



John G. Amaya

partner

John is a partner in the Washington, D.C. office and a member of the firm's Litigation Department and focuses his work in the Government & Regulatory Affairs and Immigration Practice Groups. He represents companies, institutions, foreign sovereigns and individuals in connection with federal investigations, global immigration, cross-border compliance, related litigation and congressional inquiries. John leverages his significant and varied experiences at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the United States Senate and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to effectively guide clients in legal risk to resolution and compliance, often at the intersection of politics and the law.

Immigration and Foreign Policy

John served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during the Obama Administration. He managed a broad domestic and international portfolio and was responsible for policy oversight and execution. John was instrumental in creating operational guidance for worksite immigration enforcement. In partnership with DOJ, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the State Department, John worked directly with foreign diplomats to investigate and dismantle cross-border trade violations, money laundering, foreign corruption and export control violations.

John also served as Counselor to the Director at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. There, he played a pivotal role in developing policies for, and the administration of, visas for highly skilled workers, people with extraordinary abilities, and foreign investors. John also worked on many complex global immigration matters including the response to national security risks associated with the EB-5 immigrant investor program and helping administer the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. He also worked to ensure unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the U.S. received due process.

Prior to joining the Obama Administration, John served as senior counsel to Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), then-Chairman of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. John conducted oversight investigations and advised the committee on civil and criminal justice, immigration and homeland security, foreign corruption, sovereign immunity and judicial

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

Georgetown University Law Center,
LL.M., 2011

University of Washington School of
Law, J.D., 2005

University of Washington, B.A.,
2001

LANGUAGES

- Spanish, *fluent*

SERVICES

Government & Regulatory Affairs

- Legislative advocacy
- Regulatory advocacy
- Administrative advocacy

Investigations, White Collar Defense & Shareholder Litigation

Immigration

Sports

International Business & Trade

- Immigration and cross-border employment

nominations. Additionally, John counseled corporate executives in preparation for their Congressional testimony ranging in matters from immigration to the FCPA.

John began his legal career as a trial attorney at the Department of Justice following a judicial clerkship in Billings, Montana. At DOJ, he represented the United States in federal district and appellate courts across the country on civil and criminal matters related to immigration.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Represented witnesses in Special Counsel John Durham’s investigation into the FBI’s Russia probe
- Represented client under federal investigation where business accounts were manipulated by transnational criminal organization to launder illicit proceeds
- Represented foreign oil executive in FCPA and money laundering investigation
- Defended global executive against BSA money laundering allegations and bank seizure
- Defended corporate clients against EAPA allegations of AD/CVD
- Conducted CFIUS review of Brazilian client investor in U.S. critical infrastructure
- Counseled corporate clients in ITAR and immigration discrimination compliance
- Counseled corporate client in worksite enforcement, I-9 audit and inspection
- Counsel schools and universities with DHS/SEVP compliance
- Represent high net worth international clients seeking global entry and inadmissibility redress
- Represented professional athletes, highly skilled workers, gamers and individuals with extraordinary ability in pursuit of visas and green cards
- Represented asylees and victims of violence in federal immigration court fighting removal
- Represented dozens of Afghan refugees with evacuation and resettlement efforts

BAR ADMISSIONS

- District of Columbia
- Washington
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- Supreme Court of the United States

PRESENTATIONS

- “Five Years North Panel Discussion,” UN International Organization on Migration Panel, Dec. 16, 2021
- “A Nation of Immigrants: The Dreams that Come with a New Administration,” Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy, March 16, 2021
- “The Post-COVID-19/Pre-Election State of Immigration,” Hispanic National Bar Association Annual Convention, Sept. 23, 2020
- “Changing the Latino Narrative,” Hispanic National Bar Association Annual Convention, Sept. 27, 2019
- “Ethical Issues in an Immigration Practice,” Cincinnati Bar Association, Oct. 18, 2019

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia
- Customs and International Trade Bar Association
- American Immigration Lawyers Association

COMMUNITY

- University of Washington Alumni Association, Board Member, 2022-Present