

Susman Godfrey Wins Pro Bono Appellate Victory in Unconstitutional Prison Search Case

New York (March 21, 2016) — Susman Godfrey secured an important pro bono appellate victory on behalf of a former Bedford Hills Correctional Facility inmate who alleged her Fourth and Eighth Amendment rights were violated during a body cavity search while she was incarcerated. In its ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit vacated the district court's decision dismissing the case and remanded for further consideration.

The case, *Harris v. Fischer*, was brought by Audra Lynn Harris against several corrections officers from Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. Ms. Harris alleges her Fourth and Eighth Amendment rights were violated when she was subjected to an unreasonable and invasive body cavity search. In the district court, Ms. Harris represented herself. Susman Godfrey partner [Arun Subramanian](#) was appointed by the Second Circuit to represent Ms. Harris pro bono on appeal.

After reviewing the Supreme Court's Fourth Amendment jurisprudence, the panel reaffirmed that "inmates retain a limited right to bodily privacy under the Fourth Amendment." Recounting the details of the search, the court found genuine issues of material fact as to both Ms. Harris's Fourth Amendment and Eighth Amendment excessive force claims.

"The Second Circuit's well-reasoned decision made clear that prisoners do not give up their Fourth Amendment privacy rights at the prison gates," noted Subramanian, who represented Ms. Harris for the appeal. "This is an important victory for our client that demonstrates corrections officers must respect inmates' constitutional rights."

Susman Godfrey maintains an active pro bono practice. The Harris win is just the latest in a series of pro bono victories for the firm. Last month, Co-Managing Partner [Neal Manne](#) secured two wins in one day in matters involving prosecutorial misconduct in a death penalty case and the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Texas.

Mr. Subramanian is available for interviews on the Harris matter.