HansonBridgett



Zahra Bocek

Associate

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Firm Leadership
Recruiting Committee, Member

Areas of Focus

- Appellate
- Government
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution
- Public Sector Litigation

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Zahra Bocek is an appellate litigator representing clients in state and federal appeals, writ proceedings, and post-judgment motions. Her practice centers on identifying the issues most likely to matter on appeal, developing clear appellate themes, and translating complex records into focused, persuasive briefs.

Before joining Hanson Bridgett, Zahra practiced at an appellate boutique, handling state and federal appellate matters. She began her legal career as a law clerk to Magistrate Judge Robert M. Illman of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, and during law school externed for Judge Illman, Justice Barbara J.R. Jones (Ret.) of the California Court of Appeal, and Justice Debra L. Stephens of the Washington Supreme Court.

Zahra's appellate practice grows out of a long-standing focus on advocacy. Before law school, she was an undefeated national and California state champion in collegiate debate. She went on to compete in the National Moot Court Competition and, through the UC Law SF Appellate Project, represented a pro bono asylum applicant before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Those experiences continue to shape how she frames legal issues, prepares for oral argument, and approaches written advocacy. She has also served as an Adjunct Professor of Law and Moot Court Alumni Coach at UC Law SF, teaching legal research, appellate brief-writing, oral advocacy, and moot court to first-year students.

Publications

“Filed on Time, Rejected in Error: A Clerk’s Mistake Cannot Defeat an Appeal,” co-author, Hanson Bridgett Appellate Legal Alert (September 2026)

“Filed by Midnight: Court of Appeal Invalidates Local Bar on E-Filing Notices of Appeal,” co-author, Hanson Bridgett Appellate Legal Alert (August 2026)

“The Lis Pendens Appeal Trap,” co-author, Hanson Bridgett Appellate Legal Alert (July 2026)

Presentations

“Basic Civil Appellate Practice in the California Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District,” co-speaker, Contra Costa County Bar Association MCLE Spectacular (September 2026)

“Civil Litigation Update - Recent Cases of Concern,” co-speaker, Contra Costa County Bar Association MCLE Spectacular (November 2025)

“Strategies for Working Up an Appeal,” co-speaker, Contra Costa County Bar Association MCLE (August 2025)

“Civil Litigation Update - Recent Cases of Concern,” co-speaker, Contra Costa County Bar Association 30th MCLE Spectacular (November 2024)

Published Decisions

X.K. v. M.C. (2025) 112 Cal.App.5th 1287, as modified (July 24, 2025) (Domestic violence restraining order)

Press

“Hanson Bridgett Celebrates Landmark Supreme Court Victory for Birthright Citizenship,” Hanson Bridgett News (July 2026)

“LatinoJustice PRLDEF Supports Fight in the Supreme Court to Protect Birthright Citizenship,” LatinoJustice (February 2026)

Honors & Awards

Wiley W. Manuel Award for Pro Bono Legal Services

Professional Affiliations

Chair of Appellate Law Section, Contra Costa Bar Association (2025-present)

UC Hastings College of Law Moot Court Team, Alumni Coach

Queen's Bench Bar Association

Bar Association of San Francisco

Contra Costa County Bar Association

Judicial Clerkships

Judicial Clerk and Extern for Judge Robert M. Illman, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

Judicial Extern for Justice Barbara J.R. Jones (Retired), California Court of Appeal, First District, Division 5

Judicial Extern for Justice Debra L. Stephens, Supreme Court of Washington

Academic Distinctions

David E. Snodgrass Award for Top Appellate Advocate of Class of 2021

National Moot Court Competition: Regional Champion, Best Brief, Best Oralist

Scribes American Association of Legal Writing Award

Hastings Appellate Project

Education

J.D., UC Law San Francisco (Formerly UC Hastings) (2021)

B.A., University of California, Berkeley (2016)

Admissions and Courts

California

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Supreme Court of the United States

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