth shut, his contract is terminated.

"We see cases like these all the time," says Clayton Halunen, managing partner of Halunen Law. Clients from across the country seek out the firm because of its expertise in whistleblower retaliation and government fraud.

"Often, people are not in a position to be able to challenge corporate conduct that is illegal or harmful," Halunen says. "We have the privilege of being able to do it on their behalf. We have the resources to stand by them and demand accountability from corporations."

Righting a Wrong

Government fraud cases are pursued under the False Claims Act, which prohibits government

fraud and provides protection and rewards for whistleblowers. Cases can be brought by anyone with information, employee or otherwise, and that person may be entitled to reward money if funds are recovered. Such cases are known as "qui tam" or False Claims Act lawsuits.

Generally the company isn't aware of a pending government investigation—but if they discover it and subsequently fire a whistleblowing employee, provisions in the statute can help the employee recover lost wages and other damages.

Similarly, corporate whistleblowers typically are employees who try to work with management and report issues up through the chain of command. They're entitled to lost wages and damages if a suit proves that they were terminated in retaliation for their complaints.

But Halunen says whistleblowers, both government and corporate, are generally motivated by more than money.

"Our clients often come to us because they want to challenge a corporate culture or conduct that is based purely on greed," Halunen says. "They feel very committed to changing that corporate conduct."

David & Goliath

What does it take to litigate these types of cases?

"You really need to be fearless," Halunen says. "We're a smaller firm, and we're taking on some



Clayton D. Halunen

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of the largest corporations in the world. We're not intimidated by that; we accept it and enjoy the challenge.”

A sharp focus and deep commitment to the cause has helped the firm obtain recoveries for clients in more than 95 percent of the cases they've handled.

"We believe our clients should have the best possible representation," Halunen notes. "We do not rest until we have done everything we can to vindicate our clients' rights."

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