



# Maria Colsey Heard

Member

Washington, D.C.

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Maria has represented clients being sued or investigated by state attorneys general (AGs), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), licensing boards, and other government entities for almost 30 years. She understands the procedural, substantive, and reputational complexities unique to government investigations, and helps her clients navigate the terrain and preserve their rights. She partners with her clients to understand business goals so that she can craft a tailored strategy.

Your organization may face regulator inquiry in various ways, and Maria seeks creative solutions to mitigate risk and reach a favorable resolution. She has addressed regulator interest arising from consumer complaints, guided clients through the unique pre-litigation investigations that AGs and the FTC can conduct (including negotiating the scope of government requests for business documents and interviews), litigated on behalf of clients in administrative proceedings and state and federal courts, and crafted legislative and other public policy solutions to legal challenges.

No industry sector is immune from regulator interest. Maria has extensive experience in counseling organizations on consumer protection issues, including marketing, labels and packaging, sales, service contracts, customer service, and regulatory compliance. Examples of specific regulatory areas that Maria has addressed include state and local fees; hazardous waste, electronic waste, and other environmental issues; data privacy and breaches; business licensing and regulation; telemarketing; and unclaimed property. She represents clients across a wide variety of industry sectors, including pharmaceuticals, nutrition/dietary supplements, food and beverage, data management, consumer debt, consumer lending, technology and AI, telecommunications, hospitality, automotive, retail, grocery, security, and real estate. Her clients include Fortune 100 companies, local businesses, charities, nonprofit organizations, and trade associations.

Maria has successfully negotiated a number of class action product liability settlements, most significantly representing a major health care corporation in the historic national silicone gel breast implant litigation in the United States and Canada. She also has developed the administrative framework for national settlement programs and defended class settlements against attacks on appeal and collaterally.

Maria supports the professional advancement of women at Cozen O'Connor by serving on the Executive Board of the firm's Women's Initiative and leading Women's Initiative mentoring efforts.

## Experience

Won a motion to dismiss in a case brought under the Illinois False Claims Act in which plaintiffs alleged that the client violated the law by causing authorized retailers of certain phone devices to fail to collect and pay to the State Department of Revenue an Illinois-specific sales tax on a charge for setting up the devices at the time of purchase.

Represents a Fortune 500 company in an ongoing high-profile multistate AG and FTC data breach investigation.

## Practice Areas

- State Attorneys General
- Antitrust & Competition
- Government & Regulatory
- Privacy Litigation – Emerging Trends

## Industry Sectors

- Food & Beverage

## Education

- George Washington University Law School, J.D., *with honors*, 1993
- La Salle University, B.A., *maxima cum laude*, 1990

## Bar Admissions

- District of Columbia
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania

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Represents a global property investment company in connection with state rental property laws.

Represents a group of companies in the property management industry in a regulatory dispute involving hazardous and solid waste disposal.

Represents a Fortune 500 telecommunications company in connection with multiple State AG civil investigations.

Represents a hospitality company in a multistate AG investigation and FTC inquiry.

Represents a food and beverage company in a state licensing investigation and administrative proceedings.

Represented a cooperative in connection with a data security matter.

Represented a Fortune 500 company in connection with multiple State AGs unclaimed property demands, negotiating a global resolution.

Represented a leading data services provider in connection with resolving a data privacy investigation.

Represented a major automotive manufacturer in State AG litigation centered on airbag recalls in New Mexico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.

Successfully represented a health care services company in connection with state business licensing issues.

Successfully represented a major pharmaceutical manufacturer in a federal antitrust lawsuit regarding pricing of prescription drugs.

Successfully represented major cable networks in First Amendment litigation against multiple states to strike down state taxes on pay-per-view boxing programs.

Represented a Fortune 100 company in antitrust litigation regarding the sale and marketing of printing systems and in connection with developing a global strategy to address claims related to lead-based paint, including State AG litigation, and to implement impactful, proactive solutions to childhood lead poisoning.

Represented a synthetic stucco manufacturer in appeals and collateral attacks relating to a challenge to a nationwide settlement.

Represented the State of North Carolina in federal litigation with respect to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and the State of Kansas in federal litigation to defend its violent sexual predator statute.

Represented Baxter International Inc. and Baxter Healthcare Corporation in the historic silicone gel breast implant settlement in the United States, in similar settlements in Canadian provinces, and in structuring and implementing a nationwide Hepatitis C class action settlement.