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# Giving Back



## **On October 30, 2009, President Barack Obama entered the Diplomatic Reception Room in the White House to sign the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act of 2009 into law.**

Standing beside the President as he signed the bill was Jeanne White-Ginder, the mother of Ryan White, the courageous youth who, after contracting HIV through blood-based products used to treat his hemophilia, had become the nation's leading voice urging an end to discrimination against those with AIDS.

In signing the legislation, the President authorized a four-year extension of the Ryan White Program, the largest federal program specifically dedicated to providing HIV care and treatment. Since its creation in 1990, following Ryan's death earlier that year from an AIDS-related respiratory infection, the program has assisted heavily impacted metropolitan areas, states, and local community-based organizations across the United States. The Ryan White Program has provided life-saving medical care, medications, and support services to more than half a million people each year, with an emphasis on the uninsured and underinsured, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income families.

Arent Fox partners Hunter Carter and Jon Bouker represented the Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition – a national organization formed in the early 1990s to advocate on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS – and worked closely with Members of Congress, their staffs and administration officials, to help guide the bill through the US House of Representatives and Senate.

Upon President Obama signing the bill into law, Jon Bouker, who is co-manager of Arent Fox's government relations practice, reflected on the firm's role in helping secure passage of the legislation. "Just weeks after Ryan passed away in 1990, Sen. Ted Kennedy, who introduced the original Ryan White Care Act, spoke to his Senate colleagues as they prepared to vote on the legislation, 'This courageous young man, stricken with a terminal illness, first fought against unfounded fears and prejudice in his attempt to continue going to school with his peers. Then through his tireless efforts he sought to educate and explain the realities of his illness. Such courage for a young man. Such a mark he has left on his fellow man. Together, we learned a lot. It is, in my opinion, a very fitting tribute that this bill be dedicated to him.' In following Sen. Kennedy's lead and assisting CAEAR in advocating for this life-saving program that bears Ryan's name, Arent Fox is proud to have played a role in honoring Ryan White's legacy."

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