



Geoffrey Belzer

Partner

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Geoffrey Belzer is an experienced and business-savvy litigator who has represented some of Wilson Elser's biggest clients in multiple jurisdictions throughout Illinois and Ohio. While Geoffrey concentrates on the defense of professional liability, cyber liability, medical malpractice, complex commercial claims, transportation and premises liability claims, he also has handled cargo securement and related claims involving cargo loss, product liability, real estate and medical malpractice claims.

During his 20 years of practice in the Ohio courts, Geoffrey has litigated a wide variety of claims, including more than 100 trucking claims (from the simplest to the most catastrophic and those involving complex legal issues) on behalf of drivers, their employers and brokers. Geoffrey also litigates personal injury claims throughout Ohio, and prides himself on obtaining results for his clients in the smallest Ohio counties as well as Ohio's metropolitan city centers through his wide knowledge and experience in the state. While Geoffrey is based in Chicago, he spends at least 50 percent of his professional time on Ohio matters and regularly appears in courts throughout the state.

Geoffrey has appeared throughout Illinois on matters ranging from personal injury claims to professional liability claims and banking matters.

In addition to litigation, Geoffrey has extensive experience defending attorneys, accountants and real estate professionals in malpractice cases and disciplinary proceedings. He frequently defends directors and officers of corporations and nonprofit entities, including condominium and homeowners' associations, against breach of fiduciary duty claims. His practice also encompasses the defense of claims arising from data security breaches and other cyber-based exposure, including claims against internet content providers (ICPs) arising from the use of tracking cookies and from content made available to the public via an ICP's website, as well as class action litigation arising from claimed data breaches. Geoffrey also has extensive experience in general business

Services

- Bankruptcy
- Cannabis Law
- Commercial Litigation
- Cybersecurity & Data Privacy
- Lawyers' Liability
- Specialty Professional Risks
- National Trial Team
- Professional Liability & Services

disputes relating to banking, real estate and debt collection.

Prior to law school, Geoffrey worked in the field of sports management, sales and marketing, including positions as general manager of the Canton-Akron Indians, the Class AA minor league affiliate of the Cleveland Indians, and as director of the Cleveland Indians Radio Network. Because of this experience, it is second nature for Geoffrey to view legal issues from a business person's perspective, with a focus on providing not only outstanding legal work product but also cost-effective claims resolution and responsive client service. He practiced with a large insurance defense firm in Ohio for seven years after law school, and joined Wilson Elser's Chicago office in 2007.

Education

- University of Akron School of Law (J.D., 2000)
- Northwestern University (B.S., 1987)

Bar Admissions

- Illinois
- Ohio

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin

Professional Affiliations

- American Bar Association

Representative Matters

Northbrook PLIC, LLC v. CVS Pharm., Inc., U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, 2012 (U.S. Dist. Lexis 21900, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 81089): Grant of summary judgment as to liability in commercial lease dispute.

Davis v. Avvo, Inc., U.S. District Court, Western District of Washington, 2012 (U.S. Dist. Lexis 43743): Dismissal of claim against attorney rating service with award of fees to

defendant under Washington anti-SLAPP law.

Johnson v. Niew, Illinois Second District Court of Appeals, 2012 (IL App (2d)111024-U): Dismissal of legal malpractice claim against financial services provider affirmed.

Moriarty v. Equisearch Servs., U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit (Fed. Appx. 64; 2011 U.S. App. Lexis 19992): Summary judgment on claim arising from insurance company's demutualization affirmed.

Ghilarducci v. Forrest, Illinois First District Court of Appeals, 2011 (Ill. App. Unpub. LEXIS 1600): Dismissal of legal malpractice claim on statute of limitations grounds affirmed.

Townsend v. Williger, Case No. 5:05-Cv-02540, U.S., District Court, Northern District of Ohio, 2006 (U.S. Dist. Lexis 99980): Summary judgment on conversion claim affirmed.

Robinson v. Allstate Ins. Co., No. 84666, Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County, 2004 (Ohio 7032; 2004 Ohio App. Lexis 6559): Dismissal on statute of limitations grounds affirmed.

Mominey v. Union Escrow Co., No. 82187, Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County, 2003 (Ohio 5933; 2003 Ohio App. Lexis 5275): Denial of class action certification affirmed in part and reversed in part.

Peretto v. Baron, No. 81796, No. 81809, Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County, 2003 (Ohio 3352; 2003 Ohio App. Lexis 3046): Summary judgment on trespass claims affirmed.

Edwards v. Lake Terrace Condo. Assn, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, 2011 (U.S. Dist. Lexis 43304): Dismissal of discrimination claim against condominium association.

Pa. Gen. Ins. Co. v. Park-Ohio Indus., Ohio Supreme Court, (126 Ohio St. 3d 98) (Ohio 2010): Reversal of insurance coverage dispute on issue of targeted tender. Obtained summary judgment from trial court.

Client Wins

O'Brien, Belzer & Bokeno Succeed in Affirmance of Summary Judgment in Multi-Claim Litigation in Ohio Court of Appeals

Edward O'Brien (Partner-Louisville, KY), Geoffrey Belzer (Partner-Chicago, IL), and Andrew-John Bokeno (Associate-Louisville, KY) recently succeeded in securing an affirmance of summary judgment in the Ohio Court of Appeals in a multi-claim civil lawsuit brought against the firm's client, a manufactured home community. Plaintiffs, who were tenants in the client's community, brought a civil action in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas alleging the community failed to render cosmetic repairs to the plaintiff's

home, breached certain state statutes, and misrepresented certain aspects of the community and manufactured homes to the plaintiffs. The complaint set forth multiple legal theories of liability, including breach of contract, fraud and misrepresentation, breach of R.C. 5321.04, and violations of the Ohio Consumer Sales Practices Act. After the trial court granted our motion for summary judgment on all the above theories, the plaintiffs appealed the decision to the Ohio Court of Appeals' Eighth Appellate District, which affirmed the trial court's order granting summary judgment on each and every claim asserted against the client, finding no genuine dispute of material fact and entitling the community to judgment as a matter of law. As such, the Court of Appeals disposed of all of the plaintiffs' causes of action against the firm's client.

Belzer Prevails in Breach of Contract Case after Grueling Three-Year Battle

Geoffrey Belzer (Partner-Chicago) obtained a defense verdict on behalf of a private client in a commercial matter in which a Chicago-area bank sought to recover \$1.5 million on loan guarantees and more than \$1.1 million in attorney fees spent in prosecuting claims of breach of contract, tortious interference, fraud and conspiracy. The defense verdict followed a three-day bench trial in the Cook County Circuit Court. In ruling for our client and an additional co-defendant, the judge relied on the evidence produced during trial, including the cross-examinations of the bank's president and loan officer, to determine that the bank did not meet its burden to establish that it had disposed of the collateral for the loan (primarily a bridal design company with significant consumer and industry brand-name recognition) in a commercially reasonable manner. The evidence at trial demonstrated that the bank had received an appraisal in excess of \$3.8 million for the business, did not demonstrate significant activity to attempt to sell the business, and ultimately sold it for \$775,000 or less than 20 percent of its appraised value.

Dismissal of Data Breach Class Action on Behalf of Radiology Facility and Archival Imaging System

Geoffrey A. Belzer (Partner-Chicago), Anjali C. Das (Partner-Chicago), Peter J. Larkin (Partner-White Plains) and Jennifer S. Stegmaier (Of Counsel-Chicago) obtained a data breach class action dismissal in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York on behalf of a radiology facility and archival imaging system that contained protected health information. About a year and a half after receiving notice of a breach, two patients filed a complaint against the firm's client and its IT service provider for failing to implement adequate cybersecurity measures, alleging multiple unauthorized individuals had accessed their information. Geoffrey, Anjali, Peter and Jennifer prevailed on their motion to dismiss when the court held that allegations of increased risk of future harm alone is not a cognizable injury. The court also rejected each of the plaintiffs' additional theories of injury based on time and money spent on theft and fraud monitoring, "benefit of the bargain" injury, intrusion upon seclusion and statutory violations. Plaintiff's counsel initially filed a purported class action designating another individual who was ultimately determined to never have been a patient of the radiology practice. Plaintiff's counsel dismissed that action after the team moved for dismissal, and counsel then instituted the parallel suit involving these two plaintiffs and the motion to dismiss follows.