



VAISHALI S. RAO

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Chicago

Law School: UIC John Marshall Law School

Area of Practice: Regulatory & compliance, consumer law



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Vaishali Rao is blazing a difficult trail by developing and leading a regulatory and compliance practice at Hinshaw based on her prior successes in public service. She has earned many victories for her clients during her career specializing in consumer law. But one of her greatest wins? When her work helped homeowners and communities struggling during the 2008 foreclosure crisis.

As an Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Fraud Bureau of the Office of the Illinois Attorney General, Rao handled complex litigation involving student loans, debt collection and settlement, unsecured loan products, and financial crises cases. She was part of the legal team at the AG's office that helped remedy unfair or illegal lending practices during and after the foreclosure crisis.

Rao is considered a leader amongst attorneys general colleagues nationwide. She has led complex cases involving unfair and deceptive trade practices, and through her efforts, helped to secure significant funding for legal aid, housing counseling, mediation and other foreclosure relief efforts in Illinois.

Bob Glaves, Executive Director at the Chicago Bar Foundation, said that Rao played a critical role in these efforts, including her efforts in the National Foreclosure Settlement that resulted in more than \$20 million in funding for legal assistance in Illinois.

“I watched Vaishali take control of a complex situation and provide thoughtful guidance to her colleagues and superiors,” Glaves said. “I was impressed at how much the Attorney General and her senior staff valued Vaishali's input and participation.”

Ann Spillane, general counsel with the Office of the Illinois Governor, has long worked with Rao. She points to Rao's work in turning a First Amendment defense by Standard & Poor's on its head. She won an important victory on a motion to dismiss, allowing attorneys general across the country to utilize unfair and deceptive trade practice claims in future cases.

“Vaishali has confidently and successfully led teams in complex and ground-breaking consumer fraud investigations and lawsuits,” Spillane said. “Vaishali is a tireless advocate, trusted team member and natural leader.”

Since making the move to private practice, Rao has continued to notch big victories for her clients. Her understanding of the inner workings of state attorneys general offices has helped her clients reduce multi-million dollar exposure.

Bill Evans, General Counsel at Tomorrow Energy said “Vaishali is a strong advocate for doing what is right, while at the same time zealously protecting, defending and advocating for her client. She is not afraid to present the facts as she sees them and provide solutions and strategies.”

Rao applied her extensive understanding of consumer finance and lending regulations by encouraging a student loan lender to modernize the delivery of promissory note terms so borrowers could really understand what they were getting. Rao's public service background coupled with her ability to advise clients practically resulted in helping the company to develop industry-leading standards.

Rao is focusing her efforts on giving back to the legal profession by helping women and minority lawyers sustain profitable businesses. She has additionally been a busy member of the Chicago Bar Association's many committees. Rao was recently selected as a Fellow for Leadership Greater Chicago's Class of 2020.

Vaishali stands out as someone who will continue to make a difference in her community,” said Illinois State Senator Don Harmon. “From her time in public service, she has demonstrated that she puts the interests of others before herself. Even while representing clients in private practice, Vaishali does not lose sight of the big-picture.”