



FBT Gibbons Selects Two Judicial Clerks for Firm's 2026 Pro Bono Fellowship

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FBT Gibbons has selected Julia Yujie Deng and Elizabeth Lesso as the 2026 recipients of the firm's [John J. Gibbons Fellowship](#) in Public Interest and Constitutional Law, bringing two accomplished judicial clerks with significant constitutional law experience into the nationally recognized pro bono fellowship program.

Deng and Lesso will begin their terms as Gibbons Fellows this fall, working exclusively on FBT Gibbons' impact litigation docket and supporting public interest cases involving civil rights, immigration, criminal justice reform, education equity, First Amendment matters, and other constitutional issues.

Their selection comes as the firm is expanding the reach of its fellowship program following the January combination of Frost Brown Todd and Gibbons P.C. to form FBT Gibbons. With a national platform and deeper resources, the fellowship program is positioned to support broader impact litigation efforts while strengthening collaboration with public interest organizations and community advocates nationwide.

"The Gibbons Fellowship has long reflected the firm's enduring commitment to service, particularly on behalf of the people and communities that need it the most," said FBT Gibbons Partner [Michael R. Noveck](#), who oversees the fellowship program. "We are proud to continue to litigate complex public interest cases involving significant, cutting-edge legal issues. As FBT Gibbons continues to grow nationally, we are focused on ways to further expand the program's reach and impact across the country. Julia and Elizabeth each bring exceptional legal ability, meaningful pro bono experience, and a clear commitment to this work, and we are excited to welcome them to the program."

Deng is a graduate of Harvard Law School currently completing a federal clerkship at the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada under the Hon. Anne R. Traum. Prior to her clerkship, she served as

an Immigrant Justice Corps fellow at Make the Road New Jersey, representing clients in immigration proceedings and assisting adults and children seeking asylum, temporary protected status, and naturalization. While in law school, Deng contributed to a number of pro bono initiatives, including the Prison Legal Assistance Project and Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic.

Lesso currently serves as a judicial law clerk to the Hon. Douglas M. Fasciale on the Supreme Court of New Jersey, where she conducts research and drafts bench memoranda for complex civil, criminal, and constitutional cases. She graduated from Seton Hall University School of Law in the top 2% of her class, earning Best Oral Advocate and moot court distinctions, while serving as executive editor of the *Seton Hall Law Review*. Additionally, during law school, Lesso worked at the Impact Litigation Clinic and interned with the Detention & Deportation Defense Initiative, honing her research skills by drafting appellate briefs for cases with the potential to drive broad social change.

In October 2025, longtime Fellowship Director [Lawrence S. Lustberg](#) took emeritus status, and Noveck, a former Gibbons Fellow, became the program's executive director. Under Noveck's leadership, the Gibbons Fellowship remains principally focused on high-impact pro bono representation involving close collaboration with a broad cross-section of public interest organizations and community leaders.

Through the Gibbons Fellowship, the firm litigates matters in trial and appellate courts spanning across numerous jurisdictions, including the U.S. Supreme Court. FBT Gibbons welcomes requests for representation or advice from all sources, including public interest organizations, legal services or public defender offices, government agencies, private nonprofit organizations, law school clinics, courts, and individuals.

About the Gibbons Fellowship

The John J. Gibbons Fellowship in Public Interest and Constitutional Law is a full-time pro bono fellowship program at FBT Gibbons dedicated to impactful public interest and constitutional litigation.

Established when Judge John J. Gibbons returned to the firm following his retirement from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, the Gibbons Fellowship was initially designed as a five-year experimental program and has continued for 35 years. Fellows work exclusively on the firm's impact litigation docket under the supervision of the program's director, collaborating with public interest groups and community leaders on matters involving constitutional and individual rights. Visit the [Gibbons Fellowship page](#) for more information, including a list of prior Gibbons Fellows and the significant cases and pro bono matters they worked on.

About FBT Gibbons

FBT Gibbons LLP is a national law firm focused on serving companies operating and investing in the middle market. With nearly 800 lawyers across 26 offices, the firm is positioned to support clients ranging from large multinationals to mid-sized businesses and growth-oriented startups across the United States. FBT Gibbons provides legal counsel enriched with valuable business and market context, particularly in corporate, litigation, and regulatory matters within the energy, finance, life sciences, and manufacturing sectors. The firm is committed to delivering excellent service to its clients, colleagues, and the communities in which it operates.

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