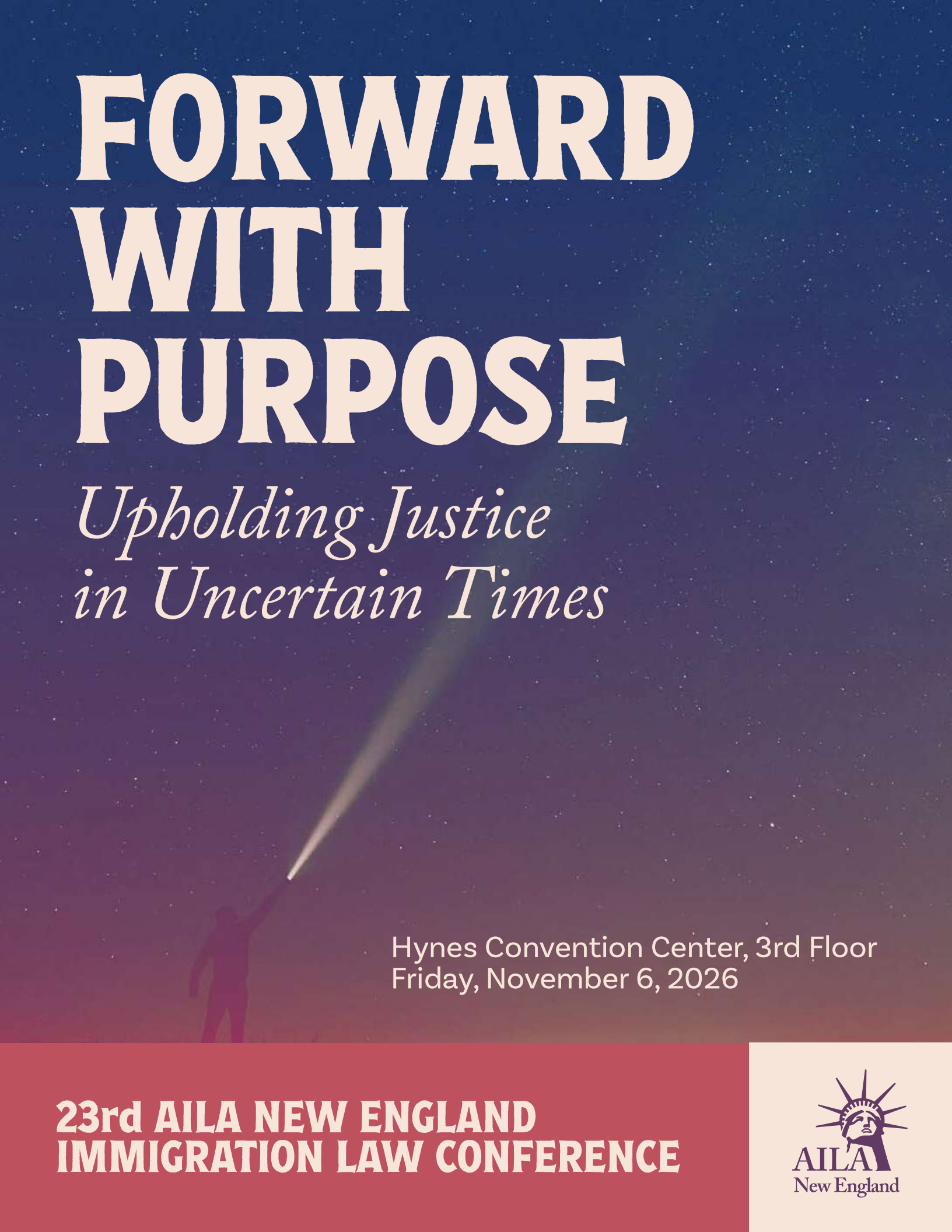
FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

Upholding Justice in Uncertain Times



Hynes Convention Center, 3rd Floor
Friday, November 6, 2026

23rd AILA NEW ENGLAND IMMIGRATION LAW CONFERENCE

AILA New England

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the 23rd Annual AILA NE Immigration Law Conference. This year, more than ever, we are excited to bring together our AILA's talented community of practitioners, advocates, colleagues, and friends under the theme Forward with Purpose: Upholding Justice in Uncertain Times. There is still no substitute for being together. As members of AILA and the broader immigration legal community, we know the value of sharing physical space to learn from one another, build our knowledge, and strengthen the bonds that sustain us in this demanding profession.

This event is more than a conference. It is a call to come together united by a shared mission: to move forward with purpose, strengthen our commitment to justice, and support one another as we navigate the challenges and opportunities facing our profession and the communities we serve.

Our nation is at a critical crossroads. Over the past year, sweeping policy changes, enforcement-driven priorities, and ongoing legal challenges have reshaped the landscape for our clients and tested our role as attorneys and advocates. That urgency is reflected in this year's program, which features thought leaders from AILA National, the American Immigration Council, and the National Immigration Litigation Alliance, along with distinguished speakers from across the country. Together, we will explore essential updates on substantive law, litigation strategies, agency developments, and the future of immigration practice.

We will also make time for technology, wellness, and resilience, because sustaining ourselves and our practices matter in a rapidly evolving legal landscape. This past year has asked a great deal of our profession. And yet, we have shown up for our clients, for each other, and for the communities we serve. This conference celebrates that resilience and invites us to care for ourselves as fiercely as we advocate for others.



We are deeply grateful to everyone who made this conference possible: our dedicated Conference Committee organizers; our inspiring speakers and panelists; our generous sponsors, exhibitors, graphic design and photography vendors; and all of you, for being here.

Whether you are new to the field or a seasoned advocate, we hope this conference offers connection, inspiration, and the tools to carry the critical work ahead. Together, we move forward with purpose. Together, we ensure that our clients' voices are heard, our values are protected, and our profession continues to thrive.

Tania Martinez, AILA Chapter Chair
Gomez and Martinez, LLC

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Marcelo Gomes da Silva came to the United States from Brazil as a young child in 2013 and grew up in Milford, Massachusetts, the only home he has ever really known. At Milford High School he took honors classes, played on the boys' volleyball team, served as a coaching assistant for the girls' team, and played drums in the school band. Outside school, he played music at his local church.

On May 31, 2025, Marcelo was driving his father's car to volleyball practice when Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents pulled him over. ICE was looking for his father. Instead, they arrested Marcelo, an 18-year-old with no criminal record. He was supposed to play with the band at his school's graduation the next morning. Instead, he spent six days in a basement holding room at ICE's Burlington field office, sleeping on a concrete floor in a cell shared with dozens of adult men, with little food and no time outdoors. While he was there, he shared what food he had and helped fellow detainees by translating their documents.



His arrest drew national attention. Classmates walked out of school, hundreds of people rallied at Milford Town Hall and outside the courthouse, and Governor Maura Healey called for his release. On June 5, 2025, an immigration judge granted him bond.

Walking out of detention, Marcelo made a promise to the men he left behind: "If I'm the only one that leaves that place, I've lost." He has kept that promise, becoming a voice for immigrants detained without criminal records. He met with Governor Healey to describe conditions inside the facility. In February 2026 he attended the State of the Union as the guest of Congressman Seth Moulton.

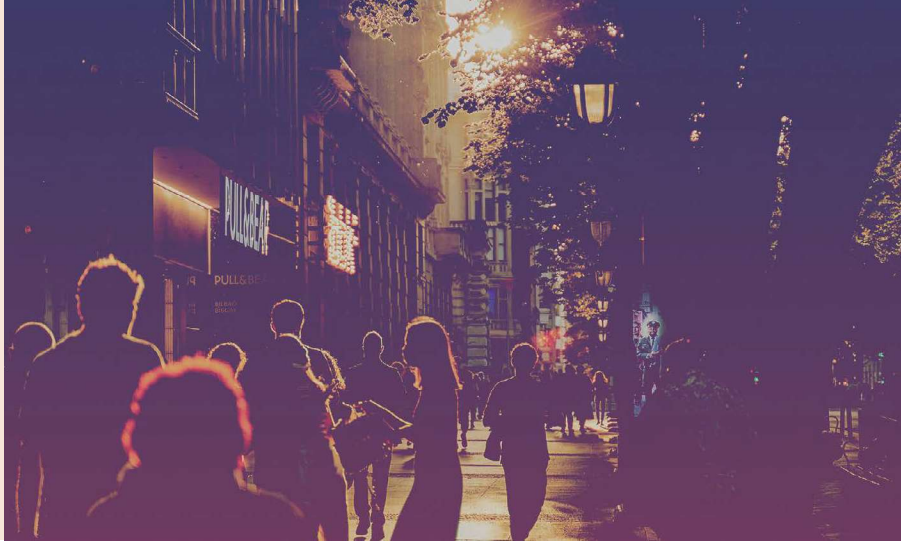
On May 31, 2026, exactly one year after his arrest, Marcelo graduated from Milford High School to cheers from his community. He now attends Providence College on a full scholarship, studying political science. He continues to fight his own removal case while advocating for others.

Marcelo Gomes da Silva, Keynote Speaker
23rd Annual AILA New England Immigration Law Conference

EVENT SCHEDULE

Time	Location	Event
7:30 am – ongoing	Hallway	Registration Check-In
8:00 – 9:00 am	302	**ETHICS PANEL:** Screened by Machine, Decided by Human? Ethics in the Age of AI Immigration Screening
9:00 – 9:15 am	Exhibitor Rm.	Networking & Exhibitor Break
9:15 – 9:45 am	302	Chapter Chair and Keynote Speaker
9:45 – 10:00 am	Exhibitor Rm.	Networking & Exhibitor Break
10:00 – 11:15 am	302	Hot Topics & Agency Practice
11:15 – 11:30 am	Exhibitor Rm.	Networking & Exhibitor Break
11:30 am – 12:35 pm	302	**EMPLOYMENT TRACK:** Compliance Under Pressure: Audits, Layoffs, NTA
	313	**REMOVAL TRACK:** Navigating Asylum in the Modern Immigration Court
	308	**WORKSHOP TRACK:** PERM: How Far Can We Push It When Everything Isn't "Matchy Matchy"
12:35 – 1:30 pm	Exhibitor Rm.	Lunch
1:30 – 2:35 pm	302	**EMPLOYMENT TRACK:** Navigating Uncertainty: A Humanitarian Primer for Business Practitioners
	313	**REMOVAL TRACK:** Adjustment of Status and Waivers in Removal Proceedings
	308	**WORKSHOP TRACK:** Habeas Corpus + Bond
2:35 – 2:50 pm	Exhibitor Rm.	Networking & Exhibitor Break
2:50 – 3:55 pm	302	**EMPLOYMENT TRACK:** From F-1 to Founder: Nonimmigrant Options for the Entrepreneur
	313	**REMOVAL TRACK:** Case Law Roundup with Tips and Strategies
	308	**WORKSHOP TRACK:** Sustaining the Advocate: Boundaries, Client Communication, and Lawyer Well-Being
3:55 – 4:10 pm	Exhibitor Rm.	Networking & Exhibitor Break
4:10 – 5:15 pm	302	**PLENARY PANEL:** Smart Growth, Strong Brand: Managing and Marketing the Modern Immigration Practice
5:15 – 7:00 pm	Exhibitor Rm.	Reception

MORNING GENERAL SESSIONS



ETHICS PANEL:

Screened by Machine, Decided by Human? Ethics in the Age of AI Immigration Screening

8:00–9:00 AM · Room 302 · CLE: Ethics

Emily Amara Gordon, Discussion Leader; Mike Turansick; James Chesser

Immigration screening increasingly blends automated vetting, biometric surveillance, and human review. DHS's public AI materials now describe USCIS, CBP, and ICE use cases ranging from continuous immigration vetting, rule-based screening, and document translation to traveler identity verification using facial recognition, investigative facial recognition tools, and newer generative AI.

Panelists will examine how these systems affect benefits adjudications, enforcement consequences, and client counseling, and what that means for lawyers' duties of competence, confidentiality, communication, diligence, candor, and supervision. They also will discuss how to advise clients when AI-assisted vetting, data exchange across agencies, and USCIS's expanded law enforcement authorities may shape a case long before the attorney sees the full picture.

Topics include:

- How USCIS, CBP, and ICE are actually using AI today through continuous vetting, automated screening, document translation, facial recognition, and newer generative AI tools
- Data sharing among USCIS, ICE, CBP, and other DHS or non-DHS systems, and how automated checks, identity tools, and shared databases can shape vetting and enforcement
- Counseling clients on biometrics, digital evidence, social media, and other information that may surface through automated vetting and identity management systems
- USCIS's expanded law enforcement authorities and what that shift means for ethical counseling, informed decision-making, and risk assessment
- Building the record when AI-assisted translations, identity matches, or fraud indicators appear unreliable, incomplete, or misunderstood

Chapter Chair and Keynote Speaker

9:15–9:45 AM · Room 302

Chapter Chair - Tania Martinez, Gomez and Martinez, LLC
Keynote Speaker - Marcelo Gomes da Silva

Hot Topics & Agency Practice

10:00–11:15 AM · Room 302

Tania Martinez, Discussion Leader; Alexis Axelrad; Trina Realmuto; Jeff Joseph; Nayna Gupta

Hear updates from national figures on policy trends, legislation, litigation, and more!



MORNING GENERAL SESSIONS

EMPLOYMENT TRACK



PANEL 1:

Compliance Under Pressure: Audits, Layoffs, NTA

11:30 AM–12:35 PM · Room 302

Katie Minervino, Discussion Leader; Kim Robidoux; Mike Nowlan; Kevin Mine

As employers face increased scrutiny around hiring, reverification, and workforce changes, practitioners must be ready to guide clients through I-9 strategies, the immigration implications of hiring laid-off workers, and the complications that can arise when layoffs intersect with NTAs and other enforcement concerns. Panelists also will address practical approaches for advising employers when foreign national employees seek accommodations or flexibility during layoffs, restructurings, and related workforce disruptions.

Topics include:

- Preparing for I-9 compliance: internal audits, corrections, recordkeeping, and training
- Considerations when hiring laid-off workers, including NTA risks, timing, and portability
- Handling foreign national requests for accommodations in layoff and furlough events

PANEL 2:

Navigating Uncertainty: A Humanitarian Primer for Business Practitioners

1:30–2:35 PM · Room 302

Lynda Hagerty, Discussion Leader; Jeannie Kain; Mary Kramer; Bea Ballerini

Description on next page

PANEL 2:
Navigating Uncertainty: A Humanitarian Primer for Business Practitioners

Employers increasingly call business immigration attorneys to advise workers whose employment authorization depends on humanitarian programs that are temporary, litigated, or otherwise unstable. This session will equip practitioners with a practical overview of precarious statuses and the employment issues that arise when those protections are narrowed, extended, or terminated. Panelists also will examine strategies for moving affected employees into more durable nonimmigrant options where possible, and how employers can structure support models that are both compliant and humane.

Topics include:

- Latest updates on precarious statuses, including humanitarian parole, TPS, DACA, DED, and asylum-based work authorization
- Employment impact of efforts to terminate or restrict humanitarian programs
- Activating an employment-based NIV from a precarious status, including timing, travel, and status-continuity concerns
- Spotting work authorization gaps and related employee-relations risks before they become crises
- How employers structure immigration support models to best assist employees in precarious statuses

PANEL 3:
From F-1 to Founder: Nonimmigrant Options for the Entrepreneur

2:50–3:55 PM · Room 302

Robin O'Donoghue, Discussion Leader; Joe Gloski; Vince Lau

Not every entrepreneur fits neatly into the traditional employer-sponsored model. As more founders launch businesses while in student status or seek to build companies, practitioners must balance creative planning with close attention to status limitations and compliance risks. Panelists will explore viable nonimmigrant options for entrepreneurs, with a focus on the limits of F-1 activity, E-1 and E-2 strategies for founders, and the evolving landscape for H-1B beneficiary-owners.

Topics include:

- Limits of F-1 status on activity, including passive ownership, active management, and work authorization issues
- E-1/E-2 visa options for founders
- H-1B beneficiary-owner cases: control, specialty occupation, and documentary strategies
- Structuring ownership and governance documents, and potential challenges

REMOVAL TRACK



PANEL 1:

Navigating Asylum in the Modern Immigration Court

11:30 AM–12:35 PM · Room 313

Sarah Allar, Discussion Leader; Jill Seeber; Maureen O'Sullivan; Jenny Beverly (former Immigration Judge)

This expert-level panel dissects the evolving complexities of defensive and referred asylum claims. Attendees will gain tactical strategies to defend against motions to pretermit and navigate the increasingly narrow window for defining a particular social group. Participants will also learn how to master client representation and strategically present experts and evidence to build a winning record at the merits hearing and for a successful appeal.

Topics include:

- What makes a "good" asylum case
- Case law updates affecting those seeking asylum, withholding of removal, and CAT relief
- Avoiding pretermission under the ACAs and Matter of H-A-A-V-
- Effectively presenting witnesses, experts, and evidence

INFORMATION:

Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

See page 16 for more information.

AILA New England will seek CLE accreditation where feasible and will provide accreditation information as it becomes available. Because CLE requirements differ by jurisdiction, AILA New England cannot guarantee that all sessions will qualify for credit in every state. Attendees are solely responsible for determining eligibility for CLE credit in their jurisdiction and for completing any required reporting or application processes.

PANEL 2:

Adjustment of Status and Waivers in Removal Proceedings

1:30–2:35 PM · Room 313

David Spitzer, Discussion Leader; Ron Abramson; Cheryl David; Annelise Araujo

This panel will focus on how to manage a variety of scenarios for respondents in removal proceedings, with a focus on how to apply for and win adjustment of status and waiver cases.

Understanding and navigating the constant changes in BIA case law, filing fees, and procedures at EOIR is more difficult now than ever. This panel of experts will provide practical advice on how to manage cases before the immigration courts in order to achieve relief from removal.

Topics include:

- Eligibility for adjustment and waivers: the ever-changing landscape
- How to prepare and file applications with EOIR
- INA § 237(a)(1)(H) waiver: case law and the application process
- Re-adjustment in proceedings with waivers
- Continuances for applications pending with USCIS, and other strategies

PANEL 3:

Case Law Roundup with Tips and Strategies

2:50–3:55 PM · Room 313

Branden Ladebush, Discussion Leader; Greg Romanovsky; David Isaacson; Ragini Shah

This panel will provide a comprehensive overview of the most impactful circuit and BIA decisions from 2025 to the present. Panelists will explore effective strategies for managing evolving case law while representing clients in removal proceedings. Panelists will also emphasize critical techniques for building a robust administrative record to ensure cases are fully prepared for federal court appeals.

Topics include:

- Circuit cases from 2025 to now, with a focus on the First Circuit
- BIA cases from 2025 to now
- Managing the changing case law for clients in removal proceedings
- Making the record: getting cases ready for appeal to federal court

WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP 1:

PERM: How Far Can We Push It When Everything Isn't "Matchy Matchy"

11:30 AM–12:35 PM · Room 308

Mi-Rang Yoon, Discussion Leader; Sarah Peterson; Bob White; Miki Matrician

Ideally, the job description, education, and experience and skills requirements would match exactly across Form ETA-9141, experience documents, recruitment, and Form ETA-9089. In practice, however, practitioners are often confronted with records that are less than perfectly aligned. In this practical session, panelists will explore where mismatches create fatal flaws, where there may be room to maneuver, and how to assess risk before deciding whether to move forward, correct course, or start over.

Topics include:

- When experience letters do not cover all PERM requirements, can other evidence fill the gaps?
- When recruitment does not match the prevailing wage request, what are the risk areas, and is the recruitment still usable?
- When Form ETA-9089 does not match the recruitment, how do you decide when to re-recruit?
- Distinguishing technical defects from substantive problems that may trigger audit, denial, or supervised recruitment

WORKSHOP 2:

Habeas Corpus + Bond

1:30–2:35 PM · Room 308

Max Brooks, Discussion Leader; Christy Rodrigues; Dan McFadden; Jesse Bless

This workshop provides a focused look at navigating habeas corpus petitions and bond proceedings for noncitizens in immigration detention. Participants will learn strategies from experts for challenging unlawful arrests, detentions, and substantive bond denials in federal district court to ensure judicial oversight of detention decisions. The session also offers practical guidance on developing a strong bond record to effectively litigate for a client's release from custody.

WORKSHOP 3:

Sustaining the Advocate: Boundaries, Client Communication, and Lawyer Well-Being

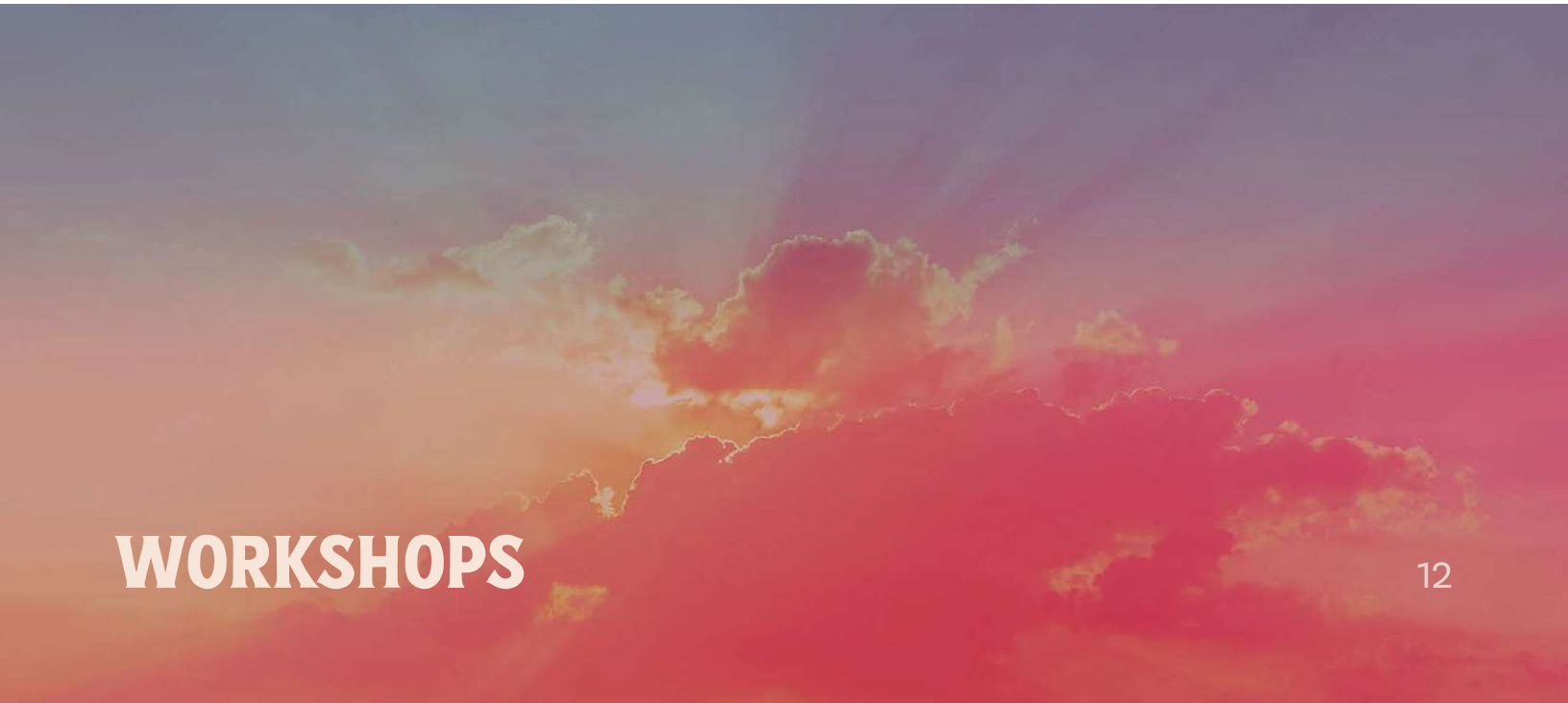
2:50–3:55 PM · Room 308 · CLE: Wellness

Michelle Shepard, Discussion Leader; Julio Cortes del Olmo; Brittany Faith; Lynn Calder

Immigration lawyers carry the emotional burden of urgent deadlines, high-stakes cases, and an uncertain legal landscape. Over time, that pressure can take a toll not only on personal well-being, but also on communication, judgment, and long-term sustainability in practice. In this wellness session, panelists will discuss how attorneys can better sustain themselves while continuing to serve clients with empathy and professionalism. They also will explore strategies for managing client expectations, setting healthy boundaries, navigating cross-cultural communication, and identifying supportive resources.

Topics include:

- Strategies for managing client expectations in high-stakes cases
- Setting healthy boundaries around communication, availability, urgency, and scope of representation
- Recognizing stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout in yourself and your team, and knowing when to seek help
- Using a DEI lens to enhance client communication and set expectations: how culture, language, and different experiences can shape trust and communication styles
- Finding support through the AILA community, AILA's Practice and Professionalism Center, Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers in Massachusetts, and similar organizations in other states, including ethics, practice-management, and confidential well-being resources





PLENARY PANEL

Smart Growth, Strong Brand: Managing and Marketing the Modern Immigration Practice

4:10–5:15 PM · Room 302

Robin Nice; Michelle Saenz Rodriguez; Vicki Morte; Flavia Santos Lloyd

Running an immigration practice takes more than legal knowledge. Whether you are launching a solo shop, managing a growing small firm, or leading an established practice, long-term success depends on smart systems, a clear brand, and a sustainable approach. In this practical session, panelists will share candid lessons from building and managing small immigration practices, including what worked, what did not, and what they wish they had known sooner. They also will discuss how to define your market, attract the right clients, leverage technology and AI thoughtfully, and avoid common mistakes in operations, marketing, and firm management.

Topics include:

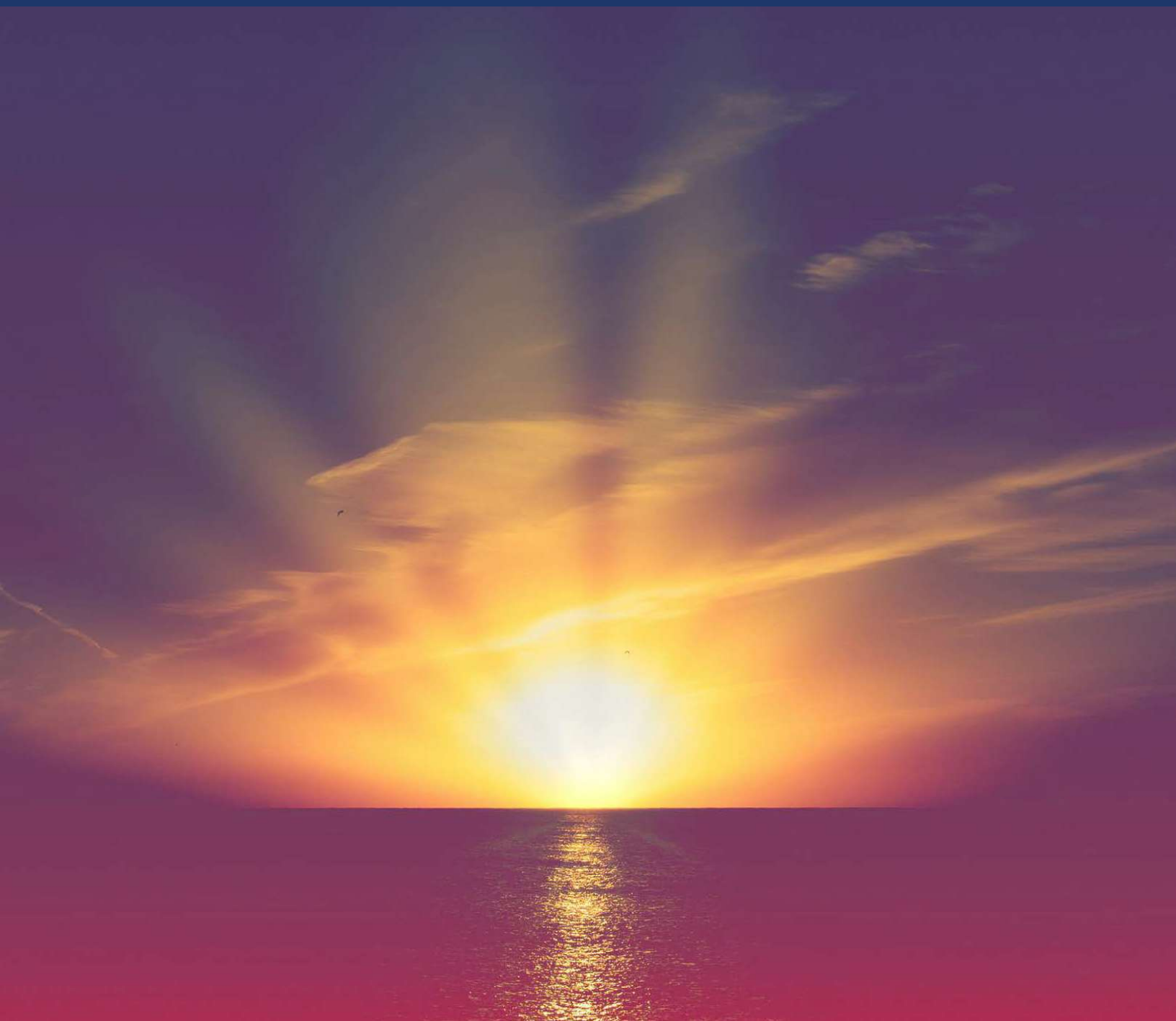
- Leveraging technology for building systems and workflows
- Using social media to brand and market your practice
- Deciding which cases to take on, which ones to decline, and how to add new practice areas

Reception

5:15–7:00 PM · Exhibitor Room



PANEL HANDOUTS AND POWERPOINT SLIDES CAN BE FOUND ON THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE.



ASKING QUESTIONS DURING THE CONFERENCE

Have a question for the panelists?

Asking a question during a session is easy! Use the simple online submission form or handwrite your question and submit it to a volunteer located in the back of the room.

For all **Plenary and Removal Sessions** in room 302, please visit: https://forms.gle/rBGHXxQvFyKG5REA8

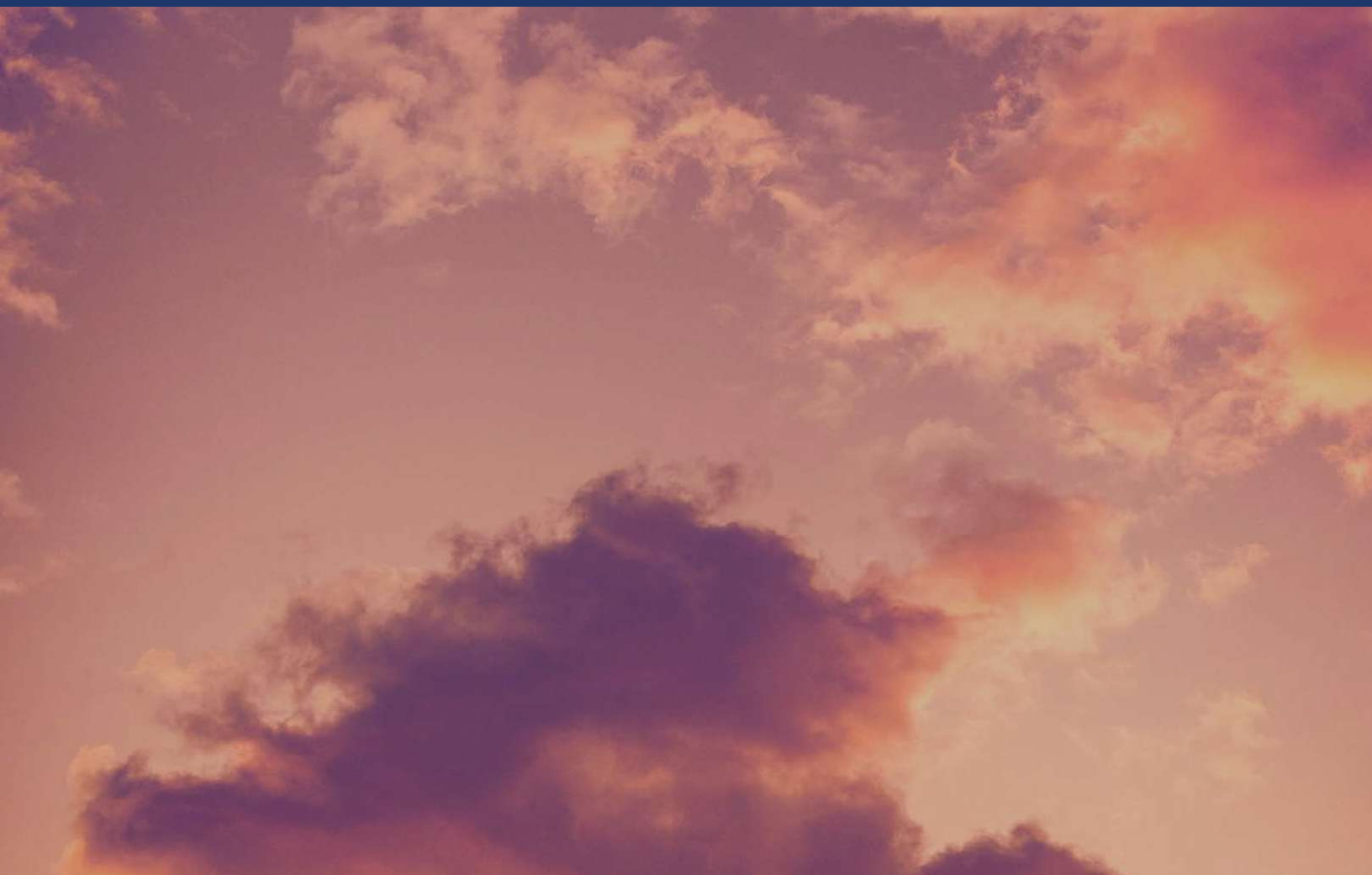
Or scan the QR code:

For all **Employment Sessions** in room 313, please visit: https://forms.gle/HaskXYG5QUM63hRg8

Or scan the QR code:

For all **Workshop Sessions** in room 308, please visit: https://forms.gle/AAgUhMUWkt8vX2zw5

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CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (CLE)

AILA New England Conference – CLE Information Sheet

AILA New England is pleased to offer CLE for conference attendees. The program is approved for CLE credit in Vermont and Maine and attendees may seek up to 6.5 general credits and 1 ethics credit.

Those reporting CLE in other states may seek credit either by individual application following the conference, or under "approved jurisdiction" policies established by the respective governing board.

All attendees seeking CLE credit must complete an Attendance Certification form and return to Rebecca Leavitt at the end of the conference, or by email at RLeavitt@Fragomen.com by November 16, 2026 to ensure attendance is accurately reported.

Certificates of Attendance are available on the Conference website. Please retain your Certificate of Attendance and report your CLE activity to the respective board.

Attendance for Maine attorneys will be provided to the Board of Overseers of the Bar within one (1) month following the conference. Please ensure that your Attendance Certification is returned by November 16th so that your attendance is reported.