

# JOSEPH M. CACACE

**Partner, Todd & Weld**  
**Boston**

Joseph M. Cacace began his pro bono work before he began his career. During law school, Cacace worked with Shelter Legal Services to help individuals experiencing homelessness in the Greater Boston area. Since he joined the bar, he has maintained at least one active pro bono matter at all times.

"Pro bono legal work has been and remains a critically important part of my practice," he says. "It helps make me a better lawyer. But more importantly, it helps make me a better citizen and a better person."

Cacace's pro bono cases have included asylum work, helping a young man to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, as well as a civil rights lawsuit against the City of Methuen, its police chief and several individual officers for using what a federal district court judge agreed was a factually inaccurate and coercive Spanish-language advice-of-rights form during OUI arrests. That case prompted the Essex County District Attorney's Office to conduct a review of all OUI cases for use of the form and resulted in a settlement for Cacace's client.

Most recently, he devoted more than six years to representation of two asylum-seeking Massachusetts families who were separated at the border in Texas in 2018 under the first Trump Administration's family separation policy. The families – one with a father who was already in Massachusetts, and whose wife and two children were detained when they attempted to join him, with the kids and their mother all separated; the second a father and son similarly separated for approximately one month – all suffered psychological trauma because of their separation and treatment.

"They were kept in unsanitary and cold conditions, not given adequate food, treated abusively and derisively by those that were supposed to be caring for them," he notes.

Cacace led the team, which included David Vicinanzo and Nathan Warecki at Nixon Peabody, Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal at Lawyers for Civil Rights, Susan Church and Derege Demissie and Jeff Goldman at Goldman & Peters Immigration Law.

"It was a long, torturous procedural road and ended up being two separate lawsuits," Cacace explained, first a Bivens action followed by a separate Federal Tort Claims Act suit. After an appeal to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, nationwide settlement talks began under the Biden Administration, but months of discussions broke down when the negotiations became public.

After a mediation in April 2024, the parties reached a confidential settlement that was approved by a federal district court last year.

"I can say that we were able to reach a result that will meaningfully improve our clients' lives and also enables them to move on from this horror without having to relive the trauma for trial," he says.

Cacace, who handles complex civil disputes and appeals of all types in his day-to-day practice, is a member of the Boston Bar Association, Massachusetts Bar Association and New Hampshire Bar Association, as well as a member of the Board of Governors of the Law Clerks' Society of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts.



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