

Gilbert LLP

News

Cuba Releases Jailed American Alan Gross, *Legal Times*

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Released after five years in a Cuban prison, U.S. Agency for International Development contractor Alan Gross credited his wife Judy and lawyer Scott Gilbert for helping win his freedom.

Represented pro bono by Gilbert, the founding partner of 30-lawyer Gilbert LLP, Gross was jailed for "acts against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state" and sentenced to 15 years in prison. As a contractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development, Gross had been providing Internet access to the island's small Jewish community.

Gross, addressing reporters at the firm's Washington office, called Gilbert his "personal Moses" and thanked him as well as the partners, associates and staff at the firm for their "relentless and often intense effort."

The release of Gross comes as the Obama administration on Wednesday announced new steps to normalize relations with Cuba. "Today, the United States is taking historic steps to chart a new course in our relations with Cuba and to further engage and empower the Cuban people," the White House said in a statement this afternoon.

President Barack Obama said in a statement Wednesday afternoon:

"In the most significant changes in our policy in more than fifty years, we will end an outdated approach that, for decades, has failed to advance our interests, and instead we will begin to normalize relations between our two countries. Through these changes, we intend to create more opportunities for the American and Cuban people, and begin a new chapter among the nations of the Americas."

The Associated Press reported that Gross was released on humanitarian grounds at the request of the United States. In exchange, three Cubans held by the United States were released, part of the so-called "Cuban Five" who were convicted in 2001 in Miami on charges including conspiracy and failure to register as foreign agents in the United States.

An insurance-recovery litigator, Gilbert was brought into the case in 2011 by Williams & Connolly, which was representing Gross and his wife. Gilbert works frequently with lawyers from the firm on insurance matters, and initially, his role was to sue Development Alternatives, as well as the contractor's insurance company and the Agency for International Development in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia—work that was done on a special-fee basis.

In an interview last year, Gilbert said, "Of all the commitments I've made to clients in 35 years, I've yet to fail on one. This will not be the first." He continued, "It's true, I'm not a human rights lawyer. But my specialty is the resolution of complex, multiparty disputes, developing strategies and then implementing them effectively. ... This is effectively the same thing."

Associated People



[Scott D. Gilbert](#)

Gilbert made multiple trips to Cuba to meet with Gross in a small, windowless room with cinderblock walls. He said the 65-year old contractor, whose health was failing, spent 23 hours a day in a 10- by 12-foot cell with two other prisoners, and had lost 110 pounds.

This story was updated with comment from Gross and the White House.



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