



WWB Monthly Update

Legal Insights to Help You Make Confident Decisions

A Message from Our CEO

February is when the gym gets quiet again. New Year's resolutions fade, routines slip, and most people slide back into old habits. Not us.

This month, our team kept its focus on our goals while springing into action for our clients. February was a dynamic month in real estate — and our team moved with it. FinCEN's new federal reporting requirements take effect March 1st, raising the compliance stakes on every home sale in the country. Across Connecticut, aggressive county revaluations sent property tax bills soaring — so we went to work, fighting appeals ahead of the February 20th deadline.

For the first time in 3.5 years, mortgage rates dropped below 6% — opening doors for buyers and sellers who've been waiting on the sidelines. With spring around the corner, we expect an uptick in real estate financing and sales activity. We're ready to help our clients seize the moment.

Everything we're building — better technology, a growing team, a sharper firm — exists to serve our clients better. That's the mission. We stay focused on it while staying ready to move the moment opportunity or challenge arises.

Eyes on the horizon, feet on the ground. 2026 is just getting started.

Client Update



FinCEN Residential Real Estate Reporting Requirement

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) has finalized its **Residential Real Estate Rule**, which will take effect on **March 1, 2026**.

The new nationwide reporting requirement will require select real estate professionals, including attorneys, title agents, and escrow agents, to file a **detailed Real Estate Report Form** with FinCEN and maintain records in connection with reportable non-financed real estate transactions that close on or after March 1, 2026.

The Real Estate Report Form will require information regarding:

- The real property being transferred;
- The purchaser and seller;
- Any beneficial owners; and
- The source of funds used in the transaction.

The rule is intended to bring greater transparency to applicable **non-financed real estate transactions** involving specified trusts and legal entities and to reduce financial crime.

Contact Us to Understand Your Obligations Under FinCEN's New Residential Real Estate Reporting Rule →

Legal Insights from the WWB Team

From employment and family law to wills and consumer protections, this month's legal insights focus on helping you understand your rights and take action with confidence.



Understanding "Employment at Will" and Your Legal Protections as an Employee

- Tom Bucci, Esq.

- ◆ **"At-Will" Does Not Mean "No Rights":** While most Connecticut employees are at-will, employers are still legally prohibited from terminating employees for unlawful reasons, even without a contract in place.

- ◆ **Certain Terminations Are Always Illegal:** Firings based on discrimination, retaliation, protected leave, whistleblowing, wage complaints, or violations of public policy may be unlawful, regardless of at-will status.

- ◆ **Motive and Timing Matter:** Documentation, the employer's stated reason, and when the termination occurred can determine whether an at-will termination crosses the line into illegality.

[Know Your Rights as an Employee in an "Employment at Will" Relationship →](#)



When a Breach of Contract Becomes a CUTPA Claim

- James A. Lenes Esq.

- ◆ **Not every breach of contract qualifies as an unfair trade practice:** In Connecticut, a simple failure to perform a contract or negligent performance is usually not enough to support a CUTPA claim.

- ◆ **CUTPA claims require serious misconduct:** To elevate a breach of contract into a CUTPA violation, the conduct must involve intentional, reckless, unethical, or bad faith behavior that goes beyond ordinary business disputes.

- ◆ **Additional damages depend on the nature of the conduct:** When aggravating circumstances are present, a CUTPA claim may allow recovery of attorney's fees and punitive damages, making the stakes significantly higher for both sides.

[Learn When a Contract Dispute May Trigger a CUTPA Claim →](#)



What You Need to Know Before Starting a Family Law Case

- Mark Midden, Esq.

- ◆ **Family law extends well beyond divorce:** It includes custody disputes, child and spousal support, protective orders, and enforcement issues, often requiring court involvement even after a case seems resolved.
- ◆ **Custody arrangements are tailored to each family:** Family law addresses legal custody, physical custody, and parenting time, structured around each family's circumstances, often through detailed parenting or visitation plans that support children's stability and ongoing parent-child relationships.
- ◆ **Financial matters can be complex and far-reaching:** Cases may involve dividing assets, business interests, retirement accounts, and determining alimony, along with planning tools like prenuptial and postnuptial agreements.

Understand What to Expect
Before Starting a Family Law
Case →



Understand the Importance of a Last Will and Testament in Estate Planning

- Heidi McGee, Esq.

- ◆ **A Will is a foundational part of any estate plan:** Regardless of whether a trust is created, a Last Will and Testament serves as a legal roadmap for how individually owned assets should be distributed after death.
- ◆ **Not all assets are predictable or planned for:** Even if most assets are jointly owned or placed in a trust, after-acquired assets such as refunds, settlements, or legal claims arising after death may still become part of an estate and require direction.
- ◆ **Without a Will, state law controls who inherits:** If no Will is in place, assets are distributed under intestacy laws, which may not reflect personal wishes, charitable intentions, or preferred allocations among heirs.

Gain Clarity on the
Importance of a Last Will and
Testament in Estate Planning

→

WWB Wins

- **Zoning Victory for The Nest Schools**

Attorneys Robert B. Bellitto and Carolyn Lenoci secured a major win before the Shelton Planning & Zoning Commission, obtaining a special exception approval that clears the way for **a new Nest preschool location in Shelton**. The client, The Nest Schools — a national operator of 58 schools across 11 states — will open its fourth Connecticut location as a result. The client praised the team's quality of representation and collaborative approach throughout the process.

- **Property Tax Appeal Team Delivers Big**

Attorney Chuck Willinger led our Property Tax Appeal team to an outstanding month, **submitting multiple appeals on assessed properties totaling \$18,912,588**. Attorneys Mark Middlen, Kathy Macol, and Carolyn Lenoci provided exceptional support throughout — a true team effort with real impact for our clients.

- **Real Estate Team Closes Major Deal**

Attorney Bradd Robbins led the real estate team to a standout win this month, successfully completing a **\$16,000,000 commercial refinancing of a Fairfield County shopping center**. With strong support from Kate Cavallaro, the team delivered seamless execution on a complex, high-stakes transaction — a fantastic result for the client and the firm.

What Our Clients Say About Us

[READ OUR 5-STAR REVIEWS](#)

"I cannot say enough about Attorney Mark Middlen and his firm.

He represented me through a highly contested and lengthy divorce, where the opposing side was often unprofessional, disrespectful, and even attempted to tarnish his reputation with untruthful

"I've had the privilege of working with Willinger, Willinger & Bucci for over 8 years, and they continue to exceed every expectation.

From the very beginning of my career as a real estate agent, and now as the Broker/Owner of my own firm, they have been my go-to recommendation for

"I have been with LegalShield for many years which means that WWB has been my law firm for many years.

Heidi McGee handled one of my first issues many years ago. Since that time, I have had several issues arise. The first thing I do

allegations. Despite these challenges, Attorney Middlen never wavered—he demonstrated exceptional diligence, skill, and commitment to my case.

What impressed me most was his professionalism and composure. Even under pressure, he maintained his integrity and focused on securing the best possible outcome for me. His thoughtful strategy, tireless work ethic, and calm, steady presence gave me confidence throughout the entire process.

This is not just a lawyer who gets results—this is someone who fights with both intelligence and integrity.

I know this is only the beginning of an extended partnership, because I trust no other firm with the outcome of my life.

If you want a legal team that truly stands above the rest, I highly recommend Attorney Middlen and his firm."



Rich J.

clients. Even though I always provide multiple attorney options, my clients consistently choose WWB because of the outstanding service they deliver.

In particular, Attorneys Bradd Robbins and his paralegal Kate Cavallaro have been incredible partners. They go above and beyond to ensure every transaction runs smoothly, no matter how complex.

Their professionalism, responsiveness, and genuine care for clients make them stand out in this industry.

I can confidently say that this firm's dedication has been an essential part of my business success, and I highly recommend them to anyone in need of exceptional legal representation."



Deanah W.

when an issue arises, is ask for Heidi.

She is absolutely awesome. She gets results.

While I am glad I have not had legal issues recently, the down side is that I have not had an opportunity to work with Heidi recently.

Congratulations Heidi on your award."



Thomas H.

Ready to Move Forward? Don't let legal uncertainty hold you back.

Our team has the experience, the results, and the commitment to protect what matters most to you.

Let's talk about your next steps.

Contact us now at: 203-916-5164 or email us at info@wwblaw.com



Shelton:


1000 Bridgeport Avenue, Suite 501, Shelton, CT 06484

Bridgeport:

1875 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

Darien:

30 Old Kings Highway South, Darien, CT 06820

 203-916-5164

 info@wwblaw.com

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Martin Luther King Jr.

Willinger, Willinger & Bucci, PLLC



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