

Meuti and Nasrallah File Petition for Writ of Certiorari in Supreme Court

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Benesch attorneys Michael Meuti and Nathan Nasrallah filed a petition for a writ of certiorari in the Supreme Court of the United States on August 13, 2020 in *Isaac Hobbs v. United States*, a pro bono case in which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit appointed Benesch as counsel.

The *Hobbs* Petition raises an issue of great importance for criminal defendants everywhere, especially indigent defendants who may not have the means or opportunity to fully understand their due-process rights. The specific legal question is whether a guilty plea is constitutionally valid if the government fails to inform a defendant of all essential elements of the crime alleged.

A federal statute prohibits various people, including people with prior felony convictions, from possessing firearms. A recent Supreme Court opinion held that an essential element of that statute is that the defendant knew that he belonged to such a category. In *Hobbs's* case, the government failed to inform *Hobbs* of that essential element in the indictment, plea agreement, or anywhere else in the record, but the Sixth Circuit nonetheless upheld *Hobbs's* guilty plea.

The petition has attracted attention from a nationally recognized Supreme Court litigator. Generally, the U.S. Solicitor General allows certiorari petitions to pass without response. In this case, the Solicitor General's Office has sought additional time to file a response, underscoring the importance of the issues raised.

Benesch's Appellate Litigation Team buttresses the firm's strong litigation practice and extensive subject-matter expertise. The team protects our litigators' hard-fought victories and helps our clients correct bad decisions by trial courts, often taking over for other firms. In pro bono cases, the team protects the rights of indigent defendants and looks for cases to help combat systemic injustices.

Michael Meuti, a former Sixth Circuit law clerk and Ohio Deputy Solicitor, leads the firm's Appellate Litigation Team and draws on his extensive experience to home in on the issues that persuade judges. Nate Nasrallah is a member of this team, as well as a former federal district court law clerk and Sixth Circuit extern.