

Daily Journal

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Top Women

Lawyers 2011



Gay C. Grunfeld

ROSEN, BIEN & GALVAN LLP

Location: San Francisco

Practice type: Litigation

Practice speciality: Commercial, constitutional, civil rights

The ailing state budget is being felt acutely by attorneys whose practices include civil rights litigation and constitutional issues.

"The state budget has been a big challenge for all of us, including the state, in trying to meet its constitutional obligations," Grunfeld said.

At prisons, rehabilitation and improved access to medical and physical care can "stop the revolving door," she said.

"The recidivism number is really an indictment of the system and it's very disturbing that we don't have more programs for them to stay out of prison," Grunfeld said. "It's a public safety issue and also common sense."

Grunfeld has been involved in a long-running class action, dealing with the rights of prisoners and parolees with disabilities to access services and facilities in California's prisons and on parole.

She and her team achieved a victory when California was ordered to track and accommodate the needs of state prisoners with disabilities housed in county jails. The decision was predominately affirmed by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last year. *Armstrong v. Schwarzenegger*, 622 F 3d. 1058, (9th Cir.).

"Our firm monitors 33 prisons, and we observe the continuing needs for improved cells and access to care," she said. "When you go to prison and find out about a person who is paraplegic and there is nobody to push them to the chow hall, it's fundamentally so

unfair and illegal."

She added, "Over and over again, we see the problems and work with the state as much as we can to fix them."

Grunfeld led a team to a major victory, representing a class of juvenile parolees against California. *L.H. v. Schwarzenegger*, 2:06-CV-02042, (E.D. Cal.).

The case, which is now in post-judgment monitoring, resulted in two published opinions, a preliminary injunction ruling that juvenile parolees are entitled to be represented by counsel in all parole revocation hearings, and a wide-reaching remedial order.

The team subsequently won a precedent-setting fee award of \$4.8 million that it expects will create greater incentives for public interest law firms to bring litigation against state institutions.

Grunfeld also has been involved in a case involving a conflict between the California Voting Rights Act and the California Constitution.

That case is expected to go to trial in the next year. Plaintiffs seek an end to what they call racially polarized voting that they say has resulted in no Latino ever being elected in the predominately Latino city of Compton. *Gonzalez v. City of Compton*, BC450494, (L.A. Super. Ct.).

Grunfeld also represents clients such as municipalities, corporations and individuals in a variety of employment, copyright, attorneys fees and commercial disputes.

— Pat Broderick