

# TRAILBLAZERS

## CRISIS LEADERSHIP

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### **What was the genesis of the path that has made you a trailblazer?**

Unique to Bracewell's Policy Resolution Group is our use of advocacy communications to augment government relations efforts, especially in crisis situations. For example, our work for the FBI Agents Association to help end the government shutdown enabled FBI Agents' national security concerns to be heard by policymakers. PRG prepared *Voices from the Field: FBI Agents Accounts of the Real Consequences of the Government Shutdown*. Members of Congress cited the report in Congress and the President alluded to Agents' concerns when he ended the shutdown.

### **What sort of change has resulted from the concept?**

Digital media is the modern battleground for policy arguments. Clients toned to use new platforms such as social media podcasts to have a voice in Washington, DC. It's PRG's holistic approach to client service—combining government relations, advocacy communications, and legal expertise—that makes us a top government relations practice. An example: our then-pro bono work for The Trevor Project, the nation's largest LGBTQ youth suicide prevention organization. We built bipartisan support at the FCC and within Congress to ensure that specialized services for LGBTQ youth were included in the creation of 9-8-8, the new telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

### **What bearing will this have on the future?**

Disciplined use of advocacy communications is key, especially in a crisis. Sometimes the best skill is simply knowing when not to tweet. Advocacy communications is here to stay, but discipline and experience are essential for their effective use. For example, I represented pro bono young women who had escaped their kidnapper in another country and wanted to move to the U.S. for their safety. Our advocacy efforts to get them to the U.S. required fast interagency and congressional action. While advocacy communications might have amplified our efforts, it could have jeopardized women's safety. Today, they are in the U.S., and are attending school.