

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Kay Anderle
Managing Partner

Address: 18300 Von Karman Ave., Suite 930
Irvine, California 92612-1057
Ph. 949.476.8700
Fax 949.476.0900
kanderle@kelleranderle.com
www.kelleranderle.com

MassMutual Class Action and Costa Mesa Sober Living Operators Victories Named To “Top Defense Verdicts” of 2018

IRVINE, CA, MARCH 5, 2019 --- Two of Keller/Anderle's jury trial victories in 2018 were selected to the *Daily Journal's* list of the prestigious top 20 “Top Defense Verdicts of 2018.” The *Daily Journal* describes the list as “the largest and most significant verdicts in California in 2018.”

In *Yellowstone Women's First Step House, Inc., et al. v. City of Costa Mesa*, Keller/Anderle LLP secured a complete jury victory for the City of Costa Mesa in a federal lawsuit challenging its group home ordinance. Two sober living home operators and an industry trade group brought the suit in the Central District of California in 2014, arguing that any regulation, no matter how favorable to the disabled, was discriminatory. Other cities had lost lawsuits challenging their own ordinances, settled them, or had been intimidated into not passing ordinances at all. [The Costa Mesa City Council hired Keller/Anderle in March 2018](#), when it was clear the City would need a complete victory at trial in order to preserve the ability to enforce reasonable regulations on group home operators. After a four-week trial before the Honorable James Selna, the eight person jury returned a

unanimous verdict on all counts for the City of Costa Mesa. [Jennifer Keller](#) and [Chase Scolnick](#) were co-lead counsel and [Anand Sambhwani](#) was second chair, backed by [Michael Schachter](#) and [Nahal Kazemi](#).

In *Christina Chavez v. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.*, after deliberations following a 12-day trial, a jury in Los Angeles Superior Court found that Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. ("MassMutual") did not improperly withhold dividends from a class of hundreds of term life insurance policyholders. The jury sided with the insurer and found that the policies in question never generated enough profit to warrant dividends under the policy agreements. The jury rejected named plaintiff Christina Chavez's claims that the insurer had breached its contracts with hundreds of people who had purchased participating 20-year term life insurance, or T20G policies, from 2000 to 2004 in the Los Angeles area. [Jennifer Keller](#) and [Jesse Gessin](#) led the firm's trial team. Said Keller "I was afraid if we lost, term policies would cease to exist. They are cheap protection for loved ones, and they are almost loss leaders for insurers. So we did a great public service here."

About the firm: [Keller/Anderle LLP](#) is among the premier boutique trial firms in California, with a record second to none, and local, statewide and national recognition of the firm's success. The firm handles high-stakes litigation of all types including commercial, intellectual property, securities, bad faith, class actions, white collar criminal defense, and entertainment/sports. Keller/Anderle LLP attorneys have won over \$925 million in judgments, and successfully defended many other high stakes cases. Members of the firm have over 400 jury trials among them. Unique among law firms handling high profile, bet-the-company cases of such a caliber is that both name partners are women, and the firm is [100% women-owned](#).