

Stephen J. van Stempvoort

MEMBER

Grand Rapids

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Steve van Stempvoort focuses on appellate litigation, with an emphasis on the federal courts. Although his practice spans various aspects of complex commercial litigation, Steve's particular expertise is in First Amendment law, municipal liability, and new technology issues, including litigation and appeals related to defamation, online speech, discrimination, civil rights, and criminal defense.

In his appellate practice, Steve has represented clients in numerous state and federal courts of appeal, including the Supreme Court of the United States. Among other favorable outcomes achieved by Steve on behalf of his clients, Steve has successfully petitioned for certiorari in the Supreme Court of the United States, obtaining a favorable remand for his client.

Some of Steve's representative matters include:

- Counsel of record for successful petition for certiorari in the Supreme Court of the United States, resulting in favorable remand;
- Won a unanimous reversal from the Fourth Circuit on a jurisdictional issue of first

Stephen J. van Stempvoort — Miller Johnson

Practice Areas

- [Litigation](#)
- [Criminal](#)
- [Employment Discrimination](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Unfair Competition](#)
- [Employment Litigation](#)
- [Election Law](#)

Education

- J.D., William and Mary Law School, 2010
- B.A., Calvin College, 2004
- M.A., The Pennsylvania State University, 2007

Bar Admissions

- Michigan, 2015
- Pennsylvania, 2010

Court Admissions

- United States Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan



impression involving the Federal Arbitration Act;

- Obtained a full reversal from the Sixth Circuit of trial court's adverse ruling in an excessive-force civil-rights case;
- Won entitlement to charitable tax exemptions on behalf of religious educational organization;
- Won reversal of the trial court and an order directing entry of habeas relief for a criminal defendant on appeal in the Sixth Circuit when the government conceded error after our opening brief was filed;
- Obtained full dismissal of a federal appeal involving millions of dollars in damages;
- Secured a reversal of criminal forfeiture order from the Fourth Circuit;
- Won full dismissal on behalf of individual landowners of a municipality's claim for highway-by-user;
- Secured a \$1 million judgment plus attorneys' fees for an international corporation in an insurance priority dispute;
- Won full dismissal of claims against an insurer in multi-million-dollar insurance coverage lawsuit.

Steve maintains an active pro bono practice and also serves as the co-chair of Miller Johnson's pro bono committee. In the spirit of the First Amendment, Steve has represented clients from across the political and ideological spectrum, including undocumented immigrants, incarcerated prisoners, a domestic-violence shelter, an open-air preacher, a national non-profit, members of the clergy, and various individuals seeking to expunge criminal convictions or reinstate social privileges. Some of the appellate matters that



Steve has taken on pro bono include a Fourth Circuit appeal on behalf of a juvenile offender who pleaded guilty after being threatened with the death penalty and was sentenced to life in prison, as well as a Ninth Circuit appeal asserting a first-impression challenge to aspects of the statute-of-limitations regime applying to prisoner civil-rights lawsuits.

Steve was recognized as one of *Michigan Lawyers Weekly's* “Up & Coming Lawyers” for 2020.

Before joining Miller Johnson, Steve served as a judicial law clerk to the Hon. Richard Allen Griffin of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He also served as a judicial law clerk to the Hon. Glen E. Conrad of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia.

Steve earned his law degree from William and Mary Law School, where the faculty selected him on the basis of his professional promise as a recipient of the Lawrence W. l'Anson Award—the highest honor conferred on a graduating student. Among other pursuits, Steve previously taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Richmond School of Law.

