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**Anthony May files amicus brief in the Appellate Court of Maryland to preserve the validity of pro bono legal services across the State.**

**BALTIMORE** – On November 30, 2022, Brown, Goldstein & Levy attorney Anthony May, representing a coalition pro bono legal services organizations across the state filed an amicus brief in the Appellate Court of Maryland supporting Appellant Carl Avery. The coalition includes the Bar Foundation of Harford County, Maryland, Community Legal Services of Prince George’s County, Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, Mid-Shore Pro Bono, Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, Public Justice Center, and Women’s Law Center of Maryland. Mr. Avery received legal services through the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS), Maryland’s largest provider of pro bono civil legal services to low-income individuals across the state, in a family law matter. Despite meeting the state income requirements to receive such services, and despite prevailing on virtually all issues, the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County nevertheless required Mr. Avery to pay \$5,000 for his adversary’s fees because he “doesn’t have attorney’s fees,” reimposing the economic burden that pro bono services are designed to eliminate.

In the brief, Anthony points to several reasons why the circuit court’s decision contradicts the fundamental purpose of pro bono legal services and runs afoul of public policy designed to ensure that underrepresented Marylanders have equal access to justice. Among other things, the court’s ruling (1) contravenes the Maryland General Assembly’s, Maryland Rules Committee’s, and the Maryland Judiciary’s goals of providing access to justice for low-income Marylanders; (2) fails to account for the importance of pro bono representation in family law matters and the increased need for such services during and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) would dissuade and penalize low-income Marylanders for obtaining such services and discourage attorneys from providing volunteer services while their clients are forced to pay the fees of their opponents who have the financial ability to pay their own fees. The coalition of non-profit organizations has asked the Appellate Court of Maryland to reverse the judgment in a reported opinion to reaffirm the judiciary’s longstanding commitment to eliminating economic barriers inherent in the justice system.

This amicus brief represents Brown, Goldstein & Levy’s longstanding commitment to expanding access to justice in civil matters for underrepresented Marylanders. Our attorneys devote

hundreds of hours a year to providing high-quality legal representation at no cost. As a firm committed to the pursuit of social justice and equity, maintaining a robust pro bono practice is one way that we are closing the gap between those who can afford a lawyer and those who cannot.

Anthony was recently selected to the MVLS Board of Directors. He was previously named MVLS' 2019 Young Lawyer of the Year and serves on the MVLS Community Advocacy Network Leadership Committee, where he formerly served as President from 2017-2019. Anthony was also the 2022 recipient of the Maryland Legal Services Corporation Rising Star Award, which is reserved for attorneys who have practiced law for 10 years or less and who have significantly contributed to expanding access to justice by serving the civil legal needs of low-income Marylanders or advancing the delivery of civil legal services.

[Read the amicus brief here.](#)

### **About Brown Goldstein & Levy, LLP**

Founded in 1982, Brown, Goldstein & Levy is a 24-lawyer law firm based in Baltimore, Maryland, with an office in Washington, DC. The firm has maintained a thriving national practice handling cases of every stripe, from commercial litigation and civil rights to criminal defense and complex family law. Above all else, Brown, Goldstein & Levy is a client-centered law firm and has decades of experiences bringing passionate, effective advocacy to our clients' fights for justice.