

ELIZABETH FRANKLIN-*Best*

APPELLATE AND FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW

NATIONAL SPEAKER & MEDIA EXPERT GUIDE

Federal Criminal Defense & Prison Policy Experts

Our attorneys and advisors are available for media interviews, expert commentary, and speaking engagements.

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About the Firm

APPELLATE & FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW

Elizabeth Franklin-Best P.C. is a nationally recognized appellate and federal criminal defense law firm with offices in Mount Pleasant and Columbia, South Carolina. The firm exclusively represents clients in federal courts and agencies, handling complex post-conviction relief, sentencing advocacy, federal appeals, compassionate release, and Bureau of Prisons matters.

With over two decades of combined experience, our attorneys and advisors have been cited as authorities by major national media outlets on federal criminal defense, prison policy, and criminal justice reform. The firm's team brings a rare combination of legal expertise and firsthand knowledge of the federal criminal justice system, making them uniquely qualified to provide informed, authoritative commentary on the pressing criminal justice issues of our time.

Our experts are available for on-camera interviews, print and digital media commentary, podcast appearances, panel discussions, expert witness testimony, and keynote speaking engagements on the topics outlined in this guide.

The firm's practice encompasses the full range of federal criminal defense and post-conviction matters, including federal criminal appeals, 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motions, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 habeas corpus petitions, compassionate release under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(1)(A), presidential clemency petitions, Bureau of Prisons administrative remedies and disciplinary appeals, federal prison designation and placement advocacy, First Step Act time credit disputes, Residential Drug Abuse Program matters, early termination and modification of supervised release, sentencing mitigation, and federal cooperation assistance.

Elizabeth Franklin-Best P.C. is committed to providing individualized, compassionate representation to each client, ensuring that no stone goes unturned in the pursuit of justice. The firm's deep expertise in federal criminal law and Bureau of Prisons policy, combined with its track record of media engagement, makes it a trusted resource for journalists, producers, and editors seeking authoritative commentary on federal criminal justice matters.

Whether for a breaking story on federal sentencing policy, an in-depth investigative feature on Bureau of Prisons conditions, or expert commentary on emerging criminal justice legislation, Elizabeth Franklin-Best P.C. provides the insight, depth, and credibility that top-tier media outlets demand.

Areas of Expertise

TOPICS OUR EXPERTS COVER

Federal Criminal Appeals

Direct appeals, procedural strategy, circuit court practice, standards of review, preservation of error, and significant appellate rulings shaping federal criminal law.

Post-Conviction Relief

28 U.S.C. § 2255 motions, § 2241 habeas petitions, ineffective assistance of counsel claims, actual innocence, and evolving post-conviction jurisprudence.

Compassionate Release

18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(1)(A) motions, extraordinary and compelling reasons, BOP exhaustion requirements, judicial trends, and recent circuit developments.

Bureau of Prisons Policy

BOP designation and placement, facility conditions, healthcare access, administrative remedies, disciplinary procedures, and agency transparency and accountability.

First Step Act

Earned time credits, risk and needs assessments, RDAP, recidivism reduction programming, and the ongoing impact of the First Step Act on the federal system.

Federal Sentencing

U.S. Sentencing Guidelines application, mandatory minimums, sentencing mitigation strategy, departures and variances, and Sentencing Commission policy.

Clemency & Pardons

Presidential pardon and commutation petitions, clemency advocacy strategy, and the clemency process from application through Department of Justice review.

Federal Supervised Release

Early termination of supervised release, modification of conditions, revocation proceedings, and federal supervised release policy and practice.

Reentry & Halfway Houses

Federal reentry programming, Residential Reentry Centers, home confinement eligibility, and the transition from federal incarceration to community.

As Featured In

Our attorneys and advisors have been quoted and featured as experts by leading national and international media outlets on federal criminal justice issues, Bureau of Prisons policy, and criminal justice reform.

CNN

Associated Press

The Washington Post

Fox News

ABC News

USA Today

Bloomberg Law

The Guardian

The Hill

Vice News

Yahoo News

Huffington Post

Prison Legal News

NY Daily News

UPI

Criminal Legal News

Detroit Free Press

*...and dozens of additional local, national, and international
print, broadcast, and digital news outlets.*

Elizabeth Franklin-Best, Esq.



PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY

Elizabeth Franklin-Best is a nationally recognized federal criminal defense and appellate attorney with over 20 years of experience in high-stakes post-conviction advocacy. She graduated from the University of Wyoming with a JD and a Master's in Philosophy, and is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and all U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals.

Elizabeth is the author of *Reversing Your Criminal Conviction: Develop Your Winning Strategy* (2023) and a frequent speaker at legal conferences on appellate advocacy and post-conviction relief. She was recognized as the 2010 "Public Defender of the Year" by the South Carolina Public Defender Association and was named a 2026 Best Lawyer in Appellate Practice.

Elizabeth exclusively represents clients in federal courts and agencies, bringing extensive experience in complex legal advocacy and a deep commitment to justice for every client she serves.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Elizabeth's federal criminal practice encompasses federal criminal appeals, 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motions, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 habeas corpus petitions, compassionate release motions, clemency and pardon petitions, sentencing mitigation, supervised release proceedings, and U.S. Sentencing Guidelines application and objections. She oversees the firm's operations and advocates for clients before federal courts and in matters involving the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

AVAILABLE FOR COMMENTARY ON

Federal Criminal Appeals

Post-Conviction Relief

Compassionate Release

Habeas Corpus Litigation

Federal Sentencing Policy

Appellate Advocacy

Clemency & Pardons

Supervised Release

Bureau of Prisons Matters

Christopher Zoukis, JD, MBA



MANAGING DIRECTOR

Christopher Zoukis is a nationally recognized federal prison expert and the Managing Director at Elizabeth Franklin-Best P.C. He is the author of the Federal Criminal Defendant's Handbook (Middle Street Publishing, forthcoming 2026), The Habeas Citebook: Ineffective Assistance of Counsel (Prison Legal News Publishing, forthcoming 3rd Edition 2026), Directory of Federal Prisons (2020), Federal Prison Handbook (2017), Prison Education Guide (2017), and College for Convicts (2014).

While in law school at UC Davis, Mr. Zoukis served as Articles Editor of the UC Davis Law Review, a Trial Practice Honors Board member, and VP of the Criminal Law Association and Students Against Mass Incarceration. He was awarded the Witkin Award for Academic Excellence and the Reynoso Award for Academic Excellence.

He has contributed articles to the Huffington Post, New York Daily News, Prison Legal News, Criminal Legal News, and other media outlets.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Mr. Zoukis has been quoted by CNN, Fox News, ABC News, Associated Press, USA Today, The Washington Post, Bloomberg Law, The Guardian, The Hill, and Vice News, among many others. He focuses on federal prison policy matters, including designation, sentence computation, disciplinary issues, healthcare, First Step Act, Residential Drug Abuse Treatment Program, compassionate release, and reentry.

Mr. Zoukis has assisted hundreds of clients with federal prison preparation, administrative remedies and disciplinary appeals, in-prison advocacy, and reentry and release planning. He is one of the most widely quoted experts in the country on Bureau of Prisons policy and federal criminal justice reform.

AVAILABLE FOR COMMENTARY ON

Bureau of Prisons Policy

Federal Prison Conditions

First Step Act

RDAP & Prison Programming

Sentence Computation

Federal Prison Designation

Reentry & Halfway Houses

Clemency & Commutations

Compassionate Release

Mass Incarceration

Criminal Justice Reform

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Contact Our Experts

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