



AAtencio@hansonbridgett.com
(415) 995-5870

Hanson Bridgett LLP
1676 No. California Blvd., Suite 620
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Firm Leadership

Public Agency Litigation Practice
Leader
Pro Bono Committee, Member

Areas of Focus

- Government
- Municipal and Public Agency
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution
- Public Transit and Transportation
- Public Sector Litigation
- Class Actions



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Alexandra V. Atencio

Partner

Alexandra is an experienced litigator, providing litigation and advisory services to public agency clients throughout California. Alexandra is Chair of Hanson Bridgett's Public Sector Litigation Group. She is also serving an appointment to the League of California Cities Public Records Act Committee.

Alexandra represents public and private entities in matters ranging from class actions, land use, civil rights and tort defense cases involving Section 1983 claims, employment, public contracting, dangerous condition of public property, catastrophic injury, and constitutional law issues such as due process, equal protection, and the First Amendment. Alexandra is also experienced in advising public agency clients on the Government Claims Act, Brown Act and Public Records Act, and advocates for her clients before legislative and regulatory bodies. Alexandra has a proven track record of achieving successful results for her clients in a variety of creative and cost-effective ways. She takes a proactive approach and enjoys advising her clients on potential areas of liability and offering strategies to anticipate and avoid litigation. She zealously advocates for her clients, while finding practical solutions and best possible outcomes in a cost-efficient manner. When a dispute is unavoidable, she counsels clients in responding to incidents, conducting administrative hearings and handling Government Code claims. She represents clients in all phases of litigation, including alternative dispute resolution, writ proceedings, jury and court trials and appeals.

Representative Work

Public Policy. Obtained a defense verdict after trial in favor of a local public agency in a class action asserting the agency's toll collection and enforcement program violated the class's due process rights.

Public Policy. Defeated class certification in a putative class action against local public transportation agencies alleging that the agencies improperly collect and use personally identifiable information for purposes of collecting tolls.

Public Policy. Obtained a judgment in favor of a local public transportation agency in a putative class action alleging improper assessment of toll evasion penalties.

Wrongful termination. Won summary judgment in favor of a local public agency alleging whistleblower retaliation. The court found the agency had a legitimate, non-retaliatory basis for the termination.

Dangerous condition of public property. Won summary judgment in a challenge to the agency's design immunity for lack of a median barrier. The court found that technological advances do not strip the agency of design immunity where no dangerous condition exists.

Dangerous condition of public property. Won summary judgment in a case involving a bicycle accident on the agency's property. The court found the agency entitled to trail immunity.

False Claims. Won summary judgment in a qui tam action against a non-profit health care facility alleging violations of the False Claims Act.

Immigration Law. Secured a published Ninth Circuit victory on behalf of petitioner, a gay Nigerian client seeking asylum and protection under the Convention Against Torture in the United States.

Publications

“New California Law Expands Protections for Public Transit Workers,” co-author, *Mass Transit* (January 2026)

“Keeping Up With California Public Records Act Decisions,” co-author, Government Legal Alert (December 2023)

“California Supreme Court Clarifies Rules for Governments’ Failure to Warn of Dangerous Traffic Conditions Liability, Leaves Door Open for Defenses,” co-author, Government Legal Alert (May 2023)

“Pandemic-Era Extensions for Presenting Government Claims to Public Entity Defendants Expired on October 27, 2022,” co-author, Government Legal Alert (October 2022)

“California Court Reaffirms that Litigation Threat Letters Should be Treated as Claims Under the Government Claims Act,” co-author, *Government Legal Alert* (July 2022)

“County’s Exclusion Of Anti-Israel Bus Advertisement Did Not Violate 1st Amendment,” *Litigation & Dispute Resolution Alert* (April 2015)

“Public Entities Risk Losing Design Immunity Where They Fail to Present Evidence Of Discretionary Approval Of A Design,” *Public Agency Law Alert* (April 2014)

“New Ruling Affects Prelitigation Settlements of Wrongful Death Claims,” *Litigation & Dispute Resolution Alert* (January 2012) (April 2012 - opinion ordered depublished)

“Risks of Using Social Media to Solicit Clients,” *Litigation & Dispute Resolution Alert* (March 2012)

Presentations

“Personally Identifiable Information - Transit Agency Obligations & Risks,” co-presenter, APTA 2023 Legal Affairs Seminar (April 2023)

“A New Look at Design Immunity – Expanding Protection for Public Entities,” California Special Districts Association Conference (September 2017)

“Design Immunity – A Valuable Tool for Avoiding Dangerous Condition Claims,” Hanson Bridgett Public Agency Roundtable Series (August 2013)

Press

“9th Circ. Says BIA Must Rethink Gay Nigerian’s Torture Claim,” *Law360* (May 2022)

Professional Affiliations

California Special District Association

State Bar of California

Bar Association of San Francisco

Women in Transportation International

Education

J.D., *cum laude* University of San Francisco School of Law (2003)

B.A., *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa San Diego State University (1997)

Admissions and Courts

California

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Central District of California