

BROWN GOLDSTEIN LEVY

## Joe Espo



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### Practice Areas

Business Disputes, Civil Litigation, Civil Rights,  
Defense of Professional Licenses, Housing Discrimination,  
Personal Injury/Wrongful Death, Professional Malpractice,  
Premises Liability, Public Interest Litigation

### Career Milestones

- Obtained the largest settlement the State of Maryland has ever paid to an individual, on behalf of a Baltimore City child abused while in foster care.
- Enjoined the State of Maryland from implementing an exemption to a residential lead paint safety regulation that would have led to the poisoning of hundreds of children.

### Profile

Joe Espo has devoted much of his career to representing individuals who have suffered serious personal injuries, including brain-damaged children in toxic tort cases, in both Maryland and the District of Columbia. He has represented more than 100 children who were victims of childhood lead poisoning caused by decaying paint in older homes and successfully challenged a Maryland regulation exempting certain housing repairs from lead-safe work rules. As an outgrowth of his representation of lead-poisoned children, Joe has represented families who have been denied housing because of landlords' concerns of lead poisoning.

Joe has also represented numerous individuals with disabilities in asserting their rights regarding housing, employment, and access to public accommodations. He successfully represented deaf sports fans in their case against the Washington Redskins' FedEx Field to gain equal access to all aural content, including the lyrics to the music played during the game. Joe's disability rights experience also includes representing clients when hospitals have failed to provide sign language interpreters during the administration of medical care.

Since 2013, Joe has been selected annually by his peers to the *Maryland Super Lawyers*. Only five percent of the lawyers in the state are chosen for inclusion in *Super Lawyers*.

A member of the state and federal bars of Maryland and the District of Columbia, Joe has taught Maryland Civil Procedure at the University of Maryland School of Law and taught classes on handling lead poisoning cases for the Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers. Before attending law school, Joe was the labor reporter at the Flint (Michigan) Journal.

## Education

- University of Maryland School of Law, J.D. with honors, Order of the Coif, 1990
- The American University, B.A., 1985

## Representative Cases

- *Jay Innes, et al. v. University of Maryland-College Park, et al.* - Successfully represented three deaf plaintiffs with season tickets to Terps basketball and football games in lawsuit to require the University to provide equal access to all aural content for deaf and hard of hearing sports fans, both in-stadium and on the athletic department's website (2017).
- *Lauren Searls v. Johns Hopkins Hospital* - Won summary judgment in favor of a deaf nurse whose job offer was rescinded because the hospital claimed that providing her a sign language interpreter would be an undue burden or direct threat to patients (2016).
- *B.F. v. Truck Company* - Obtained settlement of over \$1.5 million on behalf of a client who collided with the rear end of a truck that had a defectively designed underride guard (2014).
- *Paulino v. Veritas Prep, LLC* - For a deaf client, secured settlement involving damages, a free retake of the Veritas GMAT course, Computer Assisted Realtime Transcription (CART) for the classroom sessions, and live online office hours, and an agreement to caption the Veritas online lectures known as GMAT On Demand (2013).
- *Busch v. Clise Coal Co.* - Won \$3.9 million verdict for family of a worker electrocuted when a crane operator used a crane too close to high-voltage power lines (2013).
- *Feldman v. Pro Football, Inc.* - Secured equal access to all aural content for deaf and hard of hearing sports fans at the Washington Redskins' FedEx Field, 579 F. Supp. 2d 697 (D. Md. 2008), *aff'd*, 419 Fed App'x 381 (4th Cir. 2011).
- *Blank vs. Belvedere Restaurant Group* - Won a \$1 million verdict for a woman who fell down a poorly lit flight of stairs next to the dance floor at a nightclub, breaking her pelvis and wrist (2010).
- *Ford v. Baltimore City Department of Social Services* - Obtained settlement of over \$2 million for child seriously injured in foster care (2007).
- *Maurer v. Pennsylvania National Mutual Insurance Co.* - Holding that under-insured motorist insurer cannot contest liability after consenting to insured's settlement with at-fault driver, 404 Md. 60, 945 A.2d 629 (2007).
- *Hartzell v. Arkansas* - Obtained injunction against State of Arkansas' use of computer software that was not useable by blind employees (2003).
- *Norwest Bank v. Pence* - Holding that certain Baltimore City deferred loan agreements are not real estate liens, 363 Md. 267, 768 A.2d 639 (2001).
- *Hines v. Nishida* (Balt. City Cir. Ct.) - Invalidating certain Maryland lead paint safety regulations on the grounds they are irrational and do not protect children from harm.
- Defended a dentist in a licensure matter before the Maryland State Dental Board of Examiners.

## Honors

- Maryland *Super Lawyers*, 2013-2018

## Affiliations

- Maryland Association for Justice, Member, President's Club
- Maryland Association for Justice, Member, Mentor/Mentee Committee
- Disability Rights Bar Association, Member
- D.C. Trial Lawyers Association
- Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, Past President
- Adoption Resource Center, Past President

## Media

- September 13, 2017, Joe was quoted in the *Washington Post*, "Deputies in Lawsuit Describe Fatal Confrontation."
- September 9, 2016, Joe was quoted in the *Washington Post*, "Judge Orders Civil Trial in Death of 26-year-old with Down Syndrome"
- September 6, 2016, Joe was interviewed by WBAL TV News for a story "Wheelchair-bound Employee Told He Can't Use Service Dog at Work."
- March 2, 2016, Joe was quoted in *The Daily Record*, "Jury: Montgomery Co. Failed to Reasonably Accommodate Blind Worker."
- January 28, 2016, Joe was quoted in *The Daily Record*, "Judge: Hopkins Violated ADA by Not Hiring Interpreter."
- June 17, 2015, Joe was quoted in *The Daily Record*, "Court Revives Blind Worker's Lawsuit Against Montgomery County."
- December 5, 2014, Joe was quoted in *The Daily Record*, "Hippodrome Sued Over No Captions."
- October 17, 2013 Joe was interviewed by ABC7 News regarding his client, "Robert Ethan Saylor's Family Sues Frederick County Sheriff's Office, Others."
- Joe was quoted in *The Daily Record* September 25, 2013 article, "UMCP Sued Over Access to Ballgame Broadcasts."
- Joe was quoted in *The New York Times* March 18, 2013 article, "A Young Man With Down Syndrome, a Fatal Encounter and a Cry for Understanding."
- November 7, 2011, Sheilah Kast interviewed Joe on WYPR's Maryland Morning with Sheilah Kast regarding the recent Maryland Court of Appeals ruling that changed a 1994 state law regulating how claims of children poisoned by lead paint are handled in Maryland.

