



# PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ATTORNEY RICHARD BERNSTEIN FIGHTS FOR OUR RIGHTS**

At 36 years old, Richard Bernstein, son of attorney Sam Bernstein, has a résumé that includes everything from pro-bono litigation to Iron Man triathlon athlete. He is passionate man of the law, a man for the people. “I really love being a lawyer and feel blessed every day to be practicing something that can bring real change to real people,” Bernstein says about the affinity he has for his profession. As the head of his family law firm’s public service division, Richard applies subsidies from the practice to cases that other lawyers shy away from.

“No other law firm will touch cases that involve so much injustice to people with disabilities and special needs while being so expensive and labor intensive,” he says regarding the nature of his business. The fervor and empathy inherent of the philanthropic law he practices can correlate with the tenacity it took Richard to get to this point in his career. With the aid of readers during his time at Northwestern, Bernstein “internalized and memorized” all his studies. And though it may have taken longer and called for more effort on his part, Bernstein had a clear goal in mind. “I knew I could make a difference as an attorney and change the lives of others,” he says.

It is his ingenuous approach that has led Bernstein to represent

and win cases, paving the way for landmark legislation and support for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in Detroit and across the nation. One notable case put him in front of the Detroit Department of Transportation in an effort to make the city’s mass transit ADA compliant. He won, putting Detroit on the map as a leader in equality for the disabled. From the ground to the air, more recently Richard has taken on a case involving Northwest and Delta airlines implementing provisions so that those companies meet ADA standards.

As of late, his already heavy desk has acquired a lawsuit involving a woman who’s been fired from her waitress job for being overweight. The case prompted Bernstein to ask “At what length does a woman need to go to retain employment? Physical appearance should not play a role in job retention. As an inquisitive advocate, I pose a possible rebuttal for the restaurant asking: Can’t they argue they have a certain image to uphold?” And without skipping a judicial beat, Bernstein cites Michigan’s Elliot Larson Act forbidding physical discrimination in the workplace.

It is clear Richard Bernstein’s impenetrable positive outlook, coupled with his deep love for law, allows him to take part in upholding civil rights here at home and across the country. “When you have a severe disability, you tend to live life with much more passion, and you have a better idea of what you can do to help others...it’s just easier to find your purpose,” Richard says. Detroit is fortunate one of its citizens, advocates, and business men has found his. 🏰 – Lindsey Shaw

[callsam.com](http://callsam.com)